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| news | Source Location: Europe Source Location: United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland Source Type: Newspapers Timeline: 01 Jan, 2022 to 31 Dec, 2024 Source Name: The Independent (United Kingdom) |

1. [**Homes for Ukraine scheme: how you can help house refugees fleeing war**](#Bookmark_1)

2. [**US -backed group gets lifesaving meds to Ukrainians amid war**](#Bookmark_2)

3. [**Stopping Gazprom today 'would end war tomorrow', XR Ukraine founder says**](#Bookmark_3)

4. [**AP-NORC poll: More support for Ukraine , concern about Russia**](#Bookmark_4)

5. [**Tens of thousands register interest as Homes for Ukraine scheme launches**](#Bookmark_5)

6. [**Alliance will take a stance on constitutional question in the future, says Long**](#Bookmark_6)

7. [**Britons urged to open their doors to Ukrainians as fighting continues**](#Bookmark_7)

8. [**Stopping Gazprom today 'would end war tomorrow', XR Ukraine founder says**](#Bookmark_8)

9. [**The threat of a nuclear war won't deter power-mad Putin**](#Bookmark_9)

10. [**AP News Digest 6:30 a.m.**](#Bookmark_10)

11. [**UN : 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine worst post-WWII crisis**](#Bookmark_11)

12. [**21 Ukrainian children flown to UK for cancer treatment as refugee scheme expanded**](#Bookmark_12)

13. [**UK offers sanctuary to sick Ukrainian children as refugee scheme expanded**](#Bookmark_13)

14. [**The threat of nuclear war won't deter delusional autocrats like Putin**](#Bookmark_14)

15. [**In Ukraine , female war reporters build on legacy of pioneers**](#Bookmark_15)

16. [**Russia - Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict**](#Bookmark_16)

17. [**Russia - Ukraine War: What to know about the war in Ukraine**](#Bookmark_17)

18. [**Local churches shun Vatican 's moderate stance on Russia**](#Bookmark_18)

19. [**UK faith leaders urge government to rethink 'discriminatory' borders bill**](#Bookmark_19)

20. [**Neutral Finland , Sweden warm to idea of NATO membership**](#Bookmark_20)

21. [**Prince William delights fans by eating in ‘queer space’ restaurant in Poland : ‘We love an ally’**](#Bookmark_21)

22. [**BBC urged to get a ‘grip’ as Match Of The Day 2 set to air without presenters**](#Bookmark_22)

23. [**Syrian refugees anxious over Lebanon 's plans to deport them**](#Bookmark_23)

24. [**Poland completes Belarus border wall to keep migrants out**](#Bookmark_24)

25. [**Forgotten and abandoned: the Black, international students caught up in Ukraine conflict**](#Bookmark_25)

26. [**Inside Politics: Noisy court**](#Bookmark_26)

27. [**Word war: In Russia - Ukraine war, information became a weapon**](#Bookmark_27)

28. [**LOCALIZE IT: Support for Ukraine varies among US communities**](#Bookmark_28)

29. [**Varadkar pledges unwavering solidarity with Ukraine on day-long visit to Kyiv**](#Bookmark_29)

30. [**In pro-Putin Serbia, liberal-minded Russians seek a home**](#Bookmark_30)

31. [**EXPLAINER: Free courts at stake as EU mulls Poland funding**](#Bookmark_31)

32. [**Russian offensive turns to key Donbas city, heavy shelling**](#Bookmark_32)

33. [**James O'Brien tears apart Priti Patel's Ukraine refugee policy**](#Bookmark_33)

34. [**Senate ships $40B Ukraine aid bill to Biden for signature**](#Bookmark_34)

35. [**Protesters vent fury at French company for staying in Russia**](#Bookmark_35)

36. [**Private school heads criticise 'frustrating' visa process for Ukrainian pupils**](#Bookmark_36)

37. [**Live Updates | UK says Russia trying to boost troop numbers**](#Bookmark_37)

38. [**Excluding trans women who 'don't look feminine enough' from female toilets is cruel**](#Bookmark_38)

39. [**Excluding trans women who don't 'pass' from women's toilets is cruel**](#Bookmark_39)

40. [**Rishi Sunak’s five pledges: What are they and can they be achieved? -OLD**](#Bookmark_40)

41. [**Disrupting Russia 's Gazprom 'could end war tomorrow', Extinction Rebellion Ukraine founder says**](#Bookmark_41)

42. [**What they want: Allies meet in Europe for Ukraine summits**](#Bookmark_42)

43. [**Jewish refugee descendants open doors to Ukrainians**](#Bookmark_43)

44. [**Ukrainians organise evacuations and aid for Kharkiv with help of social media: 'People are really amazing'**](#Bookmark_44)

45. [**Micheal Martin tells Volodymyr Zelensky: Ireland is in solidarity with Ukraine**](#Bookmark_45)

46. [**What we know so far about the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme**](#Bookmark_46)

47. [**Russia Ukraine War Advisory**](#Bookmark_47)

48. [**Europe opens arms to millions of Ukraine refugees but how many people did countries take from other wars?**](#Bookmark_48)

49. [**What we know so far about the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme**](#Bookmark_49)

50. [**What happens when you get your period during a war?**](#Bookmark_50)

51. [**PM: West must end addiction to Russian energy and starve Putin of war funds**](#Bookmark_51)

52. [**2022 was year the horror of war returned to Europe**](#Bookmark_52)

53. [**Ukraine is a ' Sarajevo in the making', warns Kosovo 's PM**](#Bookmark_53)

54. [**Fear of new discrimination stalks the Romani refugees With tens of thousands crossing from Ukraine into Hungary , the community faces a cold welcome from Orban's regime**](#Bookmark_54)

55. [**Ireland faces increased cyber attack threat - foreign affairs minister**](#Bookmark_55)

56. [**'More weapons, more visas': Thousands gather in London to protest about invasion of Ukraine**](#Bookmark_56)

57. [**McDonald's , Starbucks , Coke , Pepsi join exodus out of Russia**](#Bookmark_57)

58. [**No-fly zone over Ukraine 'would not help', says head of UK's armed forces**](#Bookmark_58)

59. [**Risk 'a new Iron Curtain will descend upon Europe' as Russia 's isolation grows**](#Bookmark_59)

60. [**Voices: Boris Johnson always wanted to be Churchill, but this is the wrong kind of war**](#Bookmark_60)

61. [**Domestic woes overshadow European war for some US voters**](#Bookmark_61)

62. [**Ukraine : War crimes investigation begins after UK pushed for action on Putin**](#Bookmark_62)

63. [**Two years of war in Ukraine : Russia ’s invasion in numbers**](#Bookmark_63)

64. [**Deadly missile strike adds to Ukraine war fears in Poland**](#Bookmark_64)

65. [**Russian assault on Ukraine plants is 'energy genocide' Blitz threatens worst humanitarian disaster since WWII**](#Bookmark_65)

66. [**Russian assault on Ukraine plants is 'energy genocide' Blitz threatens worst humanitarian disaster since WWII**](#Bookmark_66)

67. [**'Time stopped': Ukrainians long to go home as war drags on**](#Bookmark_67)

68. [**Jill Biden carries out new mission in 2nd year as first lady**](#Bookmark_68)

69. [**Lulu, Mel B and mayors celebrate their cities making Eurovision shortlist**](#Bookmark_69)

70. [**What is the plan to tackle small boats and will it work?**](#Bookmark_70)

71. [**War in Ukraine has shown the virtues of national service**](#Bookmark_71)

72. [**What is the plan to tackle migrant small boats and will it work?**](#Bookmark_72)

73. [**US rabbi reviving Jewish roots in her family's Italian town**](#Bookmark_73)

74. [**Joe Biden stumbles up steps of Air Force 1 in Poland**](#Bookmark_74)

75. [**Zelensky thanks Ireland for its support as he meets Taoiseach in Kyiv**](#Bookmark_75)

76. [**Edward meets Ukrainians in Scotland after being made Duke of Edinburgh**](#Bookmark_76)

77. [**Boris Johnson news - Nato intervention 'not on the agenda' despite Putin's 'evil' invasion, PM insists**](#Bookmark_77)

78. [**Ukraine - Russia war latest: Zelensky warns ‘no time to waste’ as Ukraine ’s army chief says frontline situation ‘tense’**](#Bookmark_78)

79. [**Budget a ‘fundamental reform’ of public finances, Irish finance minister says**](#Bookmark_79)

80. [**Senior Tory suggests 'war cabinet' could be established if PM is deposed**](#Bookmark_80)

81. [**A chilling Russian cyber aim in Ukraine : Digital dossiers**](#Bookmark_81)

82. [**AP News Digest 3 am**](#Bookmark_82)

83. [**In Pictures: Big Lunch celebrations across UK as coronation festivities continue**](#Bookmark_83)

84. [**AP News Digest 3:20 am**](#Bookmark_84)

85. [**For Jews fleeing Ukraine , Passover takes on new meaning**](#Bookmark_85)

86. [**The descendants of Jewish refugees opening their doors to Ukrainians in the UK**](#Bookmark_86)

87. [**How Ukrainian pets bring solace for some refugees but heartbreak for others**](#Bookmark_87)

88. [**African refugees see racial bias as US welcomes Ukrainians**](#Bookmark_88)

89. [**'Stranded in purgatory'**](#Bookmark_89)

90. [**Ukrainians 'stranded in purgatory' as they wait weeks to join family in UK**](#Bookmark_90)

91. [**Russia - Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict**](#Bookmark_91)

92. [**'Stranded in purgatory'**](#Bookmark_92)

93. [**AP News Digest 4 a.m.**](#Bookmark_93)

94. [**Biden praises Irish efforts over Ukraine war during St Patrick's Day meeting**](#Bookmark_94)

95. [**Taoiseach disappointed to miss White House visit after contracting Covid**](#Bookmark_95)

96. [**Ukraine says Russia seized relief workers in Mariupol convoy**](#Bookmark_96)

97. [**Biden's China 'pivot' complicated by Russia 's war in Ukraine**](#Bookmark_97)

98. [**Ukraine 's Roma refugees face uncertain future under threat of discrimination in Hungary**](#Bookmark_98)

99. [**Zelensky gives Churchillian address to MPs as UK announces Russian oil ban**](#Bookmark_99)

100. [**Visa red tape is distracting men fighting on frontline, says Ukraine 's former PM**](#Bookmark_100)

101. [**'The Russians are the same as the Germans were then'**](#Bookmark_101)

102. [**Indian students in Ukraine in fear as Russian invasion grows**](#Bookmark_102)

103. [**Ukraine people smugglers make refugees their target**](#Bookmark_103)

104. [**'I love Berlin': Jewish refugee kids reach safety in Germany**](#Bookmark_104)

105. [**Russia - Ukraine War: What to know on Day 8 of Russian assault**](#Bookmark_105)

106. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Wagner says no ammunition from Putin ahead of Victory Day parade**](#Bookmark_106)

107. [**‘Energy genocide’: Ukraine pleads for urgent help as Russia blitz on infrastructure grows**](#Bookmark_107)

108. [**Inside Politics: Ukraine must accept it will not join Nato, Zelensky says**](#Bookmark_108)

109. [**Biden set to revisit Irish roots after marking Good Friday Agreement anniversary**](#Bookmark_109)

110. [**Biden to travel to Mayo and Dublin after visiting Belfast**](#Bookmark_110)

111. [**'When children tell the full story they heal themselves' Siobhan O'Grady and Kamila Hrabchuk on the museum where young Ukrainians leave their memories of war**](#Bookmark_111)

112. [**A historic King's speech**](#Bookmark_112)

113. [**Voices: Why the King’s address to the German parliament was so significant**](#Bookmark_113)

114. [**Zelensky tells Irish students to ‘take care of your freedom’ in university address**](#Bookmark_114)

115. [**Ukraine refugees forced to live in unvetted homes**](#Bookmark_115)

116. [**Ukraine refugees forced to live in unvetted homes**](#Bookmark_116)

117. [**Voices: I look at what’s happened in Ukraine and realise the importance of national service**](#Bookmark_117)

118. [**Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut**](#Bookmark_118)

119. [**Ukraine - Russia war -live: Putin ‘loses entire brigade’ as Moscow suffer painful losses in latest battle**](#Bookmark_119)

120. [**Billions set to be cut from foreign aid projects**](#Bookmark_120)

121. [**Billions set to be cut from foreign aid projects**](#Bookmark_121)

122. [**Fate of 2,500 Ukrainian POWs from steel plant stirs concern**](#Bookmark_122)

123. [**Ukrainians forced to choose 'either war or homelessness'**](#Bookmark_123)

124. [**Ukrainians in UK forced to choose between homelessness and returning to war**](#Bookmark_124)

125. [**Live updates | Ukraine reports more airstrikes on Azovstal**](#Bookmark_125)

126. [**AP News Digest 5:45 a.m.**](#Bookmark_126)

127. [**AP News Digest 3:20 am**](#Bookmark_127)

128. [**Greece conflicted when it comes to Ukraine support Far-right Azov fighters with Greek roots spark outrage**](#Bookmark_128)

129. [**Volunteers sort through Ukrainian refugee donations at London club**](#Bookmark_129)

130. [**PM braced for legal bids over forced removal of asylum seekers to Rwanda**](#Bookmark_130)

131. [**Greece steps off the sidelines to support Ukraine but faces balancing act with an unconvinced public**](#Bookmark_131)

132. [**'Seeing the Ukrainians... it just hits so close to home' The hopes of thousands of Japanese islanders of seeing their homelands again have been lost after relations with Russia broke down, write Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma**](#Bookmark_132)

133. [**The stark reality of the Ukrainian refugee crisis at the Romanian - Hungarian border**](#Bookmark_133)

134. [**Watch live as Biden receives briefing on refugee situation in Poland**](#Bookmark_134)

135. [**Ireland 's hundred thousand welcomes for war victims**](#Bookmark_135)

136. [**'I have forgotten who I was before the war in Ukraine ' The thousands of Russians who fled after Putin's invasion and crackdown at home are unsure if they will ever return**](#Bookmark_136)

137. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin’s warplanes ‘drop bombs’ on civilian shipping lanes as Kyiv troops advance**](#Bookmark_137)

138. [**Fox News correspondent Benjamin Hall 'lost part of his leg' in Ukraine attack that killed cameraman**](#Bookmark_138)

139. [**Russia - Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict**](#Bookmark_139)

140. [**Fox News cameraman and Ukrainian journalist killed in vehicle attack that injured correspondent Benjamin Hall**](#Bookmark_140)

141. [**'The hardest part was that I could only take four people'**](#Bookmark_141)

142. [**How one man from Ukraine fled war for a second time**](#Bookmark_142)

143. [**A Hamptons pastry chef, a new bride and a father who won the green card lottery: The Ukrainians returning home from US to fight for their country**](#Bookmark_143)

144. [**Russian invasion reorders West's calculations on cost of war**](#Bookmark_144)

145. [**A hundred thousand welcomes: How Ireland has embraced Ukrainians fleeing war**](#Bookmark_145)

146. [**Ireland 's hundred thousand welcomes for war victims**](#Bookmark_146)

147. [**Russia - Ukraine War: What to know on Russia 's war in Ukraine**](#Bookmark_147)

148. [**Refugees trying to flee Ukraine targeted by people smugglers**](#Bookmark_148)

149. [**Watch live as Boris Johnson meets with Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki**](#Bookmark_149)

150. [**Liz Truss is right - Putin will be the biggest loser of a war with Ukraine**](#Bookmark_150)

151. [**Ukraine : Thousands gather in London to march in solidarity with war-torn country**](#Bookmark_151)

152. [**Watch live as Michael Gove makes statement on 'Homes for Ukraine ' scheme**](#Bookmark_152)

153. [**Activists break into French villa owned by Russian leader Vladimir Putin's daughter**](#Bookmark_153)

154. [**‘Why is it different?’: Adil Ray clashes with GMB guest over Rwanda policy**](#Bookmark_154)

155. [**'Fear of the foreigner has defined debate in Denmark ' Hardline rhetoric around immigration has taken hold in a country known for broadly liberal values, says Emily Rauhala**](#Bookmark_155)

156. [**How progressive Denmark became the face of the anti-migration left**](#Bookmark_156)

157. [**Joe Biden seeks to ‘make hope and history rhyme’ in Irish homecoming address**](#Bookmark_157)

158. [**AP Week in Pictures: Europe and Africa**](#Bookmark_158)

159. [**Watch live as MPs debate new powers to tackle Russian oligarchs**](#Bookmark_159)

160. [**Ukraine refugee U-turn 'nowhere near enough'**](#Bookmark_160)

161. [**Climate at heart of Labour's foreign policy, says Lammy**](#Bookmark_161)

162. [**End row on protocol by using flexibility shown to Ukraine , Britain tells EU**](#Bookmark_162)

163. [**End row on protocol by using flexibility shown to Ukraine , Britain tells EU**](#Bookmark_163)

164. [**Biden calls Putin 'a butcher' during visit to Ukrainian refugee camp in Poland**](#Bookmark_164)

165. [**Labour would put climate crisis at heart of foreign policy, David Lammy vows ahead of conference speech**](#Bookmark_165)

166. [**Squatters occupy London mansion 'owned by Russian oligarch' in protest of Ukraine war**](#Bookmark_166)

167. [**Ukrainian refugee breaks down in tears facing UK visa application that is 'too hard'**](#Bookmark_167)

168. [**Mila Kunis 'never been more proud' to be Ukrainian , starts fundraiser with Ashton Kutcher**](#Bookmark_168)

169. [**Russia 'built itself a trap' in Ukraine and are 'getting desperate', Ben Wallace says**](#Bookmark_169)

170. [**Boris Johnson announces Ukraine refugees scheme for Britons who want to offer their homes**](#Bookmark_170)

171. [**Watch live as Boris Johnson faces Keir Starmer at PMQs**](#Bookmark_171)

172. [**Surge in homeless refugees feared as Ukrainian scheme reaches a 'crisis point'**](#Bookmark_172)

173. [**This is what a 50km-long refugee crisis looks like**](#Bookmark_173)

174. [**Watch live as Refugees crowd ferries at Danube River as thousands flee Ukraine**](#Bookmark_174)

175. [**Homes for Ukraine : Michael Gove unveils UK scheme for fleeing refugees**](#Bookmark_175)

176. [**Dominic Raab tells Labour and Angela Rayner to get out of 'social media echo chamber'**](#Bookmark_176)

177. [**Watch live as Boris Johnson holds briefing on Ukraine crisis alongside Nato chief and Estonian PM**](#Bookmark_177)

178. [**Ukraine : British man living in Poland opens home to refugees escaping war-torn homeland**](#Bookmark_178)

179. [**Voters urge Johnson to ditch limits on refugees**](#Bookmark_179)

180. [**Voters urge Johnson to ditch limits on refugees**](#Bookmark_180)

181. [**Plane carrying Polish president Andrzej Duda makes emergency landing in Warsaw**](#Bookmark_181)

182. [**AP PHOTOS: Day 31: Biden visits Poland , rockets hit Ukraine**](#Bookmark_182)

183. [**The war in Ukraine is crushing thousands of elderly Japanese people**](#Bookmark_183)

184. [**Live Updates | Russia acknowledges significant troop losses**](#Bookmark_184)

185. [**Twice a refugee: How one man in Ukraine fled war once more to get his family to safety**](#Bookmark_185)

186. [**'I feel shame': Fleeing abroad after Putin's war, Russian exiles see no future at home**](#Bookmark_186)

187. [**Good Friday Agreement 'cannot change', Biden warns at St Patrick's Day event**](#Bookmark_187)

188. [**How one man from Ukraine fled war for a second time**](#Bookmark_188)

189. [**In Ukraine , female war reporters build on legacy of pioneers**](#Bookmark_189)

190. [**Meet the grandparents trying to escape Ukraine : 'I lived through the Second World War. And now we have this'**](#Bookmark_190)

191. [**Live updates: Fitch downgrades Russia 's credit rating**](#Bookmark_191)

192. [**Live updates: Kharkiv nuclear facility again hit by shelling**](#Bookmark_192)

193. [**Homes for Ukraine scheme hits ‘crisis point’ as councils brace for surge in homeless refugees**](#Bookmark_193)

194. [**Rishi Sunak news -live: Hunt expected to lift cap on bankers’ bonuses in Autumn Budget**](#Bookmark_194)

195. [**Polish Nobel author says Russia threat to 'free world'**](#Bookmark_195)

196. [**Inside Politics: Zelensky calls for Nuremberg-style trials and NI tax hike bites**](#Bookmark_196)

197. [**Inside Politics: Nazanin arrives back in the UK**](#Bookmark_197)

198. [**Meet the rescuers trying to save fleeing Ukrainians: 'The hardest part was I could only take four people'**](#Bookmark_198)

199. [**Tributes pour in for 'legend' Fox cameraman killed in Ukraine attack that injured correspondent Benjamin Hall**](#Bookmark_199)

200. [**Refugee count tops 1 million; Russians besiege Ukraine ports**](#Bookmark_200)

201. [**Ukraine crisis upends Hungary 's election race as Orban faces heat over ties with Russia**](#Bookmark_201)

202. [**They fled Putin's war too, but Britain won't help because of their nationality**](#Bookmark_202)

203. [**Boris Johnson news: Michael Gove reveals 'Homes for Ukraine ' sponsorship scheme**](#Bookmark_203)

204. [**Boris Johnson news -live: Sunak hints at cost-of-living help as UK launches first phase of Ukraine scheme**](#Bookmark_204)

205. [**Boris Johnson news -live: Seven oligarchs sanctioned by UK amid Home Office visa U-turn**](#Bookmark_205)

206. [**Ukraine - Russia war -live: Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive**](#Bookmark_206)

207. [**Simon Coveney visiting Poland as Ukraine crisis continues**](#Bookmark_207)

208. [**In Pictures: Royal reunion on day two of Jubilee celebration**](#Bookmark_208)

209. [**Trump news - live: Mo Brooks says then-president asked him to rescind 2020 election and put him back in office**](#Bookmark_209)

210. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Kyiv mocks Putin’s ‘loneliest little tank in world’ seen at Victory Day parade**](#Bookmark_210)

211. [**Boris Johnson news - live: Zelensky echoes Churchill in address to Commons**](#Bookmark_211)

212. [**AP News Digest 3:25 am**](#Bookmark_212)

213. [**Celebrating 50 people who make life better for others**](#Bookmark_213)

214. [**Happy List 2022: The Independent celebrates 50 inspirational people making life better for others**](#Bookmark_214)

215. [**Inside Politics: Kyiv rocked by fresh bombardment but Russian advance stalled**](#Bookmark_215)

216. [**Ukraine ’s forgotten refugees: They fled Putin’s war too – but Britain won’t help because of their nationality**](#Bookmark_216)

217. [**NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week**](#Bookmark_217)

218. [**Bel Powley on Botox, nepotism and difficult sex scenes: ‘The heroin chic thing is gonna die again, right?’**](#Bookmark_218)

219. [**'I'm the kind of person who will tell people what I want' Bel Powley, who starred in 'The Diary of a Teenage Girl' and 'Everything I Know About Love', tells Ellie Harrison about her new role as Miep Gies, the woman who hid Anne Frank**](#Bookmark_219)

220. [**A timeline of Putin’s invasion – and the fight to save Ukraine**](#Bookmark_220)

221. [**Ukraine - Russia war -live: Putin turns to new weapon for winter attacks as bombing of Avdiivka continues**](#Bookmark_221)

222. [**Ukraine news – live: Putin and Wagner lose ‘substantial manpower in Bakhmut fight’**](#Bookmark_222)

223. [**On neighbouring borders, Polish families helping refugees face very different fates**](#Bookmark_223)

224. [**'After the victory, we will go home': Ukraine 's refugees show faith in face of horror**](#Bookmark_224)

225. [**Why I'm no longer happy to be 'Putin's propaganda girl' She fell in love with Russia and spent years defending Putin and his policies. But now, watching the unprovoked, violent invasion of Ukraine , Johanna Ross is left bitterly disillusioned**](#Bookmark_225)

226. [**Russia - Ukraine war – live: Putin’s forces ‘dealt a good kick’ after first UK Challenger 2 tank destroyed**](#Bookmark_226)

227. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Kyiv troops advance on two fronts as Putin’s air defences ‘struck in Crimea’**](#Bookmark_227)

228. [**Royal news -latest: Harry arrives for final day of privacy hearing as King addresses German parliament**](#Bookmark_228)

229. [**Ukraine - Russia news – live: One dead as Putin’s troops ‘fire at rescue workers’ in flood-hit Kherson**](#Bookmark_229)

230. [**I was called 'Putin's propaganda girl'. But I quit**](#Bookmark_230)

231. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station**](#Bookmark_231)

232. [**'Youngest Soviet defector' sees himself in Ukrainian children fleeing Putin: 'Reliving my plight to be free'**](#Bookmark_232)

233. [**Coronation – live: Police arrest 52 people as King and Queen crowned in historic ceremony**](#Bookmark_233)

234. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station**](#Bookmark_234)

235. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Zelensky to make surprise appearance in person at G7 summit in Japan**](#Bookmark_235)

236. [**Ukraine news – live: Moscow to take up UN Security Council presidency as Kyiv blasts ‘absurd’ move**](#Bookmark_236)

237. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station**](#Bookmark_237)

238. [**'I hated education - public schools should be banned' Rap-punk troubadour Jamie T spars with Mark Beaumont on British identity, the war in Ukraine and private education**](#Bookmark_238)

239. [**Jamie T: ‘I hated education. I think public schools should be banned’**](#Bookmark_239)

240. [**The asylum seekers stuck in hotel rooms for months on end**](#Bookmark_240)

241. [**Families fleeing violence being warehoused in filthy rooms overrun by vermin**](#Bookmark_241)

242. [**Coronation – live: Street parties and concert after King Charles III crowned in historic event**](#Bookmark_242)

243. [**Ukraine - Russia war live: Press Putin to end war, Germany urges China’s Xi Jinping**](#Bookmark_243)

244. [**Ukraine - Russia war live: Kyiv planning ‘serious operation’ in Crimea as Zelensky slams Pope’s white flag claim**](#Bookmark_244)

245. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin’s troops redeployed to Bakhmut as Kyiv makes ‘tactical gains’**](#Bookmark_245)

246. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: ‘Powerful explosion’ rocks central Moscow as Ukrainian drone downed near Kremlin**](#Bookmark_246)

247. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on nuclear weapons**](#Bookmark_247)

248. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on nuclear weapons**](#Bookmark_248)

249. [**Coronation live updates: King Charles and Queen Camilla route and carriage details revealed**](#Bookmark_249)

250. [**King Charles – latest: Queen Camilla makes first public appearance since title change announcement**](#Bookmark_250)

251. [**Royal news -latest: King tells Ukrainians who fled war to Germany ‘I’m praying for you’**](#Bookmark_251)

252. [**Royal news -latest: King tells Ukrainians who fled war to Germany ‘I’m praying for you’**](#Bookmark_252)

253. [**King Charles visit – latest: Monarch to address German parliament as Harry’s court case continues**](#Bookmark_253)

254. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: China says it won’t ‘add fuel to fire’ in first war call with Zelensky**](#Bookmark_254)

255. [**King Charles visit – latest: Monarch to address German parliament as Harry’s court case continues**](#Bookmark_255)

256. [**Russia - Ukraine war – live: Putin launches biggest drone attack yet as explosions heard through night in Kyiv**](#Bookmark_256)

257. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin suffers serious losses in largest offensive in months**](#Bookmark_257)

258. [**Russia - Ukraine news – live: Putin fires barrage of missiles on Kyiv, air defence activated across country**](#Bookmark_258)

259. [**Royal news -latest: Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha**](#Bookmark_259)

260. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin’s forces suffer blow as helicopters destroyed by missile strikes, says Kyiv**](#Bookmark_260)

261. [**Coronation -live: William and Kate make unexpected visit to concert queue**](#Bookmark_261)

262. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin installs ‘Devil’s Teeth’ defence visible from space ahead of spring offensive**](#Bookmark_262)

263. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Drone attack south of Moscow after two killed in Kherson shelling**](#Bookmark_263)

264. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin’s Black Sea fleet commander ‘killed in attack on Crimea navy HQ’**](#Bookmark_264)

265. [**Russia - Ukraine war – live: Putin ally warns of nuclear world war as Kyiv raids Dnipro River**](#Bookmark_265)

266. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Ukraine makes frontline gains as rain threatens counteroffensive**](#Bookmark_266)

267. [**Israel admits ‘serious failures’ over deadly strike but insists aid workers were mistaken for Hamas: Updates**](#Bookmark_267)

268. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin airstrike targets Odesa hotel in two-hour onslaught**](#Bookmark_268)

269. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Putin’s Black Sea fleet commander ‘killed in attack on Crimea navy HQ’**](#Bookmark_269)

270. [**Russia - Ukraine war – live: Global wheat prices soar as Putin destroys 60,000 tonnes of Odesa grain**](#Bookmark_270)

271. [**Russia - Ukraine war – live: Drones shot down above Moscow after Putin’s largest aerial assault on Kyiv**](#Bookmark_271)

272. [**Royal news -latest: Coronation preparations step up after Charles and Camilla’s Germany trip**](#Bookmark_272)

273. [**Ukraine - Russia war – live: Dozens injured in Kyiv missile strike as ‘90% of Putin’s pre-war troops lost’**](#Bookmark_273)

274. [**Coronation – live: William and Kate make unexpected visit to concert queue**](#Bookmark_274)

275. [**Ukraine - Russia war – latest: Putin reveals when nuclear weapons will be deployed to Belarus**](#Bookmark_275)

276. [**Ukraine - Russia war – latest: Putin reveals when nuclear weapons will be deployed to Belarus**](#Bookmark_276)

277. [**Ukraine - Russia war – latest: Zelensky says ‘counter-offensive actions’ are underway**](#Bookmark_277)



# [*Homes for Ukraine scheme: how you can help house refugees fleeing war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653P-PFG1-JBNF-W0JK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Millions of Ukrainians have fled their homeland after Russia's invasion, triggering a major humanitarian crisis within Europe.

The fighting continues to have a devastating impact on civilians living in the country, which has prompted the UK to announce two schemes for refugees.

One is the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme, which anybody with space to house a refugee can apply for.

Individuals, charities, community groups and businesses can register their interest in the for the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme.

The other is the Ukraine Family Scheme, for those who already have relatives in the UK.

For those who are unable to offer a room, there are other ways to help, including volunteering to help raise funds for the crisis and donating to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) appeal, which goes towards providing essential hygiene supplies, blankets and food.

Here we answer all of your questions on the Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Family Scheme schemes, such as who is eligible and how to apply.

Homes for Ukraine scheme

How can I help?

There are two ways you can help through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. If you know someone in Ukraine that you want to bring to the UK then work with them to fill out the dedicated visa application. If you don't know someone you can fill out an expression of interest. More information is available on [*homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk*](http://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/)

How long do I have to provide accommodation?

We're asking people to provide at least 6 months of stable accommodation, but you can extend this if you and your guest(s) want to do so.

What sort of space can I offer?

Accommodation can be anything from an empty room to an unoccupied home, as long as it's safe, heated, free from health hazards and gives your guests adequate access to bathroom and kitchen facilities.

Am I going to be expected to cover my guest's bills or provide meals?

No, you'll just be asked to provide the accommodation. However, there is nothing stopping you offering meals if you want. An optional 'thank you' payment of £350 per month will be provided to people who do host guests.

Will there be checks carried out to protect my family and my guests?

Yes, the local council will complete checks on the accommodation and living arrangements. Security checks will take place too, which will vary based on circumstances. More information is available on [*ukstandswithukraine.campaign.gov.uk*](http://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk/)

For those sponsoring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

I'm interested, where do I register?

Complete the short form on the Homes for Ukraine webpage. You will be kept updated after recording your interest.

I already have a named contact to sponsor what should I do?

If you already have a named contact that you wish to sponsor you should get in touch with them directly and prepare to fill in a visa application with all of their details and yours.

I don't yet know anyone from Ukraine to sponsor. What should I do?

If you don't know anyone from Ukraine to sponsor you are still encouraged to take part in the scheme if you can. You may wish to get in touch with charities, faith groups or local community organisations who are starting to make connections between individuals.

I'm part of an organisation. What role can I play?

Record the organisation's interest by visiting the Homes for Ukraine webpage. Named individual contacts are being prioritised.

The Ukraine Family Scheme

What is the Ukraine Family Scheme?

The Ukraine Family Scheme allows immediate and extended family members of British nationals and people settled in the UK to come to the UK. Those that have no ties to a Ukrainian national but would like to support the cause should register their interest to the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Who is eligible for the Ukraine Family scheme?

â Ukrainian nations applying must be applying to join or accompany a UK-based family member.

â Must be Ukrainian or the immediate family member of a Ukrainian national applying to the scheme.

â Must have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before the 1st January 2022.

What immigration status, right to work and access to public services and benefits will I get?

Passport holders who apply through the online-only process will only receive a permission to travel letter and then a six-month entry stamp that evidences your right to work, study and claim benefits in the UK. Once in the UK, you will need to make an application to extend their stay for up to 36 months. You will be able to work and access benefits and public services -including healthcare, schooling, employment support and English language tuition.

How do I apply?

You can apply from outside of the UK under this scheme to seek to come to the UK. Either you or a sponsor completes a single form which collects your details and the details of your sponsor -which is your application. If you hold a valid Ukrainian international passport you will not need to attend a Visa Application Centre. If you do not hold a valid Ukrainian International Passport you will need to book and attend an appointment at a visa application centre. There is no charge to apply. You can book an appointment online at [*gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre*](https://www.gov.uk/find-a-visa-application-centre)

Can I apply if I have already entered the UK?

Yes, Ukrainian nationals that have already entered the UK can apply to the scheme provided they meet entry requirements. Applications made under the scheme will be prioritised by the Home Office.

What does the scheme provide?

Ukrainian nationals applying under the Ukraine Family Scheme will be granted a visa to the UK for three years.

Does this scheme cost anything?

No, the scheme is free and does not include any salary or language requirements. Where can I find out more information to the scheme? More information on the Ukraine Family Scheme and which family members are eligible can be found online at [*gov.uk/UFS*](http://gov.uk/UFS)

**Load-Date:** March 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*US-backed group gets lifesaving meds to Ukrainians amid war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-DK41-JBNF-W0MK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 1:20 PM GMT

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**Length:** 984 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Thousands of patients in Ukraine are receiving lifesaving medicines to treat HIV and opioid addiction through a U.S.-funded group still operating amid the Russian invasion

**Body**

Thousands of patients in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are receiving lifesaving medicines to treat [*HIV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hiv) and opioid addiction through a U.S.-funded group still operating despite the Russian invasion. Supplies are running short and making deliveries is a complicated calculus with unpredictable risks.

Officials say the quiet work of the Alliance for Public Health shows how American assistance is reaching individuals in the besieged nation, on a different wavelength from U.S. diplomatic and military support for the Ukrainian government.

The Ukraine-based humanitarian organization has operated for more than 20 years. It has received millions of dollars from the U.S. Agency for International Development as well as the [*Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/centers-disease-control-and-prevention) , and other federal programs to counter HIV globally.

Executive director Andriy Klepikov said shutting down was not an option during the invasion. Ukraine has one of the most serious HIV epidemics in Western Europe, and patients need their medications daily.

He said his group made a "risk management plan" to continue its work if fighting broke out. But it did not envision the scale of the onslaught unleashed by Russian forces, and that has forced the group to adapt.

In areas of Ukraine that have escaped the worst, the organization is still able to deliver medications via postal and parcel services. For refugees who have left the country, caseworkers are making connections with aid groups that can restock medications. In places under attack but still in Ukrainian control, medical vans are bringing in supplies via convoys. The group has even been able to get some deliveries into Russian-controlled areas, with the help of intermediaries. It also is distributing medicines for tuberculosis.

Asked how long it can keep going, Klepikov responded:

"We Ukrainians are quite resilient. I am not the best soldier. But in the area of medicine, humanitarian work, public health, human rights \_\_ that's my area, and I will do the maximum possible." He was interviewed by telephone several times recently.

"We are still serving thousands of people" with medications, Klepikov said. "It's more than five thousand."

The group's fleet of medical vans has been pressed into service to transport injured civilians to hospitals that can treat complex cases, and to deliver essential supplies for daily living.

U.S. officials say they have been impressed with the attitude of the Ukrainians, which evokes the tenacity of Britons during the London Blitz in World War II.

"Going into the war, I think we assumed the services would probably not be working anymore, and we completely understood," said Ryan Keating, a CDC epidemiologist overseeing AIDS prevention and treatment assistance for Ukraine. But "in most cases throughout the country our partners have continued to work every day."

Keating tells of a nurse at a clinic in one hard-hit city, who when the air raid siren sounded, scooped up the HIV medicines first and then hustled to the bomb shelter. Health care staff continued to communicate with clients from the bomb shelter.

For the Alliance, every day turns into a test. The group has lost contact with clients in Mariupol, which has a large population of HIV patients. That coastal city has been relentlessly pummeled by the Russians, and reports indicate much of it is reduced to rubble. An Alliance medical van was destroyed during a bombardment, Klepikov said.

Normal patterns of communication between clients and their caseworkers and clinicians have been severely disrupted. A clinic or office may be closed. [*Patients*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/patients) may have moved to safer areas. Messaging apps and online forums have filled some of the gaps, much as telehealth became the fallback in the United States during the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

A website supported by the Alliance has become a place for patients to seek counseling for the trauma of war. According to one of the group's periodic situation reports, the top concerns of patients are acute stress, strong anxiety mixed with sadness, fear of death, guilt after evacuating to a safer area, and guilt about not doing enough.

"The importance of this work increases substantially in the context of war," said Klepikov, who holds a doctorate in philosophy.

The U.S. has a long-standing relationship with the Ukrainian group through a program called the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief.

Efforts are underway to restock Ukraine's supply of medicines, said Dr. Ezra Barzilay, CDC's country director for Ukraine. Antiretroviral drugs are used to treat HIV, and medicines such as buprenorphine and methadone are used for opioid addiction. Two Ukrainian factories that made drugs to treat opioid addiction have been attacked.

HIV and opioid addiction are related medical problems because the virus that causes AIDS can be transmitted by infected needles used to inject drugs. The Alliance estimates that 100,000 Ukrainians living with HIV are in cities and districts impacted by the Russian invasion. At the time the war started, more than 17,000 patients with opioid addiction were receiving treatment.

"Having the drugs in country doesn't necessarily make it work," Barzilay said. "You could have thousands of pills in one city and the city next door may not have access. They're moving drugs by car from location to location."

Program director Klepikov said he remembers a long-ago event with the U.S. ambassador to kick off American support for his organization. "I'm worried that what we've achieved in 21 years can be destroyed in days because of the Russian aggression in Ukraine."

President Joe Biden's health secretary, Xavier Becerra, said the Health and Human Services Department is coordinating with the State Department to deliver medical supplies to Ukraine, and is preparing to help resettle ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. "We want to be there," Becerra told The Associated Press. "At HHS, we have a role to play as well."

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Stopping Gazprom today 'would end war tomorrow', XR Ukraine founder says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651J-8GT1-F072-41MP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 19, 2022 Saturday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 16

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:** ZOE TIDMAN

**Body**

The war in Ukraine could be stopped "tomorrow" by causing disruption to Gazprom, the founder of the Ukrainian branch of Extinction Rebellion (XR) has said, calling on climate protesters worldwide to demonstrate at the Russian energy giant's offices.

The climate activist, who wanted to go only by his first name Grisha, told The Independent it was a "problem" to be expressing solidarity with Ukraine while still funnelling money into the invading country through oil and gas imports, and said Russian fossil fuels should be "blocked".

He is one of millions who have been displaced by the Russian invasion which started just over three weeks ago. The war has decimated several cities and is reported to have killed thousands of civilians.

Speaking to The Independent from Ukraine, Grisha said his whole country was mobilising to resist the attack. His contribution is not joining the fight on the front line, but rather stepping up the battle against fossil fuels. "I am not an army man. I don't know how to fight or shoot with (a) gun," he said. "We try to focus on different things other people can do."

The climate activist said he wanted to see more civil disobedience across Europe targeting Russian fossil fuels, which could include XR groups and other protesters rallying outside Gazprom offices and preventing people from going to work. "We believe that if Gazprom stops today, tomorrow the war ends," the 38-year-old said.

Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas company by production, wields considerable influence both in Russia and beyond as it supplies around 40 per cent of Europe's gas. Its subsidiaries have offices across the continent, including several in the UK. Other companies have moved to distance themselves from the Russian state-owned energy firm since the war in Ukraine started, including Shell, which cut ties with Gazprom earlier this month.

In the UK, the health secretary has reportedly told hospitals to stop using gas from the energy giant. Germany blocked a new Gazprom pipeline in response to Russian aggression days before the war started. Europe has so far stopped short of banning Russian gas imports. But the war in Ukraine has sparked even more alarm over the world's reliance on fossil fuels.

As well as its impact on the climate crisis, world leaders have been expressing concern over how this money ends up being spent in the Russian context. Earlier this week, a European Union environment chief said the bloc's dependence on Russian fossil fuels was financing a "war chest".

US president Joe Biden banned Russian oil and gas imports last week over the war in Ukraine, saying it would help to serve a blow to Vladimir Putin's "war machine". Concerns have also been raised in the UK - where Russian oil is being phased out - that the public could inadvertently be funding the war by filling up cars or paying energy bills.

Grisha - as translated by a fellow Ukrainian XR activist, Nastya - said his group wanted to encourage the global community to protest against fossil fuels as the war wages on and had created slogans and posters for this, although it was difficult to work on activism with air raid sirens frequently going off and attacks happening in the background.

The 38-year-old XR Ukraine founder said it was important to see groups around the world helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but that this was only a sticking plaster. "A lot of people in Ukraine want to stay and they don't want to leave and they want to come back to their countries. So it's also very important to stop the source of the issue, not the outcome," he was translated as saying.

Svitlana Krakovska, a Ukrainian scientist involved in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, told The Guardian fossil fuels were driving both the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine. "Burning oil, gas and coal is causing warming and impacts we need to adapt to. And Russia sells these resources and uses the money to buy weapons. Other countries are dependent upon these fossil fuels, they don't make themselves free of them," she said. "This is a fossil fuel war. It's clear we cannot continue to live this way, it will destroy our civilisation."

The UK said last week it would no longer import Russian oil by the end of the year and was exploring options to reduce gas imports. Meanwhile, the European Union said it was planning to phase out its dependency on Russian fossil fuels by 2027.

Grisha told The Independent he thought it was "very strange" to see the EU slapping sanctions on Russia, yet still paying what he claimed was billions for Russian gas and oil since the war started. According to a tracker run by campaign group Europe Beyond Coal, the bloc has paid Russia more than Euro 17bn for fossil fuels since the invasion was launched on 24 February.

An EU official told The Independent it has launched an unprecedented sanctions response over the war in Ukraine and had just adopted a fourth package, which included a "far-reaching" ban on new investment on Russian energy.

"It's working, we see the effect on the Russian economy already - the stock market is closed, the rouble has lost half of its value and companies are fleeing the country," they said. "Some transactions are still needed, though, to ensure the supply of certain energy products into the EU."

Gazprom and the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy were approached for comment. The head of Gazprom has called on its 500,000 employees to rally around Mr Putin to preserve Russia as a great power in the face of foreign attempts to break her, according to a letter published on Thursday.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP-NORC poll: More support for Ukraine, concern about Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652G-HY41-JBNF-W3DR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 6:01 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 867 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As Russia escalates its war in Ukraine and stories of civilian casualties and destruction in cities reach the United States, support has risen for a major American role

**Body**

As Russia escalates its war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and stories of civilian casualties and destruction in cities reach the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) , support has risen for a major American role - and so has fear of the threat Russia poses to the U.S.

The new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research also finds a majority of Americans say they're willing to accept damage to the economy if it helps to stop Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's invasion. Forty percent now say the U.S. should have a "major role," up from 26% in an AP-NORC poll conducted just before the invasion began.

Another 46% say the U.S. should have a "minor role." The percentage who think the U.S. shouldn't be involved at all ticked down from 20% to 13%.

The poll suggests many Americans want President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) to do more to counter Russia without suggesting he should reverse his pledge not to send U.S. troops to Ukraine.

Additional U.S. forces have deployed to neighboring countries that are part of NATO. The U.S. and West, meanwhile, have imposed sanctions that have crushed Russia's economy. They are providing anti-tank and anti-missile weapons to Ukraine, which has mounted a robust resistance, killed thousands of Russian troops, and stopped Russia from taking Kyiv or other major cities so far. But the White House has also held back some weapons and intelligence as it seeks to avoid a direct conflict between the U.S. and Russia, which have the world's two largest nuclear arsenals.

A majority of Americans - 56% - think Biden hasn't been tough enough on Russia, according to the poll. Another 36% said his approach has been "about right."

Speaking after the release of the earlier AP-NORC poll, White House press secretary Jen Psaki noted that Americans may have different meanings of what is a "major role" or "minor role" in the conflict. "We make national security decisions based on what's best for our country's national security, not on the latest polling," Psaki said.

Russia's continued bombardment of Ukraine and Putin's raising the alert level on his country's nuclear weapons has sparked fears around the world. The poll shows the vast majority of Americans are at least somewhat concerned that the U.S. will be drawn into a war with Russia, including nearly half who are very or extremely concerned. Several respondents interviewed after the poll raised the possibility of a third world war.

There's also increasing worry about Russia's influence in the world - with 64% saying they were very or extremely concerned, up from 53% a month ago - and strong support for the U.S. sanctioning Russia and supporting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Two-thirds said they favor accepting people from Ukraine into the U.S., compared to only about 1 in 10 opposed.

Putin's decision to invade reminded Leo Martin, an 85-year-old from Council Bluffs, Iowa, of Nazi Germany entering Poland in 1939, which started World War II in Europe.

"I'm not sure if Putin is bluffing but it seems like we're going to have to push back," he said. "I didn't think he was quite as ruthless as he is. That kind of surprised me."

Americans ages 60 and older were most likely to say the U.S. should play a major role, at 58% compared with 39% of those ages 45 to 59 and 29% of those under age 45. The percentages in all three age groups rose this month from February.

The poll also found a small majority of Americans - 55% - saying the bigger priority for the U.S. in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine is "sanctioning Russia as effectively as possible, even if it damages the U.S. economy." Still, a sizeable minority - 42% - said the bigger priority is "limiting damage to the U.S. economy, even if it means sanctions on Russia are less effective."

About 7 in 10 Americans approve of economic sanctions imposed by the U.S. on Russia in general and the ban on Russian oil in particular.

"When you look at what the people of Ukraine are going through and all the upheaval over there, it's like, 'Well, we can pay a little more for gas,'" said Anne-Marie Klein, 38, from Longview, Washington.

Klein said she considered Putin a "madman" and said the U.S. had to strike the balance between pushing back against the Russian president without instigating the kind of global conflict that her two sons, ages 8 and 10, may one day have to fight. She said she believed the U.S. should play a "minor role."

"'Minor role' to me means our troops aren't fighting," she said. "It can stop there and not become nuclear."

Drake Brandon, a 23-year-old from Sacramento, California, said he was trying to find work and said many people were worried about rising gas prices and economic issues. But while Brandon also said he wanted the U.S. to have a "minor role" focusing on sanctions, he rated his level of concern about the conflict, on a 1 to 10 scale, as an 8 or 9.

"I think about it every day," he said. "Part of me thinks Putin has nothing to really lose at this point."

\_\_\_

The AP-NORC poll of 1,082 adults was conducted March 17-21 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Tens of thousands register interest as Homes for Ukraine scheme launches*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6519-XN01-JBNF-W33M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1019 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** However, concerns have been raised about red tape, safeguarding and resourcing.

**Body**

More than 150,000 people had registered their interest in the UK's [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme ahead of its launch on Friday, but concerns have been raised about how it will work in practice.

The programme 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 Britain to enter the country.

But concerns have been aired about red tape, safeguarding and resourcing, with one major charity warning the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is "unleashing chaos" with the scheme and that refugees could die before they are matched with a sponsor and can safely reach the UK.

NEW -UK individuals, charities, community groups & businesses can now record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through our new Homes for Ukraine scheme.Express an interest in becoming a sponsor now [*https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle*](https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/vbbINAz3XP*](https://t.co/vbbINAz3XP) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1503407897224622081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Labour said the programme's "excessive bureaucracy" and "DIY nature" are the greatest barriers to its success, and urged the Government to "cut unnecessary paperwork and play an active role in matching sponsors to refugees".

More than 150,000 people in Britain had registered their interest by Thursday, and refugees who have found a sponsor can apply from Friday.

Robina Qureshi, director of Positive Action in Housing, claimed the scheme is a "smokescreen" and distraction from what really needs to happen, which she says is the removal of the visa requirement for Ukrainians to come to the UK, as other European countries have done.

She accused the Government of putting charitable organisations in an "invidious" position and foisting the scheme on them without prior consultation, adding that she expects just a "trickle" of refugees to arrive through the scheme because they will have to find people to become sponsors while abroad before they can apply, and then make their own way to the UK.

She told the PA news agency: "Are some of the people going to be alive by the time the process has been gone through?

"They should be letting people in now, but the Government is doing to refugees what they've done to the Syrians and to Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust, and what they're doing is to reduce to an absolute minimum the number of refugees making their way to the UK in the midst of the worst refugee crisis since World War Two."

Positive Action in Housing, which runs Room for Refugees - the UK's longest running refugee hosting programme which has been in place since 2002 - is receiving around 40 calls and up to 150 emails an hour from Britons who want to offer accommodation to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Almost 70 Ukrainian refugee families have registered with the charity, including 60 children and several heavily pregnant women currently in Ukraine, France, Poland, Belgium and Germany.

Unless the government steps up and provides clear guidance, we risk squandering the amazing generosity of people who have offered to open their homes

Labour's Lisa Nandy

Ms Qureshi questioned how many people who have expressed an interest via the Government's website will have to withdraw because they later realise they do not have "the physical or mental room".

She said: "We do not have half a hosting program in place.

"All they've got is expressions of interest - they have not identified individuals to match them up... this is an illusion of people helping because they're distracting from the fact that they haven't lifted visa restrictions."

The Refugee Council also voiced concerns about the scheme, with its head of advocacy, Andy Hewett, saying it could be "too slow and complex" to help the most vulnerable, adding that it favours those who already have a contact in the UK, who may not necessarily be the most at risk.

Shadow levelling up and housing secretary, Lisa Nandy, welcomed the scheme's launch but said there remains a "worrying lack of engagement with local councils and charities".

She said: "They stand ready to do their job but, unless the government steps up and provides clear guidance, we risk squandering the amazing generosity of people who have offered to open their homes.

"Getting Ukrainian families here quickly is vital so they are secure and there is certainty for those welcoming them. The biggest barriers are excessive bureaucracy and the DIY nature of this scheme. The Government needs to cut unnecessary paperwork and play an active role in matching sponsors to refugees."

A spokeswoman for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities said: "We are moving as quickly as possible to ensure that those fleeing horrific persecution in Ukraine can be found the families and sponsors they need.

"The Government continues to work closely with non-governmental organisations and local government in order to speed up the process to bring Ukrainians to safety in the UK."

Meanwhile, Defence Secretary Ben Wallace announced that the UK is to deploy a medium-range missile system and 100 personnel to Poland to "protect her airspace from any further aggression by Russia".

It came as Mr Wallace accused Russia of "dirty tricks" after he and Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) were targeted with hoax calls from an impostor posing as Ukraine's [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister).

Mr Wallace, who became suspicious during a 10-minute video call on Thursday, ordered an investigation into the security breach, which has prompted serious questions about Whitehall security after Ms Patel said the same thing happened to her earlier this week.

Elsewhere, British defence intelligence analysts believe Russia is being forced to divert "large numbers" of troops to defend its supply lines rather than continuing its attacks in Ukraine.

The latest intelligence assessment published by the Ministry of Defence said: "Logistical problems continue to beset Russia's faltering invasion of Ukraine.

"Incessant Ukrainian counterattacks are forcing Russia to divert large number of troops to defend their own supply lines. This is severely limiting Russia's offensive potential."

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Alliance will take a stance on constitutional question in the future, says Long*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-1MJ1-JBNF-W3FR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 12:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 887 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Naomi Long said Northern Ireland's constitutional status was not the main priority for most people in the region.

**Body**

The Alliance Party will undoubtedly take a position on Northern Ireland's constitutional position at some point in the future, leader Naomi Long has said.

But Mrs Long insisted the constitutional question was not at the forefront of most people's minds at present, as they face a crisis-hit health service and spiralling cost-of-living pressures.

Fresh from addressing her party conference at the weekend, the East [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) MLA said any future referendum on whether [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) should remain within the UK had to be informed by facts and evidence on the consequences of a vote for a united Ireland.

The cross-community Alliance Party currently does not take a position on the constitution and designates as neither unionist or nationalist within Stormont's powersharing structures.

"The things that are pressing on people's minds, our health service, on the cost-of-living crisis, the fact that we have to deal with climate change - these are the issues that are gripping people, not the constitutional question right now," she told BBC NI's Sunday Politics show.

"And when we take a position, as undoubtedly will happen at some point in the future, it will be based on facts and evidence.

"We're not going to see a referendum and we don't want to support a referendum on Northern Ireland's future in the context of, for example, a Brexit-style referendum where you promise everything to everybody, and everybody comes away disappointed.

"So, we've got to actually focus on the things that matter to people and I think what we've got to do also is respect the fact that for many people in our community, and for a growing number, it isn't the thing that defines their politics, and we've got to adapt our politics to respect that."

In her conference speech on Saturday, Mrs Long said a big result for the Alliance Party in Northern Ireland's Assembly election in May could herald the end of [*Stormont*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/stormont) political system based on binary division.

She stressed the need for major changes to structures that are currently based on the community designation system that effectively hands blocs of unionists or nationalists a veto.

On Sunday, Mrs Long said Stormont could no longer function if one party was able to halt effective governance if it decided to "take their ball and go home".

Her comments come amid the latest powersharing crisis at Stormont.

The Executive imploded last month when the [*DUP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dup) withdrew First Minister Paul Givan from the administration as part of its campaign of protest against Brexit's Northern Ireland Protocol.

The move automatically ousted Sinn Fein deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill from office and removed the Executive's ability to take any significant decisions.

Other ministers, such as Mrs Long, remain in post but are constrained in their ability to shape major policies.

There remains uncertainty whether a new administration can be formed on the other side of the May 5 election, with the DUP making clear it cannot be business as usual until [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) barriers on Irish Sea trade are removed.

"We need to make sure that in future assemblies and executives that no party can take their ball and go home, and leave the rest of us in this kind of situation," Mrs Long told BBC NI on Sunday.

"I think what we do need to do is rebalance the playing field. If the DUP don't want to be part of government, they have a right to be, but if they don't want to be that shouldn't mean we can't have a government, and the same should go for every other party.

"If parties want to walk away from government, that's their choice, which they should answer for, but they shouldn't be able to hold the rest of us hostage."

Mrs Long branded Mr Givan's withdrawal as first minister as "scandalous" given the problems facing people in Northern Ireland.

The move means the Executive is unable to agree a three-year budget and Sinn Fein Finance Minister Conor Murphy says it also means an additional £300 million funding pot earmarking for the coming financial year cannot be spent.

The DUP disputes this assertion and has called on the other Stormont parties to work together to find a way to allocate the money despite the lack of functioning executive.

"I suppose we can draw some comfort from the fact that for the first time in a long time, the DUP's answer isn't 'no', because that is unfortunately part of the problem," said the Alliance leader.

"They're the ones who have walked away from government and left us in this legally ambiguous position where we have ministers in office but not in power, where we can do things that we've already been doing, but we can't do new things."

She added: "I really think it's scandalous given the pressures that people are facing, given the pressures on our health service, given the pressures on the cost-of-living crisis, and given the fact that this money could be lost to us if we don't spend it, I think it's scandalous that the DUP is standing in the way of us doing that."

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**



[*Britons urged to open their doors to Ukrainians as fighting continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-T951-DY4H-K397-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:19 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1025 words

**Byline:** David Hughes

**Highlight:** Russian and Ukrainian officials held further peace talks, but the death toll continued to mount on Monday.

**Body**

British householders were urged to throw open their doors to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** as the civilian death toll continued to rise in the conflict.

The UK [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) set out details of a sponsorship scheme allowing individuals and organisations to offer a home to refugees fleeing the fighting amid fears of a wider confrontation between Russia and Nato.

Communities Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) announced the "Homes for Ukraine" scheme as the Government scrambled to make it easier for people to come to the UK following widespread criticism of its response so far.

Almost three million people have fled Ukraine since [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ordered the Russian invasion and civilians continued to find themselves caught up in the fighting on Monday.

Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) and his Latvian counterpart Arturs Krisjanis Karins agreed during bilateral discussions in Downing Street that Mr Putin had made a "terrible and unforgivable mistake" in attacking Ukraine.

A No 10 spokeswoman said the pair called for the Kremlin's "indiscriminate attacks on innocent civilians" to cease.

It came after a Russian airstrike in central Kyiv killed one person and wounded six others, Ukrainian officials said, while two people were killed in the northern Obolonskyi district of the capital when artillery fire hit an apartment building.

There have been 1,663 civilian casualties since the invasion, the UK's Ministry of Defence said, citing United Nations figures - although the true statistic may be far higher - with "indiscriminate Russian shelling and air attacks... causing widespread destruction".

The UN's refugee agency believes more than 2.8 million people have left Ukraine in search of safety.

The Russians claimed 20 civilians were killed in Donetsk by a ballistic missile launched by the Ukrainian forces.

Ukrainian and Russian officials held further peace talks by video link and discussions are set to continue on Tuesday.

(4/4) As with previous such estimates, the true figures are likely to be significantly higher and will continue to climb as long as Russian operations continue.- Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1503254805405437955?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In the Commons, Mr Gove said the Ukrainian people were "the victims of savage, indiscriminate, unprovoked aggression" and "their courage under fire and their determination to resist inspires our total admiration".Previously only Ukrainians with family members already settled in the UK could come.But under the new scheme, sponsors can provide a route for Ukrainians without family ties to come to the UK.Mr Gove said "in recognition of their generosity" a tax-free monthly payment of £350 will be provided to people for each family they look after.Sponsors can be of any nationality as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months.NEW -UK individuals, charities, community groups & businesses can now record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through our new Homes for Ukraine scheme.Express an interest in becoming a sponsor now [*https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle*](https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/vbbINAz3XP*](https://t.co/vbbINAz3XP) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1503407897224622081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

A new website will allow people to record their interest ahead of phase one of the scheme opening for applications for Friday.

The potential for the conflict in Ukraine to trigger a wider clash between Russia and Nato was underlined over the weekend with a strike close to the border with Poland.

Ukraine President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) warned it was "only a matter of time" before the alliance was struck following a Russian attack on a base less than 15 miles from the border with Nato member Poland.

Health Secretary Sajid Javid said he believed a direct attack on a Nato member was still "very unlikely", but warned it would trigger a response from the alliance, which has a policy of mutual defence.

Mr Javid told BBC's Today programme: "We've made it very clear to the Russians even before the start of this conflict.

"Even if a single Russian toecap steps into Nato territory, then it will be considered an act of war."

The attack on the Yavoriv base, which has previously been used by Nato to train Ukrainian soldiers, was one of the western-most targets struck by Russia during the invasion.

Mr Zelensky, who spoke to Mr Johnson on Sunday, used the attack near the Polish frontier to renew his call for Nato allies to "close" the skies above Ukraine.

Downing Street said the strike so close to a Nato member is "deeply concerning" and that the UK is seeking to build the "broadest possible coalition" against the Russian aggression.

"These strikes are deeply concerning," the Prime Minister's official spokesman said. "We want everyone in the international community to condemn Putin's barbaric acts."

In other developments:

- Justice Secretary Dominic Raab visited The Hague on Monday to offer UK legal expertise and technical support to the International Criminal Court as it considers allegations of war crimes.

- The UK will supply Ukraine with more than 500 portable generators to provide energy for essential services, including at hospitals and shelters.

- NHS England will provide treatment for 21 Ukrainian children with cancer forced to flee Ukraine.

- The Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Bill is expected to clear Parliament and become law, paving the way for dozens more oligarchs to be sanctioned.

- Protesters occupied a mansion belonging to sanctioned oligarch Oleg Deripaska in Belgravia, London.

- The Government is exploring whether properties linked to sanctioned Russians could be used to house refugees.

The escalation of the war in western Ukraine came as Mr Johnson was hosting leaders from the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), an alliance of northern European nations.

Representatives from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway were due to dine with Mr Johnson at his Chequers country retreat on Monday night before talks in London on Tuesday.

During his call with Mr Zelensky on Sunday, Mr Johnson "said the UK would continue to pursue more options for bolstering Ukraine's self-defence" including at the JEF meeting.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Stopping Gazprom today 'would end war tomorrow', XR Ukraine founder says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651J-8GT1-F072-41K6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 19, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 16

**Length:** 934 words

**Byline:** ZOE TIDMAN

**Body**

The war in Ukraine could be stopped "tomorrow" by causing disruption to Gazprom, the founder of the Ukrainian branch of Extinction Rebellion (XR) has said, calling on climate protesters worldwide to demonstrate at the Russian energy giant's offices.

The climate activist, who wanted to go only by his first name Grisha, told The Independent it was a "problem" to be expressing solidarity with Ukraine while still funnelling money into the invading country through oil and gas imports, and said Russian fossil fuels should be "blocked".

He is one of millions who have been displaced by the Russian invasion which started just over three weeks ago. The war has decimated several cities and is reported to have killed thousands of civilians.

Speaking to The Independent from Ukraine, Grisha said his whole country was mobilising to resist the attack. His contribution is not joining the fight on the front line, but rather stepping up the battle against fossil fuels. "I am not an army man. I don't know how to fight or shoot with (a) gun," he said. "We try to focus on different things other people can do."

The climate activist said he wanted to see more civil disobedience across Europe targeting Russian fossil fuels, which could include XR groups and other protesters rallying outside Gazprom offices and preventing people from going to work. "We believe that if Gazprom stops today, tomorrow the war ends," the 38-year-old said.

Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas company by production, wields considerable influence both in Russia and beyond as it supplies around 40 per cent of Europe's gas. Its subsidiaries have offices across the continent, including several in the UK. Other companies have moved to distance themselves from the Russian state-owned energy firm since the war in Ukraine started, including Shell, which cut ties with Gazprom earlier this month.

In the UK, the health secretary has reportedly told hospitals to stop using gas from the energy giant. Germany blocked a new Gazprom pipeline in response to Russian aggression days before the war started. Europe has so far stopped short of banning Russian gas imports. But the war in Ukraine has sparked even more alarm over the world's reliance on fossil fuels.

As well as its impact on the climate crisis, world leaders have been expressing concern over how this money ends up being spent in the Russian context. Earlier this week, a European Union environment chief said the bloc's dependence on Russian fossil fuels was financing a "war chest".

US president Joe Biden banned Russian oil and gas imports last week over the war in Ukraine, saying it would help to serve a blow to Vladimir Putin's "war machine". Concerns have also been raised in the UK - where Russian oil is being phased out - that the public could inadvertently be funding the war by filling up cars or paying energy bills.

Grisha - as translated by a fellow Ukrainian XR activist, Nastya - said his group wanted to encourage the global community to protest against fossil fuels as the war wages on and had created slogans and posters for this, although it was difficult to work on activism with air raid sirens frequently going off and attacks happening in the background.

The 38-year-old XR Ukraine founder said it was important to see groups around the world helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but that this was only a sticking plaster. "A lot of people in Ukraine want to stay and they don't want to leave and they want to come back to their countries. So it's also very important to stop the source of the issue, not the outcome," he was translated as saying.

Svitlana Krakovska, a Ukrainian scientist involved in the most recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, told The Guardian fossil fuels were driving both the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine. "Burning oil, gas and coal is causing warming and impacts we need to adapt to. And Russia sells these resources and uses the money to buy weapons. Other countries are dependent upon these fossil fuels, they don't make themselves free of them," she said. "This is a fossil fuel war. It's clear we cannot continue to live this way, it will destroy our civilisation."

The UK said last week it would no longer import Russian oil by the end of the year and was exploring options to reduce gas imports. Meanwhile, the European Union said it was planning to phase out its dependency on Russian fossil fuels by 2027.

Grisha told The Independent he thought it was "very strange" to see the EU slapping sanctions on Russia, yet still paying what he claimed was billions for Russian gas and oil since the war started. According to a tracker run by campaign group Europe Beyond Coal, the bloc has paid Russia more than Euro 17bn for fossil fuels since the invasion was launched on 24 February.

An EU official told The Independent it has launched an unprecedented sanctions response over the war in Ukraine and had just adopted a fourth package, which included a "far-reaching" ban on new investment on Russian energy.

"It's working, we see the effect on the Russian economy already - the stock market is closed, the rouble has lost half of its value and companies are fleeing the country," they said. "Some transactions are still needed, though, to ensure the supply of certain energy products into the EU."

Gazprom and the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy were approached for comment. The head of Gazprom has called on its 500,000 employees to rally around Mr Putin to preserve Russia as a great power in the face of foreign attempts to break her, according to a letter published on Thursday.

**Load-Date:** March 19, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The threat of a nuclear war won't deter power-mad Putin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-407X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 31

**Length:** 912 words

**Body**

For all of my 70 years, we have been sold the line that having a nuclear deterrent is the way of securing world peace; that the threat of mutual assured destruction (MAD) would be enough to prevent anyone from deploying a nuclear weapon. The war in Ukraine has shown how wrong we were. The possession of a nuclear arsenal allows amoral aggressors to use conventional weapons - including chemical ones - to obliterate innocent people while the world watches and does not intervene for fear of the nuclear nightmare that may ensue.

Let's not forget that Putin has been testing the west's capacity to respond for years - with incursions in Chechnya, Georgia, Crimea, Syria and Salisbury - and been emboldened every time we backed off, granting him the freedom to invade Ukraine. Having got so far without meeting meaningful resistance, he will know that if he is under pressure, the use of nuclear weapons is something he could deploy before anyone stays his hand.

The problem with MAD is that it assumes that those who have the power to use nuclear weapons are rational and sane human beings that value human life. History tells us otherwise; that power-crazed, fundamentalist dictators will rise to positions of supreme power and that we should act uncompromisingly against them before their power and influence takes us all to the edge of annihilation. One hopes it's not too late to learn but our capacity for self-delusion does not give much cause for hope.

Graham Powell Cirencester

<strong>Tolstoy</strong>

Putin justifies his invasion of Ukraine on the spurious grounds of seeking to liberate its people from a fascist government that's a threat to Russia. He might like to reflect on the words of another Russian, Leo Tolstoy, from his book What Then Must We Do?

They are: "I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by all possible means - except by getting off his back."

Roger Hinds Surrey

<strong>Rushing to the rescue</strong>

London homeowners who have been burgled would have been so encouraged by the heartening sight of 10 police vans and cars and over 30 officers rushing to respond to the illegal occupation of oligarch Oleg Deripaska's mansion in Belgravia on Monday.

I would, however, guess that victims of housebreaking - who have probably waited in vain for a swift response from the police - would more likely have been surprised and somewhat miffed to see Dame Cressida's finest rushing to the rescue with such enthusiasm, when a Russian oligarch was the victim.

Patrick Moore Norwich

<strong>Callous and incompetent</strong>

Seeing the kind and warm welcome given to exhausted ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at Dublin airport, I felt utterly mortified. We on the other side of the Irish Sea have been humiliated by our horrible government in the eyes of the world. I hope the world realises the British people are not any less moved by the Ukrainians' plight than anyone else, and are anxious to help and welcome them in their desperate trouble.

Michael Gove can posture angrily and display false rage about claims of British callousness as much as he likes, but as we are not cold-hearted, neither are we stupid - and it is the government of which he is a member that is callous, incompetent and in hoc to their hard-right contingent. They have shamed us.

Penny Little Oxfordshire

<strong>Big money</strong>

There are, seemingly, an ever-expanding number of "oligarchs" but, because of his profile and connections with the all-consuming national game of football, much of the focus is on Roman Abramovich and, quite rightly by association (no pun intended), Chelsea FC. This was all talked about when he was allowed to buy Chelsea way back when, but brushed under the carpet because of the total thrall of money, wherever it comes from and however it was made.

Today, I see stories about the corrupt nature that some of this money may have been made from (like it was never known until now!) including the "cheap" purchase of oil companies, as the USSR disintegrated, for millions which were then sold back to the state for billions. The intimation that this was elaborate fraud stands, but I wonder where the millions came from to make the original purchases to eventually make the billions? I was one of those, 19 years ago, who was queasy and wondering about this money. Initial thoughts then were: this is a Russian with Russian money, so why didn't he use his largesse on a Russian football club?

Apparently, he investigated the "purchase" of other football clubs before Chelsea such as Barcelona and Real Madrid, but those clubs are owned by the fans, so it wasn't ever a goer. Undoubtedly, his period at Chelsea has brought enormous success and that is great for the supporters, but it has come at a price for English football. Overall inflation for a start but the opening of the doors to other dubious ownership "models" - Saudi Arabia and UAE (currently devastating Yemen) - and that's only two. Lots of big money is dodgy and, it seems it's all welcome in the UK.

John Moughton Manningtree, Essex

<strong>I wish I could host</strong>

I am pleased to see that the UK is finally doing more to help the Ukrainian people. It's a disgrace what is happening there, and I wish I could become a host but I only have a small house and don't have the room. I applaud the Ukraine people - the fighting spirit they have shown is a lesson to us all.

Annette Langley Address supplied

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 6:30 a.m.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6509-ND71-DY4H-K4G1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 13, 2022 Sunday 11:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1079 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EST. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - A [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) airstrike on a military training base in western [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) killed at least nine people and wounded 57, a local official said Sunday. The assault brought the war closer to the border with [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) after a senior Russian diplomat warned that [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) considered foreign shipments of military equipment to Ukraine "legitimate targets." By Msyylav Chernov and Yuras Karmanau. SENT: 1,340 words, photos, video. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-ENERGY-PRICES - [*Italian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italian) paper mills that make everything from pizza boxes to furniture packaging ground to a halt as Russia's war in Ukraine has sent natural gas prices skyrocketing. And it's not just paper. Italian steel mills, likewise, turned off electric furnaces last week. And fishermen, facing huge spikes in oil prices, stayed in port, mending nets instead of casting them. By Business Writer Colleen Barry. SENT: 980 words, photos.

UKRAINE-WAR-JEWISH-REFUGEES - Many Jews are among the more than 2.5 million refugees leaving Ukraine. International Jewish organizations have mobilized to help, working with local Jewish communities in Poland, Romania, Moldova and elsewhere to organize food, shelter, medical care and other assistance. The reality that so many Jews have joined the mass civilian exodus from Ukraine underlines the deceitfulness of Russian propaganda, which claims Russia is de-Nazifying Ukraine. By Vanessa Gera. SENT: 970 words, photos.

VIRUS OUTBREAK-CHINA - The number of new coronavirus cases in an outbreak in China's northeast has tripled and authorities stepped up anti-disease controls by suspending bus service to Shanghai and ordering residents of another city to stay at home. By Joe McDonald. SENT: 390 words, photos.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-GAGAUZIA - 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. SENT: 520 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-EX-PLAYER-HELPS - Sergiy Stakhovsky is a recently retired professional tennis player from Ukraine who has left his wife and three young children at home in Hungary to back to his birthplace to help how he can during Russia's invasion. SENT: 760 words, photos.

ITALY-REFUGEES-BUS-ACCIDENT - A bus carrying about 50 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** overturned on a major highway in northern Italy at dawn, killing one person, Italian firefighters say. SENT: 180 words, photo.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-DAY-IN-PHOTOS - Day 17: Images of destruction and Ukrainian defiance. SENT: 100 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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MASSAGE-BUSINESS-SHOOTINGS-COMMEMORATION - Nearly a year after eight people were killed in a mass shooting at three Atlanta-area spas, many of them women of Asian descent, community members came together Saturday to remember the victims at a memorial tribute. SENT: 420 words, photos.

OBIT-SALLY-SCHMITT - Sally Schmitt, who founded The French Laundry restaurant in California wine country and helped launch the region's farm-to-table movement, has died. She was 90. SENT: 360 words.

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WASHINGTON/POLITICS

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SESSION-ENDS-WEST-VIRGINIA - The West Virginia Legislature's Republican supermajority failed to pass a controversial bill restricting how race is taught in public schools because they missed a midnight deadline in the final moments of the 2022 session, a state Senate spokesperson confirms. SENT: 760 words.

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NATIONAL

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NEW-YORK-MUSEUM-STABBING - A man stabbed two employees multiple times inside the Museum of Modern Art in New York on Saturday afternoon, leaping over a reception desk to attack them after he was denied entrance for previous incidents of disorderly conduct, authorities said. SENT: 480 words, photos.

CHILD'S BODY FOUND - A manhunt is under way for a man wanted in the death of a child whose body was found inside a California home during the search for a missing 8-year-old girl. SENT: 220 words, photos.

JOPLIN-OFFICERS SHOT - The body of a Missouri police officer who was shot along with two other officers earlier this week has been transported to a funeral home after his organs were donated, the Joplin Police Department announced. SENT: 290 words.

OBIT-TRACI BRAXTON - Singer Traci Braxton, who was featured with her family in the reality television series "Braxton Family Values," has died at age 50. SENT: 200 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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MALAYSIA-POLITICS - Malaysian Prime Minister Ismail Sabri's Malay party has defeated its allies in the ruling party and the opposition to score a landslide victory in a second state election that could presage early national polls. SENT: 490 words, photos.

IRAN-US DATE STABBING - A woman stabbed her date whom she had met online in retaliation for the 2020 death of an Iranian military leader killed in an American drone strike, police say. SENT: 310 words, photos.

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SPORTS

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BBO-SPRING-TRAINING-BEGINS - Pitchers, catchers and everybody else are due at spring training on Sunday for the first official day of preseason training after Major League Baseball's 99-day lockout. It'll be the first day in uniform for new Texas Rangers infielders Corey Seager and Marcus Semien, a chance for the Cleveland Guardians to break in gear with their new logo and a reason for fans everywhere to rejoice after a longer winter than usual. SENT: 780 words, photos.

BBO--NATIONAL LEAGUE-DHs - The designated hitter has permanently made its way to the National League nearly 50 years after it debuted in the American League for the 1973 season. That could be good news in free agency for several players like Nick Castellanos and Kyle Schwarber, who are awesome with the bat but just OK with the glove. SENT: 650 words, photo.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Vincent K. Willis can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** March 13, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UN: 1.5 million refugees from Ukraine worst post-WWII crisis*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XW-1BX1-JBNF-W549-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 6:35 PM GMT

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**Length:** 933 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Yevgen Chornomordenko took off with a sprint when the Ukrainian father of two saw the GPS coordinates from his wife's cellphone draw nearer to the border crossing into Poland

**Body**

The Ukrainian father of two took off with a sprint when he saw the GPS coordinates from his wife's cellphone draw nearer to the border crossing into Poland.

Yevgen Chornomordenko had been waiting for 11 days on the Polish side of the border for his wife, Alina, and two children to arrive from the Ukrainian capital, which had woken up to Russian shelling on Feb. 24.

War had broken out at home just days after his arrival in the Polish city of Wroclow, near Germany, for a job installing solar panels.

"I never believed war would start,'' Chornomordenko said, as he checked the GPS position of his arriving family.

Nearby, the U.N. high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi, visited the same Medyka border crossing, proclaiming the number of refugees leaving [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) the fastest-growing humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. In just 11 days, 1.5 million people had sought safety in neighboring countries.

Just moments after the U.N. official spoke, Chornomordenko's wife and two children made the crossing themselves, in a small white [*Kia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kia) , which Alina had driven across Ukraine from Kyiv, in normal times an eight-hour drive.

He lifted 4-year-old son [*David*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david) onto his shoulders, and cradled the baby, 8-month-old Sofia, in his arms, looking lovingly at the tiny face, murmuring, "so beautiful."

"I am so grateful,'' he said.

Asked if he would return to Ukraine to fight, Chornomordenko said that for now his priority was to find a safe place for his family to stay. He remains worried about his brother, a charity worker, and retired parents back in Kyiv, trading frequent messages with them as he awaited his family.

"I feel pity for the situation. I know it is very difficult for the people that are still there,'' he said.

The number of refugees continued unabated Sunday, even as humanitarian corridors meant to ease the flight of refugees collapsed as quickly as they were agreed upon inside Ukraine.

Grandi said the humanitarian corridors also were critical to allowing basic goods to arrive to those in need and to evacuate the most vulnerable.

"But what is needed really is a cease-fire, the end of hostilities, because that's the only way to stop this tragedy,'' Grandi said.

The sentiments were echoed by Pope Francis, who made a powerful appeal for peace at the Vatican Sunday, imploring "an end to the armed attacks, and that negotiations prevail."

In a highly unusual move, the pontiff said he had dispatched two Cardinals to the war-ravaged country, signaling that the "Holy See is ready to do everything in the service of this peace."

"In Ukraine, rivers of blood and tears are flowing," the pope said during his traditional Sunday blessing. "This is not just a military operation, but a war that is spreading a lot of destruction and misery. The victims continue to become more numerous, just like the people who are fleeing."

One 11-year-old boy made it all the way to Slovakia from the city of Zaporozhzhia, the site of Ukraine's largest nuclear power plant taken by Russian troops that caught fire after a building was hit with a projectile. The boy's frightened mother sent him on the 1,000-kilometer (620-mile) journey alone by train to find relatives, staying behind to care for her sick mother who can't be moved.

"He came with a plastic bag, passport and a telephone number written on his hand, all alone," according to a statement by Slovakia's Interior Ministry, who hailed the boy as "a true hero."

Volunteers took care of him, took him to a warm shelter and gave him food and drinks, and later reunited him with family in Bratislava.

In a video provided by Slovak police, the mother thanked the Slovak government and police for taking care of her son.

"People with big hearts live in your small country. Please, save our Ukrainian children,'' said the mother, identified as Yulia Volodymyrivna Pisecka.

In Romania, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** gathered at the Saints Peter and Paul Christian Orthodox [*Church*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/church) in Suceava, to pray for peace. They were welcomed by Rev. Mihai Maghiar who is himself, Ukrainian-Romanian.

"The first thing that we do as servants of the Church is talk to them, help them trust again, and understand that life doesn't end at the Ukrainian border, or any other border," said Maghiar, who has seen many refugees come by his church since the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24.

Oksana Oliinykova sought strength in the church. She is bringing her daughter to the Netherlands, where friends have offered her a place to say. But a journalist who has covered the brutalities of war, Oliinykova is planning to go back to Ukraine, where her father and son remained to fight.

"And we can't help with anything. It's scary. It's scary to understand that our boys, who go to fight have nothing. We can't provide bulletproof vests and helmet," she said.

Text messages from friends tell her just how desperate the situation at home has become. "Please help!" they ask. "We are without electricity for three days. The (Russians) are close, we can't leave, we don't even have blankets, we can't feed our children," the write.

For now, Oliinykova prays.

"As a Christian it's very hard for me to hate," said Oliinykova, who said she has relatives in Russia.

"And I know that they are also shocked. I don't know how could I hate them. They are also sending young boys (to the war). How to get through all of this?" she asked. "I think we need less hate and more love."

\_\_\_

Karel Janicek reported from Prague, and Renata Brito from Suceava, Romania.

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

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*21 Ukrainian children flown to UK for cancer treatment as refugee scheme expanded*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-4M61-DY4H-K33W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 8:42 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 968 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson says the UK will 'pursue more options for bolstering Ukraine's self-defence' after an attack on a military base near the Polish border.

**Body**

The UK has announced it is providing cancer treatment for 21 seriously ill Ukrainian children as [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) were urged to open their homes to people fleeing the war.

The children and their immediate family members arrived from Poland on Sunday evening and will be assessed before being sent to NHS hospitals to continue their care.

Announcing their arrival, Health Secretary [*Sajid Javid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sajid-javid) said: "I am proud that the UK is offering lifesaving medical care to these Ukrainian children, who have been forced out of their home country by the Russian invasion while undergoing medical treatment."

I can confirm that 21 very ill Ukrainian children with cancer have landed safely in UK this evening. [*@NHSEngland*](https://twitter.com/NHSEngland?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) will now ensure they get life-saving care in safety.Hugely grateful to everyone involved in helping get these children and their families here.- Sajid Javid (@sajidjavid) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/sajidjavid/status/1503115750009094145?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The children's arrival came after a Russian attack on a military training base near Yavoriv in western Ukraine, less than 15 miles (24km) from the border with Poland, a Nato member.During a call with Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) on Sunday, Mr Johnson "said the UK would continue to pursue more options for bolstering Ukraine's self-defence, working with partners including at Tuesday's meeting of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF) in London", a No 10 spokesman said.Representatives from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway will attend the summit of the northern European security coalition.Putin's barbaric actions murdering Brent Renaud and other innocent civilians are testing not just Ukraine but all of humanity. Speaking to President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) I assured him that we will continue to do all that we can to bring an end to this disastrous conflict.- Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1503105074444349444?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Johnson said Russian president Vladimir Putin's "barbaric actions" were "testing not just Ukraine but all of humanity".People keen to offer refugees shelter in the UK can register their interest in sponsoring Ukrainians through the Government's new humanitarian scheme from Monday.Levelling Up Secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) has said the process of matching Britons with people fleeing the conflict will take place from Friday, while he expects the first refugees to use the new route will make their way to the UK by the end of the week.Tory MP Danny Kruger told the BBC the scheme would provide ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with "friends" as well as support."When a family arrives, often what they really need is friends. They need people to introduce them to the area, to take them to the church or show them where the playgroup is," the MP for Devizes said."These aren't services that the local council is always best able to provide, but where there's a need for professional support - particularly if there's counselling or training for job opportunity - then we need professional services." Meanwhile, the UK will supply Ukraine with more than 500 portable generators to provide energy for essential services, including at hospitals and shelters.Mr Johnson said they will help ease the power cuts currently crippling the country.During his call with Mr Zelensky, the men also "condemned the murders of Brent Renaud and countless innocent Ukrainians, and the abduction of the mayors of Dniprorudne and Melitopol", Downing Street said.It was reported on Sunday that Mr Renaud, an acclaimed US filmmaker, was killed after Russian forces opened fire on his vehicle near the Ukrainian capital Kyiv.Today, Russian war criminals abducted another democratically elected Ukrainian mayor, head of Dniprorudne Yevhen Matveyev. Getting zero local support, invaders turn to terror. I call on all states & international organizations to stop Russian terror against Ukraine and democracy. [*pic.twitter.com/jEPTBTLikY*](https://t.co/jEPTBTLikY) - Dmytro Kuleba (@DmytroKuleba) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1502945209159761923?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mr Zelensky has accused Russia of kidnapping the mayor of Melitopol, a port city in the south of Ukraine.And Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba tweeted on Sunday that "Russian war criminals" had "abducted another democratically elected Ukrainian mayor, head of Dniprorudne Yevhen Matveyev".Foreign Secretary [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss) said the UK was "doing all we can to support including defensive weapons and humanitarian aid" after speaking to her Ukrainian counterpart Mr Kuleba.Good to speak to [*@DmytroKuleba*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). The bravery of the Ukrainian leadership and people is immense. is doing all we can to support including defensive weapons and humanitarian aid.- Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 13, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1503103295245725698?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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Mr Gove also announced that local authority areas would be entitled to more than £10,000 per Ukrainian refugee using the fresh route to the UK.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK offers sanctuary to sick Ukrainian children as refugee scheme expanded*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-15G1-JBNF-W078-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 1:55 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 968 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** Boris Johnson says the UK will 'pursue more options for bolstering Ukraine's self-defence' after an attack on a military base near the Polish border.

**Body**

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**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The threat of nuclear war won't deter delusional autocrats like Putin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-Y2V1-JBNF-W17K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 1:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** LETTERS,VOICES; Version:2

**Length:** 1039 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**

For all of my 70 years, we have been sold the line that having a nuclear deterrent is the way of securing world peace; that the threat of mutual assured destruction (MAD) would be enough to prevent anyone from deploying a nuclear weapon.

The war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has shown how wrong we were. The possession of a nuclear arsenal allows amoral aggressors to use conventional weapons - including chemical ones - to obliterate innocent people while the world watches and does not intervene for fear of the nuclear nightmare that may ensue.

Let's not forget that Putin has been testing the west's capacity to respond for years - with incursions in Chechnya, Georgia, Crimea, Syria and Salisbury - and been emboldened every time we backed off, granting him the freedom to invade Ukraine.

Having got so far without meeting meaningful resistance, he will know that if he is under pressure, the use of [*nuclear weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nuclear-weapons) is something he could deploy before anyone stays his hand.

The problem with MAD is that it assumes that those who have the power to use nuclear weapons are rational and sane human beings that value human life.

History tells us otherwise; that power-crazed, fundamentalist dictators will rise to positions of supreme power and that we should act uncompromisingly against them before their power and influence takes us all to the edge of annihilation. One hopes it's not too late to learn but our capacity for self-delusion does not give much cause for hope.

Graham Powell

Cirencester

Tolstoy

Putin justifies his invasion of Ukraine on the spurious grounds of seeking to liberate its people from a fascist government that's a threat to Russia.

He might like to reflect on the words of another Russian, Leo Tolstoy, from his book What Then Must We Do?

They are: "I sit on a man's back, choking him and making him carry me, and yet assure myself and others that I am very sorry for him and wish to ease his lot by all possible means - except by getting off his back."

Roger Hinds

Surrey

Rushing to the rescue

London homeowners who have been burgled would have been so encouraged by the heartening sight of 10 police vans and cars and over 30 officers rushing to respond to the illegal occupation of oligarch Oleg Deripaska's mansion in Belgravia yesterday.

I would, however, guess that victims of housebreaking - who have probably waited in vain for a swift response from the police - would more likely have been surprised and somewhat miffed to see Dame Cressida's finest rushing to the rescue with such enthusiasm, when a Russian oligarch was the victim.

Patrick Moore

Norwich

Callous and incompetent

Seeing the kind and warm welcome given to exhausted [***Ukrainian******refugees*** *at Dublin airport*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-ireland-refugees-welcome-b2035634.html) , I felt utterly mortified.

We on the other side of the Irish Sea have been humiliated by our horrible government in the eyes of the world. I hope the world realises the British people are not any less moved by the Ukrainians' plight than anyone else, and are anxious to help and welcome them in their desperate trouble.

Michael Gove can posture angrily and display false rage about claims of British callousness as much as he likes, but as we are not cold-hearted, neither are we stupid - and it is the government of which he is a member that is callous, incompetent and in hoc to their hard-right contingent. They have shamed us.

Penny Little

Oxfordshire

Big money

There are, seemingly, an ever-expanding number of "oligarchs" but, because of his profile and connections with the all-consuming national game of football, much of the focus is on [*Roman Abramovich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roman-abramovich) and, quite rightly by association (no pun intended), Chelsea FC.

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 was all talked about when he was allowed to buy Chelsea way back when, but brushed under the carpet because of the total thrall of money, wherever it comes from and however it was made.

Today, I see stories about the corrupt nature that some of this money may have been made from (like it was never known until now!) including the "cheap" purchase of oil companies, as the USSR disintegrated, for millions which were then sold back to the state for billions.

The intimation that this was elaborate fraud stands, but I wonder where the millions came from to make the original purchases to eventually make the billions?

I was one of those, 19 years ago, who was queasy and wondering about this money. Initial thoughts then were: this is a Russian with Russian money, so why didn't he use his largesse on a Russian football club?

Apparently, he investigated the "purchase" of other football clubs before Chelsea such as Barcelona and Real Madrid, but those clubs are owned by the fans, so it wasn't ever a goer.

Undoubtedly, his period at Chelsea has brought enormous success and that is great for the supporters, but it has come at a price for English football. Overall inflation for a start but the opening of the doors to other dubious ownership "models" - Saudi Arabia and UAE (currently devastating Yemen) - and that's only two. Lots of big money is dodgy and, it seems it's all welcome in the UK.

John Moughton

Manningtree, Essex

I wish I could host

I am pleased to see that the UK is finally doing more to help the Ukrainian people.

It's a disgrace what is happening there, and I wish I could become a host but I only have a small house and don't have the room. I applaud the Ukraine people - the fighting spirit they have shown is a lesson to us all.

Annette Langley

Address supplied

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*In Ukraine, female war reporters build on legacy of pioneers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-T951-DY4H-K39D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:22 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 915 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The female journalists covering Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine owe a debt to the work of their 20th-century predecessors

**Body**

Clarissa Ward interrupted her live TV report on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to help a distraught older man, then a woman, down a steep and explosion-mangled path, gently urging them on in their language.

A day later, Lynsey Addario, a photographer for The New York Times, captured a grim image of a Russian mortar attack's immediate outcome: the bodies of a mother and her two children crumpled on a road, amid their suitcase, backpacks and a pet carrier.

The memorable reports illustrate both the skill and gutsiness of female journalists serving as eyewitnesses to Russia's brutal invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and the way their presence has changed the nature of war reporting.

They cover the tactics of war, but give equal measure to its toll.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) are so exhausted, they can barely walk," Ward told viewers in her report. "It's just an awful, awful scene. And they're the lucky ones."

The author of "You Don't Belong Here," a 2021 book that profiles three pioneering women who covered the Vietnam War, said there's "absolutely no doubt that the reporting is what I would call more humane, looking at the human side of war."

Elizabeth Becker argues that Frances FitzGerald of the U.S., Kate Webb of Australia and Catherine Leroy of France were foundational to modern war reporting. Arriving in Southeast Asia on their own dime, without a staff job and little or no journalism experience, they broke the male grip on war reporting with daring and innovation.

Traditionally, "the coverage was the battlefield, which is important," said award-winning journalist Becker, a Cambodian war correspondent in the 1970s. She said it took newcomer FitzGerald to ask, "'OK, what does this mean in terms of the Vietnamese and the villages?'"

[*War reporting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war-reporting) is "a sense of mission, it's a sense of purpose, it's a sense of being able to tell a story," said Christiane Amanpour, the London-born chief international anchor for CNN. "And women are really very good at it, it seems."

It's also a matter of logic, said [*Holly Williams*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/holly-williams) , the Istanbul-based correspondent for CBS News on assignment in Ukraine.

"I'm acutely aware of the fact that if you don't tell women's stories, you're missing at least half of the picture," said the Australian-born Williams, who has reported on conflicts in Asia and the Middle East.

Ward, who has hopscotched across those regions, worked for CBS News prior to joining CNN and, before that, was based in Moscow and Beijing for ABC News.

"Often women do have a different perspective on war, and for a long time that was not really at the forefront of a lot of coverage," Ward said. She strives to include "the humanity behind the story, the experience of ordinary people who are living in war zones. To me, that is equally as important as the military component."

The prominence of TV correspondents and the reach of their outlets adds to their impact. Oprah Winfrey offered online praise of network reporters "risking their lives to show the world the truth."

Many male colleagues also contribute nuanced reporting, as ABC News veteran Martha Raddatz and others noted. But Raddatz recalls a not-so-distant time when men tended to "love the equipment, love the airplanes."

Ward and and other female journalists routinely tip their cap to their predecessors, including FitzGerald, and praise recent trailblazers, including Amanpour.

"I think my generation and myself, we were perhaps the last line of the rare woman foreign correspondent," Amanpour said. In every form of media it's "exploded into a very female friendly profession."

But parity has yet to be fully or widely achieved. Ward said that the growing number of female TV correspondents belies what she described as "a fairly male-dominated profession in general."

"Don't forget, the person in front of the camera is one person. Then you have, for TV, four people holding the camera, behind the camera, and most of them are still men," she said.

In U.S. journalism overall, men retain a numerical advantage over women even in a changing media industry, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of census data. While the number of people working in any facet of print, online or video journalism fell by nearly 17% between 2008 and 2018, men remained a majority at the end of the decade at 64%, "on par with their share in 2008" of 60%, Pew found.

Female journalists face daunting challenges in certain regions, including "many parts of the developing world, and certainly in the Islamic world and other areas of what I call the patriarchy," Amanpour said.

Yonat Friling, a Jerusalem-based senior producer for Fox News Channel who worked in Ukraine with correspondent Trey Yingst, is aware of how opportunities can differ. In 2004, she was on the international desk for an Israeli TV station when she asked her boss to be moved to field producer.

"He told me, 'This is a job for men. Only men can do that,'" Friling recalled. She left the next year and joined Fox News in her chosen role.

Family needs and concerns add to the burden of war reporting.

NBC News correspondent Erin McLaughlin said that before Russia struck at Ukraine, the threat of what might happen made her parents worry more than they had over her previous assignments, including in Iraq.

Ward, who is married and has two children, expressed regret about missing her son's 4th birthday while in Ukraine.

"I'm not going to pretend this isn't hard. But I also wouldn't be anywhere else right now," she said.

\_\_\_

Associated Press researcher Jennifer Farrar contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

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[*Russia-Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6527-2SP1-DY4H-K4XS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 9:09 AM GMT

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**Length:** 976 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The battle for Ukraine's cities is thundering across its suburbs, with the Ukrainian military blocking Russian forces from a key highway and the invaders increasing air raids that have caused uncounted deaths and destruction

**Body**

The battle for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) 's cities is thundering across its suburbs, with the Ukrainian military retaking a key neighborhood near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) and the invading [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) forces increased air raids that have caused uncounted deaths and sent millions of people fleeing.

Ukraine's military said early Tuesday it had forced Russian troops out of a strategically important Kyiv suburb, following fierce fighting. However, Russian forces were partially able to take three northwest suburbs where there's been fighting for weeks.

The port city of Mariupol continues to suffer acutely. Civilians making the dangerous escape from the embattled southern port hub described fleeing through street-to-street gun battles and past unburied corpses as steady Russian bombardment tried to pound the city into submission. There was no immediate sign of a diplomatic breakthrough that could bring even temporary relief.

Here are some key things to know about the conflict:

WHY ARE SUBURBS TURNING INTO BATTLEFIELDS?

The suburbs could be a barrier to Ukraine's cities or a doorway for Russian troops, with the capital of Kyiv believed to be Moscow's primary military objective in [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's war.

Outside devastated Mariupol, the Kremlin's ground offensive has advanced slowly, knocked back by lethal hit-and-run attacks by the Ukrainians.

The regained Kyiv suburb allowed Ukrainian forces to retake control of a key highway to the west and block Russian troops from surrounding the capital from the northwest.

Ukraine's Defense Ministry said Russian forces advancing toward Kyiv were able to partially take northwest suburbs of Bucha, Hostomel and Irpin, some of which had been under attack almost since Russia's military invaded on Feb. 24.

Still, Putin's forces are increasingly concentrating their air power and artillery on Ukraine's cities and the civilians living there.

A senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the military's assessment, said Russia had increased air sorties in recent days, carrying out as many as 300 through the weekend, and has fired more than 1,100 missiles into Ukraine since the invasion began.

WHAT'S THE LATEST ON MARIUPOL?

The Russian assault has turned living in Mariupol into a fight for survival.

Electricity, water and food supplies have been cut off and communication with the outside world has been severed. It was unclear how many of the city with a prewar population of 430,000 remained. Around a quarter were believed to have fled early in the war and tens of thousands more have escaped over the past week by way of humanitarian corridors. Other attempts to leave have been thwarted by Russian efforts to pound the city into submission.

Those who have made it out of Mariupol described a devastated landscape.

"There are no buildings there anymore," said 77-year-old Maria Fiodorova, who crossed the border to Poland on Monday after five days of travel.

Olga Nikitina, who fled Mariupol for the western Ukrainian city of Lviv, said gunfire blew out her windows, and her apartment dropped below freezing.

"Battles took place over every street. Every house became a target," she said.

Still unclear were fate of those inside an art school flattened on Sunday and a theater that was blown apart four days earlier. More than 1,300 people were believed to be sheltering in the theater, and 400 were estimated to have been in the art school.

Perched on the Sea of Azov, Mariupol has been a key target that has been relentlessly bombarded for more than three weeks and has seen some of the worst suffering of the war. The fall of the southern port city would help Russia establish a land bridge to Crimea, seized from Ukraine in 2014.

WHAT HAS THE [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) DIRECTLY WITNESSED OR CONFIRMED?

In the Russian-occupied southern city of Kherson on Monday, Russian forces shot into the air and fired stun grenades at protestors who were chanting "Go home!" Kherson early this month became the first major city to fall to Russia's offensive.

In Kyiv, a shopping center in the densely populated Podil district near the city center remained a smoking ruin after being hit late Sunday by shelling that killed eight people, according to emergency officials. The attack shattered every window in a neighboring high-rise.

WHAT ABOUT DIPLOMACY?

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said late Monday he was prepared to discuss a commitment from Ukraine not to seek NATO membership in exchange for a cease-fire, the withdrawal of Russian troops and a guarantee of Ukraine's security.

"It's a compromise for everyone: for the West, which doesn't know what to do with us with regard to NATO, for Ukraine, which wants security guarantees, and for Russia, which doesn't want further NATO expansion," Zelenskyy said.

He also repeated his call for direct talks with Putin. Unless he meets with the Russian president, it is impossible to understand whether Russia even wants to stop the war, Zelenskyy said.

Zelenskyy also said that Kyiv will be ready to discuss the status of Crimea and the eastern Donbas region held by Russian-backed separatists after a cease-fire and steps toward providing security guarantees.

The Kremlin is demanding Ukraine disarm and declare itself neutral.

U.S. President Joe Biden travels to Europe this week, where he will attend a summit with NATO leaders that will look for ways to strengthen the bloc's own deterrence and defense to deal with the now openly confrontational Putin.

The Kremlin has bristled at remarks coming from the Americans. The Russian Foreign Ministry has warned that relations with the U.S. are "on the verge of a breach" and summoned the U.S. ambassador.

Biden has added a stop to Poland during his trip, visiting a crucial ally of Ukraine which has taken in more than 2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war between Russia and Ukraine: [*http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine War: What to know about the war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-G411-DY4H-K0P9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 9:23 AM GMT

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**Length:** 998 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A third round of direct talks between Ukranian and Russian officials has yielded limited results, with no agreement to end the war and minor progress on establishing safe corridors to allow civilians to escape the fighting

**Body**

Minor progress has been made on establishing safe corridors to allow civilians to escape the fighting. A top [*Ukranian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukranian) official says both sides agreed to a 12-hour-long cease-fire Tuesday for the evacuation of civilians from a key eastern city.

Meanwhile, [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) aircraft continued to bomb cities in eastern and central [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) overnight, Ukrainian officials said. Shelling pounded suburbs of the capital, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is urging his people to keep resisting the assault, which [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) officials say has forced more than 1.7 million to flee the country. Ukraine's foreign minister says more than 20,000 people from 52 countries have volunteered to fight in Ukraine.

As the war enters its 13th day, food, water, heat and medicine have grown increasingly scarce in Ukraine.

Here's a look at key things to know about the war:

HAS THERE BEEN PROGRESS ON SAFE EVACUATIONS?

The Russian coordination center for humanitarian efforts in Ukraine said Russia will begin a cease-fire at 10 a.m. Moscow time (0700 GMT) Tuesday to allow civilians to flee through special corridors that the Russians say was agreed upon with Ukrainian authorities, according to Russian media.

Most of those corridors would lead to Russia either directly or via Belarus, according to officials in Moscow. However, Russia's ambassador to the U.N. suggested that humanitarian paths leading from the capital, Kyiv, and other cities could give people choice in where they want to go.

Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said Tuesday both sides agreed to a cease-fire from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m Ukraine time (0700 to 1900 GMT) for the evacuation of civilians from the eastern city of Sumy. Those being evacuated from Sumy include foreign students from India and China, she said.

The Russian Defense Ministry has said civilians will be allowed to leave Sumy, Mariupol and Kyiv.

In the southern port city of Mariupol, an estimated 200,000 people - nearly half its population - are hoping to flee. Hospitals there are facing severe shortages of antibiotics and painkillers.

Ukrainian and Russian officials held a third round of direct talks Monday since the start of invasion Feb. 24. The countries' foreign ministers are scheduled to meet in Turkey on Thursday, according to that country's top diplomat.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND?

In the capital, soldiers and volunteers have built hundreds of checkpoints to protect the city of nearly 4 million people, often using sandbags, stacked tires and spiked cables.

A Russian general was killed in the fighting in Ukraine's second-largest city, according to the Ukrainian military intelligence agency. He was identified as Maj. Gen. Vitaly Gerasimov - the second Russian general reportedly killed since the invasion began. The report said he had fought with Russian forces in Syria and Chechnya and had taken part in the seizure of Crimea in 2014. It was not possible to confirm the death independently. Russia has not commented.

The mayor of Lviv said the city in far western Ukraine is struggling to feed and house the tens of thousands of people who have fled there from war-torn regions of the country. More than 200,000 Ukrainians displaced from their homes are now in Lviv, filling up sport halls, schools, hospitals and church buildings.

Russian aircraft bombed cities in eastern and central Ukraine overnight, Ukrainian officials said. Shelling pounded suburbs of the capital, Kyiv. In Sumy and Okhtyrka, to the east of the capital near the Russian border, bombs fell on residential buildings and destroyed a power plant, a regional leader said. Bombs also hit oil depots in two other towns.

Russian troops have overall made significant advances in southern Ukraine but stalled in some other regions. A top U.S. official said multiple countries were discussing whether to provide the warplanes that Ukraine's president has been pleading for.

HOW MANY PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED?

The death toll of the conflict has been difficult to measure. The U.N. human rights office said Monday that it had confirmed the deaths of 406 civilians and wounding of 801 others through the end of Sunday. However, it acknowledged the actual figures are likely considerably higher.

The World Health Organization said it verified at least six attacks that have killed six health care workers and injured 11 others.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** continue to pour into neighboring countries, including Poland, Romania and Moldova. Among them are an unknown number of people with U.S. citizenship, though some haven't been able to flee Ukraine yet.

GLOBAL IMPACT

Surging prices for oil and other vital commodities, such as wheat used in subsidized bread and noodles, are rattling global markets. The situation remains uncertain as investors search for safe havens from expanding sanctions against Russia.

Worries are growing that Russia's invasion of Ukraine will upend already tight supplies of oil. Russia is one of the world's largest energy producers, with prices surging even further by the possibility the U.S. might bar crude imports from Russia.

A growing number of multinational businesses have cut Russia off from vital financial services, technology and a variety of consumer products in response to Western economic sanctions and global outrage over the war. Among those suspending services in Russia due to sanctions is Netflix, the popular streaming service.

In the Middle East, the war in Ukraine is magnifying divisions in the region following Moscow's role in recent years in the war in Syria and among militant factions in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen where ally, Iran, has influence.

Despite countries sending weapons and military equipment to Ukrainian forces fighting the Russians, Western countries have rejected Ukrainian calls to impose a no-fly zone over the country. There are concerns such a move would risk dramatically escalating the conflict.

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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 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Local churches shun Vatican's moderate stance on Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XK-CWY1-DY4H-K3M8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 8:43 AM GMT

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**Length:** 960 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The head of the Polish bishops' conference has done what Pope Francis has avoided doing by publicly condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

The head of the Polish bishops' conference has done what [*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) has so far avoided doing: He publicly condemned Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and urged the head of the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) Orthodox Church to use his influence with [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) to demand an end to the war and for Russian soldiers to stand down.

"The time will come to settle these crimes, including before the international courts," Archbishop Stanislaw GÄdecki warned in his March 2 letter to Patriarch Kirill. "However, even if someone manages to avoid this human justice, there is a tribunal that cannot be avoided."

GÄdecki's tone was significant because it contrasted sharply with the comparative neutrality of the [*Vatican*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vatican) and Francis to date. The Holy See has called for peace, humanitarian corridors, a cease-fire and a return to negotiations, and even offered itself as a mediator. But Francis has yet to publicly condemn Russia by name for its invasion or publicly appeal to Kirill, and the Vatican offered no comment on the Russian strike on Europe's largest nuclear plant that sparked a fire Friday.

For a pope who has declared the mere possession of nuclear weapons immoral and cautioned against using atomic energy because of the environmental threat posed by radiation leaks, the silence was even more notable.

The Vatican has a tradition of quiet diplomacy, believing that it can facilitate dialogue better if it doesn't take sides or publicly call out aggressors. It has long used that argument to defend Pope Pius XII, the World War II-era pope criticized by some Jewish groups for not speaking out enough against the Holocaust. The Vatican says quiet diplomacy helped save lives then, and it continued that tradition in its Cold War Ostpolitik policy of behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

Francis took an unprecedented step last week when he went to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See to meet with the ambassador. But the only thing the Vatican said about the meeting was that Francis went to "express his concern about the war." He also spoke by phone with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

The Vatican secretary of state, Cardinal Pietro Parolin, took a similarly unusual step this week when, in an interview with four Italian newspapers, he actually named Russia in saying the war had been "unleashed by Russia against Ukraine."

In the case of Ukraine, which counts a few million Catholics among its majority Orthodox population, Francis is not shy about his hopes to improve relations with the Russian Orthodox Church and its influential leader, Kirill. As recently as December, when fears of a Russian invasion were already tangible, Francis expressed hope for a second meeting with Kirill following their historic encounter in 2016, the first between a pope and Russian patriarch in a millennium.

"A meeting with Patriarch Kirill is not far from the horizon," Francis told reporters in route home from Greece. "I am always available, I am also willing to go to Moscow: to talk to a brother, there is no need for protocols. A brother is a brother before all protocols."

Francis' ambassador to Russia, Archbishop Giovanni D'Agnello, met Thursday with Kirill at the patriarch's residence in the Danilov Monastery in Moscow. Kirill's office said the patriarch recalled the "new page in history" opened by the 2016 meeting, expressed appreciation for the "moderate and wise position" of the Holy See in resisting being drawn into the conflict and insisted churches can only be peacemakers.

The Vatican didn't report the meeting and its spokesman didn't respond when asked for comment.

One of Francis' top communications advisers, the Rev. Antonio Spadaro, however, noted Kirill is "facing a great challenge" to weigh the now-growing list of Orthodox priests, metropolitans and ordinary Ukrainian faithful who are begging him to raise his voice against Putin and change position. In an essay published by the Italian news agency Adnkronos, Spadaro didn't count Francis among them, though he quoted the pope as saying recently that it was "very sad" that Christians were making war.

That moderate tone was echoed this week when the Holy See's ambassador to the United Nations stressed the need for humanitarian corridors in Ukraine to allow refugees out and humanitarian aid in. He didn't identify Russia as the reason they were needed, according to the Vatican summary of his remarks.

The Holy See's foreign minister, Archbishop Paul Gallagher, met Wednesday with his Italian counterpart, Luigi Di Maio. The Italian foreign ministry said Di Maio "repeated Italy's firm condemnation of the Russian aggression to the detriment of Ukraine and the commitment to continue on the path of effective and incisive sanctions against the government of the Russian Federation," while helping Ukraine in the "humanitarian, economic and defense areas."

The Vatican, which is sending medical supplies to Ukraine, said nothing after the meeting.

Such silence has not been shared by the head of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church, who has been emphatic in his daily denunciations of the Russian invasion. Nor has it been shared by Polish bishops, who are now helping to mobilize the reception of tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who have crossed the border.

"I ask you, Brother, to appeal to Vladimir Putin to stop the senseless warfare against the Ukrainian people," Polish Bishop Gadecki said in his letter to Kirill. "I ask you in the most humble way to call for the withdrawal of the Russian troops from the sovereign state that is Ukraine."

"I also ask you to appeal to Russian soldiers not to take part in this unjust war, to refuse to carry out orders which, as we have already seen, lead to many war crimes," he added. "Refusing to follow orders in such a situation is a moral obligation."

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*UK faith leaders urge government to rethink 'discriminatory' borders bill*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WH-WBT1-JBNF-W4PJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 28, 2022 Monday 10:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 944 words

**Byline:** Samuel Lovett

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Critics say bill will 'close the door' to those seeking asylum in the UK, including those fleeing Ukraine

**Body**

More than 1,000 faith leaders have urged the government to reconsider its controversial Nationality and Borders Bill, which will criminalise and restrict the rights of all people who arrive in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) without a visa.

If the bill passes -it is entering its final stages in the House of Lords -people trying to seek asylum in Britain, such as those now fleeing Ukraine, could be treated as second-tier [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , or even criminals, as they would be arriving via irregular routes.

It comes as UK charities backed [*The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-russia-refugee-crisis-b2024020.html) , calling on the British government to set up an urgent and properly funded resettlement programme for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion.

In a letter sent to prime minster [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , the faith leaders warned: "While there is still conflict and injustice in the world, there will always be desperate people needing to seek sanctuary from war, persecution and suffering. We cannot close our door on them, but this bill does just that."

Dr Rowan Williams, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, and Zara Mohammed, the secretary-general of the Muslim Council of Britain, are among the signatories of the letter, which has support from leaders across all six major faith groups in the UK.

Almost 116,000 people have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion began on Thursday, with this number expected to rise in the coming days and weeks, according to the UN.

Currently, there is no specific resettlement scheme in the UK for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

If the Nationality and Borders Bill is enshrined in law, the UK's immigration system will allow for "differential treatment" of refugees depending on how they reached Britain.

Those who arrive with visas or via resettlement schemes will be granted "all of the benefits, in inverted commas, of coming into the UK," Sophie McCann, an advocacy officer at MSF, told The Independent. "So they can they can work, they have recourse to public funds, and they have access to a family reunion."

Those who arrive irregularly, such as via boat or lorry, will have their rights restricted -irrespective of whether these individuals have family members in the UK.

"Someone who doesn't have a visa, basically the government is terming them illegal, which is at odds with the Refugee Convention -or a misinterpretation of it," Ms McCann said.

The bill would make it a criminal offence to arrive in the UK "without a valid entry clearance", the maximum sentence for which would be four years' imprisonment. Today, peers will vote on an amendment to remove this clause from the bill.

Critics of the proposed legislation say it will effectively shut the door to refugees as the vast majority of people seeking asylum have no option but to use irregular routes to travel to the UK, given the lack of resettlement schemes available to them.

The faith leaders' letter calls on the prime minister to make substantial changes to the bill. These include abandoning the government's plans to criminalise and restrict the rights of all people arriving in the UK seeking refugee protection outside pre-arranged schemes. The signatories say this policy was made "without a basis in evidence or morality".

The coalition group Freedom from Torture said the bill had been brought under renewed focus amid the conflict in Ukraine, which has forced more than 100,000 people to flee the country. If passed, the bill "will criminalise and deny protection to Ukrainians who make their own way to safety in the UK," said chief executive Sonya Sceats.

"Make no mistake, any parliamentarian who votes in favour of this bill is voting to slam the door in the face of Ukrainian men, women and children in need."

The signatories of the letter also assert that the government must urgently address the UK's failure to establish safe routes into Britain, which would help people seeking sanctuary. They urge Mr Johnson to be "compassionate and ambitious" in opening family reunion and resettlement schemes and routes for unaccompanied refugee children in Europe.

Ms Mohammed said: "There are many provisions in theâ¯Nationality and Borders Billâ¯thatâ¯are deeply concerning for faith communities.

"We must, therefore, not abandon our moral obligation to ensure safe passage for those who need it, to have a fair and equitable asylum process and protect nationality as a right, not just a privilege. We have a duty to uphold the UK's proud tradition as a nation made all the richer by those who come here toâ¯buildâ¯a betterâ¯life,â¯or seek sanctuary from persecution."

Under the proposed law, the Home Office would also be able to strip any British national of their citizenship "where they are deemed to have claim to citizenship of another country" and where there was a "public good".

Critics say the law creates a situation where millions of British citizens who either came to the country as immigrants or are recently descended from immigrants will not enjoy the same rights to keep their citizenship as others.

As part of plans to tighten the UK's borders, the government is considering offshore processing and is proposing to build large scale accommodation centres in the UK which will hold up to 8,000 people at one time.

Rabbi Jonathan Wittenberg, senior rabbi of Masorti Judaism, said: "I implore the government to open safe passages and not discriminate against those who, in vital need of sanctuary, find whatever way they can to reach a place of refuge."

The government has said that the the Nationality and Borders Bill reduces the pull factor to the UK and aims to make the asylum system firmer and fairer by differentiating between those coming through parallel illegal routes and those using safe asylum schemes.

**Load-Date:** February 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Neutral Finland, Sweden warm to idea of NATO membership*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-FNW1-JBNF-W03T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 8:39 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 956 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Through the Cold War and the decades since, nothing could persuade Finns and Swedes that they would be better off joining NATO - until now

**Body**

Through the Cold War and the decades since, nothing could persuade Finns and Swedes that they would be better off joining NATO - until now.

Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has profoundly changed Europe's security outlook, including for Nordic neutrals [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) and [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) , where support for joining NATO has surged to record levels.

A poll commissioned by Finnish broadcaster YLE this week showed that, for the first time, more than 50% of Finns support joining the Western military alliance. In neighboring Sweden, a similar poll showed those in favor of NATO membership outnumber those against.

"The unthinkable might start to become thinkable," tweeted former Swedish Prime Minister Carl Bildt, a proponent of NATO membership.

Neither country is going to join the alliance overnight. Support for NATO membership rises and falls, and there's no clear majority for joining in their parliaments.

But the signs of change since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) began its invasion last week are unmistakable.

The attack on Ukraine prompted both Finland and Sweden to break with their policy of not providing arms to countries at war by sending assault rifles and anti-tank weapons to Kyiv. For Sweden, it's the first time offering military aid since 1939, when it assisted Finland against the Soviet Union.

Apparently sensing a shift among its Nordic neighbors, the [*Russian Foreign Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russian-foreign-ministry) last week voiced concern about what it described as efforts by the United States and some of its allies to "drag" Finland and Sweden into NATO and warned that Moscow would be forced to take retaliatory measures if they joined the alliance.

The governments of Sweden and Finland retorted that they won't let Moscow dictate their security policy.

"I want to be extremely clear: It is Sweden that itself and independently decides on our security policy line," Swedish Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said.

Finland has a conflict-ridden history with Russia, with which it shares a 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border. Finns have taken part in dozens of wars against their eastern neighbor, for centuries as part of the Swedish Kingdom, and as an independent nation during the world wars, including two fought with the Soviet Union from 1939-40 and 1941-44.

In the postwar period, however, Finland pursued pragmatic political and economic ties with Moscow, remaining militarily nonaligned and a neutral buffer between East and West.

Sweden has avoided military alliances for more than 200 years, choosing a path of peace after centuries of warfare with its neighbors.

Both countries put an end to traditional neutrality by joining the European Union in 1995 and deepening cooperation with NATO. However, a majority of people in both countries remained firmly against full membership in the alliance - until Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

The YLE poll showed 53% were in favor of Finland joining NATO, with only 28% against. The poll had an error margin of 2.5 percentage points and included 1,382 respondents interviewed Feb. 23 to 25. Russia's invasion began on Feb. 24.

"It's a very significant shift," said senior researcher Matti Pesu from the Finnish Institute of International Affairs. "We've had a situation in the past 25-30 years where Finns' opinions on NATO have been very stable. It seems to now to have changed completely."

While noting that it's not possible to draw conclusions from a single poll, Pesu said no similar shift in public opinion occurred after Russia's 2008 war with Georgia and the 2014 annexation of the Crimean Peninsula, "so this is an exception."

In Sweden, a late February poll commissioned by the Swedish public broadcaster SVT found 41% of Swedes supported NATO membership and 35% opposed it, marking the first time that those in favor exceeded those against.

The Nordic duo, important partners for NATO in the Baltic Sea area where Russia has substantially increased its military maneuvers in the past decade, has strongly stressed that it is up to them alone to decide whether to join the military alliance.

In his New Year's speech, Finnish President Sauli Niinisto pointedly said that "Finland's room to maneuver and freedom of choice also include the possibility of military alignment and of applying for NATO membership, should we ourselves so decide."

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg noted last week that for Helsinki and Stockholm "this is a question of self-determination and the sovereign right to choose your own path and then potentially in the future, also to apply for NATO."

There are no set criteria for joining NATO, but aspiring candidates must meet certain political and other considerations. Many observers believe Finland and Sweden would qualify for fast-track entry into NATO without lengthy negotiations and membership could be a reality within months.

Finnish Prime Minister Sanna Marin said this week that her Social Democratic Party would discuss possible NATO membership with other parties but didn't set a time frame. She said everyone agrees that the events of the past weeks have been a game-changer.

"Together we see that the security situation has changed remarkably since Russia attacked Ukraine. It is a fact that we have to acknowledge," Marin said.

\_\_\_ Associated Press writers Karl Ritter in Stockholm, and Lorne Cook in Brussels, contributed to this report.

\_\_\_

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

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)

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[*From banking to sports to vodka, Russia's isolation grows*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-switzerland-vladimir-putin-germany-ukraine-b2025427.html)

[*Sports bodies move further to isolate and condemn Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-uefa-fifa-schalke-gazprom-b2024843.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Prince William delights fans by eating in ‘queer space’ restaurant in Poland: ‘We love an ally’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67VB-CFX1-DY4H-K2PV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2023 Thursday 9:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE; Version:2

**Length:** 1098 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.

At the [*2017 British LGBT Awards*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/prince-william-british-lgbt-awards-homophobia-gay-rights-homophobic-bullying-a7732131.html) , Prince William was named Celebrity Straight Ally of the year and used his acceptance speech to condemn homophobic bullying once again. “In recent years I’ve been compassionate about what we can do to protect people from bullying, particularly online,” he said in a pre-recorded video. “Through this work I’ve encountered a number of tragic stories about LGBT young people who have, sadly, felt unable to cope with the abuse and discrimination they face in their lives.”

The then-Duke of Cambridge even extended his support of the LGBT+ community to his children, after telling the Albert Kennedy Trust in 2019 that he would [*fully support his children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/prince-william-lgbt-charity-homophobia-a8975881.html) if they were to come out as gay. When asked by the charity how he would react to his children being LGBT+, he replied: “I think you really don’t start thinking about that until you are a parent and I think – obviously, absolutely fine by me.”

“The one thing I’d be worried about is how they, particularly the roles my children fill, is how that is going to be interpreted and seen,” he added. “It worries me as to how everyone else will react and perceive it and then the pressure is then on them.”

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 23, 2023

**End of Document**



[*BBC urged to get a ‘grip’ as Match Of The Day 2 set to air without presenters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RY-2721-DY4H-K30G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2023 Sunday 11:32 AM GMT

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**Section:** FOOTBALL,SPORT; Version:3

**Length:** 1071 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** Its Women’s Super League coverage will also feature a reduced format.

**Body**

The [*BBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bbc) has been urged to get a “grip” of the impartiality row over [*Gary Lineker*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gary-lineker) as its sports coverage faced disruption for a second consecutive day.

Match Of The Day aired for only 20 minutes on Saturday without accompanying commentary or analysis from pundits following a boycott in “solidarity” with former England striker Lineker.

And Sunday’s Match Of The Day 2 will follow a similar reduced format to Saturday night’s programme, commentator Guy Mowbray confirmed.

It’s always such a privilege to work with BBC MOTD. But tomorrow I have taken the decision to stand down from my punditry duties. [*@GaryLineker*](https://twitter.com/GaryLineker?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) — Jermain Defoe OBE (@IAmJermainDefoe) [*March 11, 2023*](https://twitter.com/IAmJermainDefoe/status/1634541148650852353?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Uncertainty over Match Of The Day 2 grew on Saturday after main presenter Mark Chapman was absent from his BBC radio duties and Jermain Defoe announced he had pulled out of appearing as a pundit on the highlights show.Mowbray wrote on Twitter: “As yesterday, there will be no ‘normal’ MOTD(2) programme tonight. The scheduled commentary team are in full agreement with our BBC Sport colleagues. We hope that a resolution can be found ASAP.”The live coverage of Sunday’s Women’s Super League match between Chelsea and Manchester United ran on BBC Two with no pre-match presentation and using world feed commentary.Gabby Logan is also scheduled to host live coverage from 2.15pm as Scotland play Ireland at Murrayfield, but Six Nations coverage is not due to be disrupted.Radio 5 Live’s coverage was radically altered throughout the day on Saturday and there was a change to its Sunday schedules too, with its usual ‘Premier League Sunday’ show from midday to 2pm replaced by episodes of Sport’s Strangest Crimes. The afternoon’s two Premier League commentaries from 2pm remained on the schedules.Tim Davie is isolated in some ways, he needs to come home and grip this now. We need him back running the shipFormer BBC executive Peter SalmonFormer BBC executive Peter Salmon, who was previously controller of BBC One and director of sport, told Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg the situation was “complex” and Lineker is a “major figure”.He added: “Twenty-five years in 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.”Reflecting on the disruption to the BBC’s sports schedule, he added: “It’s a mess, isn’t it?“They must be wishing they could reel back 72 hours and start all over again. It’s Oscars day but there’s no awards for how this has been managed.“I think they’ve got to take action pretty quickly. It doesn’t help the chairman of the BBC himself is slacked to one side in this process and there’s a bit of an issue.“[*Tim Davie*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tim-davie) is isolated in some ways, he needs to come home and grip this now. We need him back running the ship.”Former BBC director-general [*Mark Thompson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mark-thompson) said he “absolutely hopes” and “believes” Davie will survive the impartiality row surrounding Lineker.Asked by Kuenssberg whether he thought Lineker would be back on air by Sunday night, he replied: “I hope so.”The BBC’s decision on Friday to stand Lineker down from presenting Match Of The Day, after he compared language used to launch a new Government asylum seeker policy with 1930s Germany in a tweet, has prompted a growing number of its sports presenters to boycott their shows.Davie has apologised for the disruption but said he will not resign.It is the latest controversy to hit the corporation after its chairman, Richard Sharp, became embroiled in a cronyism row over him helping Boris Johnson secure an £800,000 loan facility.The BBC also faces a strike on Wednesday where up to 1,000 journalists are expected to walk out on the same day Chancellor [*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) is due to deliver his Spring Budget."I don't think Gary Lineker should have been taken off air."Shadow chancellor [*@RachelReevesMP*](https://twitter.com/RachelReevesMP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) says she wouldn't have used Gary Lineker's language, but the decision to take him off air was "out of proportion"[*#Ridge*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ridge?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*https://t.co/ZoMhCmTrtv*](https://t.co/ZoMhCmTrtv) Sky 501, Virgin 602 [*pic.twitter.com/B3RsdzTmt6*](https://t.co/B3RsdzTmt6) — Sophy Ridge on Sunday & The Take (@RidgeOnSunday) [*March 12, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RidgeOnSunday/status/1634844018264735746?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) On Sunday, Hunt rowed back from demanding an apology for Lineker’s comments.Asked if he still thought 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.“If you believe in BBC independence, then it’s not for the chancellor or any other government minister to say how these issues are resolved.”Asked whether the corporation’s leadership is too close to the party of Government, Hunt said it was not for him “to make those judgments”.Shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves criticised Tory MPs for “putting pressure” on the BBC to take Lineker off air.She told Sophy Ridge On Sunday: “I wouldn’t have used the language that Gary Lineker used.“But do I think he should be taken off TV from doing commentary on the football? No, I don’t. And I think that was out of proportion.”She said Tory MPs had nothing to say when Sharp was found to have helped facilitate a loan for Johnson.Saturday night’s limited Match Of The Day was watched by 2.6 million viewers, according to overnight figures reported by BBC News – up by nearly half a million on last week’s show.The BBC needs to do better.We agree with Jurgen that their decision not to include commentary on Match of the Day is unacceptable.The BBC should be upholding basic accessibility standards so that everyone can enjoy their output. [*https://t.co/CNfDHQe3CZ*](https://t.co/CNfDHQe3CZ) — RNIB (@RNIB) [*March 12, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RNIB/status/1634888994042556416?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

However, the programme was radically different with a reduced run time and featuring only short highlight clips of the day’s matches.

The BBC was criticised by the Royal National Institute of Blind People for not providing commentary.

In response to a Tweet from a blind fan calling it a breach of the equalities act, the RNIB wrote: “The BBC needs to do better. We agree with Jurgen that their decision not to include commentary on Match of the Day is unacceptable.

“The BBC should be upholding basic accessibility standards so that everyone can enjoy their output.”

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Syrian refugees anxious over Lebanon's plans to deport them*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6601-26T1-JBNF-W0DR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 21, 2022 Thursday 7:06 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1042 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The Lebanese government’s plan to start deporting Syrian refugees has sent waves of fear through vulnerable communities already struggling to survive in their host country

**Body**

Sitting outside her tent in a camp in eastern Lebanon, a 30-year-old Syrian refugee contemplated the sunset and her worsening options.

Umm Jawad fled to Lebanon in 2011 to escape a Syrian government siege of her hometown of Homs. She managed to survive over the past decade, despite Lebanon’s devastating economic meltdown and souring attitudes toward Syrian refugees.

But now Lebanon wants to send her and a million other refugees back to Syria, claiming that much of the war-shattered country is safe. She is terrified. [*Life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/life) in Lebanon is difficult, but she fears returning to Syria could be fatal.

She’s considering a risky escape to [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) by sea with her husband and their children, ages 11 and six. There, she could complete her accounting degree, put the children back in school and secure a steady supply of medication for her epilepsy.

“They (the Europeans) live a better quality of life,” said Umm Jawad, who asked to be identified by her nickname, which means mother of Jawad in reference to her older son's first name, to speak freely about her family and plans. “But here, my children, husband, and I live in a tent.”

Lebanon’s economic meltdown -– one of the worst in modern history --has pushed a growing number of Lebanese and Syrians to attempt the perilous journey by sea to Europe.

The Lebanese government’s recently announced plan to deport 15,000 refugees per month to Syria appears set to push more people to make that journey, at a time when Europe is struggling with millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the months-long war in their country.

The Lebanese Army and other security agencies report foiled migration attempts off the coast of the northern coasts on a weekly basis. At least seven migrants drowned following a confrontation between a boat of Lebanese and Syrian migrants and the Lebanese Army in April.

“The Lebanese are not happy with their life here and are trying to leave, so what does that mean for Syrians?” said Umm Jawad. “May God help both the Lebanese and Syrians out of this crisis.”

Umm Jawad lives in a Syrian refugee camp near Lebanon’s eastern border crossing with Syria, On a recent day, children played soccer in the camp’s labyrinth of alleys, while some residents bartered with a street vendor who passed by with his cart carrying produce. One man set up a makeshift barbershop inside a tent.

Life in the camp has been getting harder. Donor fatigue, the COVID-19 pandemic, and Lebanon’s crippling economic crisis have forced more refugees to go into debt to afford food, medicine, and rent.

Lebanon, a country of five million people, says it can no longer afford to host more than a million Syrian refugees, and is adamant to start deporting them within months, despite opposition from the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) and rights groups.

The Lebanese authorities have supported forced refugee returns for years but had not come up with a comprehensive plan until recently. In justifying such measures, they say Syrian officials have assured them there are now many safe areas refugees can return to.

In a Lebanese government document obtained by The Associated Press, Damascus assured Beirut in April that returnees would be able to secure identification cards, birth certificates, social services, temporary housing, and a viable infrastructure. Syrian officials also wrote that returnees would benefit from Syrian President Bashar Assad’s pardons of political opponents and military draft evaders.

In reality, the Assad government has struggled to rebuild areas it has reclaimed through devastating sieges and air raids, and Syria’s economy, like that of Lebanon, is in tatters. Western-led sanctions on Damascus following the government’s brutal crackdown on political opposition in 2011 have further exacerbated the economic downturn.

Many Syrian refugees fear for their safety if forced to return, including the oppressive omnipresence of their country’s notorious security services.

Human Rights Watch has documented cases of Syrian refugees facing detention, torture, and a host of human rights violations upon their return, even with security clearances from the Syrian government, said Lama Fakih, the Middle East and North Africa director at the watchdog group.

Umm Jawad worries her husband could be forced to return to the military. “You have check points every few hundred meters, between every neighborhood, and crime is rampant. You just can’t feel safe even in your own home,” she said.

Hassan Al-Mohammed, who works in the fields of Lebanon’s lush Bekaa Valley, along with several of his 12 children, said he dreams of going home, but that now is not the time. He said his hometown southwest of the city of Aleppo is still a frontline. “Should I flee an economic crisis just to have my family slaughtered?” he said, sitting in his tent.

At the same time, many Lebanese feel that sending the Syrians home would ease the economic crisis in Lebanon, wherethree out of four people now live in poverty.

Tensions between Lebanese and Syrians are increasingly palpable.

Al-Mohammed says bakeries would sometimes prioritize Lebanese nationals for their bundle of bread and make Syrians and non-Lebanese wait for hours. He is frustrated by claims that refugees have been benefitting economically at the expense of Lebanese. “They reduced aid, so we’re working to eat. The money we make is to buy bread,” he said.

Lebanese ministers in recent months have proposed that the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees redirect refugee aid to Syria, as a way of improving the situation there and encouraging returns.

But those calls have so far fallen on deaf ears. The U.N. refugee agency, along with Europe, the United States and several rights groups, say that Syria simply isn’t safe yet.

Lebanese officials expressed their frustration.

The U.N.’s refusal to redirect aid deters refugees from returning, Issam Charafeddine, the Cabinet minister dealing with refugee issues, said in an interview earlier this month. He also said reports of an imminent start of deportations amount to an unfounded “fear campaign.”

Maj. Gen. Abbas Ibrahim, a member of the Lebanese government’s refugee returns committee, told reporters last week that “it seems the international community doesn’t want the Syrians to return to their country.”

**Load-Date:** July 21, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Poland completes Belarus border wall to keep migrants out*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65TH-V411-JBNF-W2CG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 30, 2022 Thursday 7:43 AM GMT

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**Length:** 969 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A year after migrants started crossing into the European Union from Belarus to Poland, Polish authorities will announce that the construction of a new steel wall along its border with Belarus has been finished

**Body**

A year after migrants started crossing into the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) from [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) to Poland, [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) Prime Minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) is expected to visit the border area on Thursday to mark the completion of a new steel wall.

On Friday, Polish authorities will also lift a state of emergency along the border that has blocked journalists, rights workers and others from witnessing a human rights crisis. At the very least, 20 migrants have died in the area's freezing forests and bogs.

As Poland opened its gates to millions of Ukrainians fleeing Russia's invasion, work was well underway to build the 5.5-meter (18-foot) high wall along 186 kilometers (115 miles) of its northern frontier with Belarus

It's meant to keep out asylum seekers of a different type: those fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East and Africa, who were encouraged to try their luck by Belarus’ authoritarian regime — a close ally of Russia — as part of a feud with the EU.

One of them was 32-year-old Ali, who left Syria late last year after reading on social media that the easiest way into the EU was to fly to Belarus and walk into Poland.

Ali, from a village outside Hama in western Syria, flew to the Belarusian capital, Minsk, and set out to find an unguarded spot in the forest where he could sneak over into the EU.

“I was looking for a place where I can live in safety, away from the oppression and hopelessness back home,” he said in an interview this week with The Associated Press in Berlin.

Ali, who didn't give his last name, fearing repercussions for his family, was not prepared for the violence and sub-zero temperatures that awaited him in the vast forests and swamps.

“There were nights when I went to sleep on the bare ground in the woods thinking I would not wake up again,” Ali said.

Human rights activists see a double standard in the different treatment of the neighboring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** — fellow Slavs who are mostly Christian, female and white — and those from the distant Middle East and Africa, many of whom are Muslims and male.

“If you give a lift to a refugee at the Ukrainian border you are a hero. If you do it at the Belarus border you are a smuggler and could end up in jail for eight years,” said Natalia Gebert, founder and CEO of Dom Otwarty, or Open House, a Polish NGO that helps refugees.

Belarus had never before been a key migration route into the EU — until its President Alexander Lukashenko began encouraging would-be asylum-seekers in the Middle East to travel to Minsk. Soon, people from Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan and African countries flocked to the EU's eastern edge, entering Poland and neighboring Lithuania and Latvia.

EU leaders accused Lukashenko of waging “hybrid warfare” in revenge for the bloc's sanctions over the regime's treatment of dissidents. Poland’s government says Russia is complicit, given Lukashenko’s alliance with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Though migration slowed in the winter, people continued to try to enter the EU through Poland, a route seen as less dangerous than crossing the Mediterranean Sea, where many have drowned in past years, Gebert said.

Ali, whose small makeup business in Syria was destroyed when Sunni extremists learned he belonged to the Alawite religious minority, says he got pushed back six times by Polish border guards.

But Belarusian guards beat him, stole his money and forced him to take off all his clothes in the middle of the winter. He wanted to give up and return to Minsk, but the guards wouldn't let him. They made him and others lie on the cold ground, screamed at them, approached closely with a snarling dog and kicked Ali repeatedly in the chest.

Polish border patrol officers broke his phone’s SIM card, he said. He went without water and food for days, lost in the swamps.

A Human Rights Watch report this month said Poland “unlawfully, and sometimes violently, summarily pushes migrants and asylum-seekers back to Belarus, where they face serious abuses, including beatings and rape by border guards and other security forces.”

Amnesty International has also detailed serious human rights abuses.

A Polish government spokesman did not reply to a request for comment on the allegations of the human rights groups.

While some Poles support the government’s tough stance, many border region residents have throughout the winter and spring sought to help migrants trapped in the forest, several requiring medical help.

A play that premiered in Warsaw this week, "Responsibility," asks how Poland can accept millions of Ukrainians while withholding help to thousands of others. One character asks: “Why does the Polish state demand that a child from Aleppo sits in a bog in sub-zero temperatures and withhold the aid it gives the child from Mariupol?”

Ali spent 16 days in the forests, before he and others used pliers to open a hole in a border fence. Some villagers gave him food and water, but soon he was apprehended by police and taken to a detention center.

Over the next three months, he was moved through several closed camps.

Guards carried batons and stun guns, he said, and every time before they moved him to a different camp they made him and other detainees strip naked in public. Nobody addressed him by his name, but by an identification number.

In March, he was handed his papers and taken to the Debak center for foreigners in Otrebusy southwest of Warsaw, where he was told: “Go away, go to Germany.”

Ali arrived in Berlin in April and applied for asylum. Rights activists and psychologists have documented his account and also those of other asylum-seekers who say they suffered abuse by both Belarusian and Polish border guards.

“I feel better here. People call me by my name again,” Ali said. “But I'm worried all the time that the Germans will send me back to Poland.”

\_\_\_

Grieshaber reported from Berlin.

**Load-Date:** June 30, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Forgotten and abandoned: the Black, international students caught up in Ukraine conflict*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MH-5SH1-DY4H-K1VW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2023 Friday 9:08 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1201 words

**Byline:** Nadine White

**Highlight:** As the world marks the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, the plight of the country’s international students have largely been forgotten

**Body**

Thousands of [*African*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/african) students who fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) have been “frozen out” of receiving aid for those [*driven out by Russian attacks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-speech-cyber-attack-russia-b2286371.html) , The Independent has been told.

Before the conflict, around 76,000 international students, mostly from [*Nigeria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nigeria) and [*Morocco*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/morocco) , [*Ghana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ghana) , [*Zimbabwe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zimbabwe) and [*India*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/india) , were based there.

But after grappling with racism at Ukraine’s borders while trying to flee, a large number of students are displaced in countries, including Turkey, Italy, Kenya, Romania and Belgium, unsure of their next move.

Many are unable to complete their studies, battling with the mental and emotional distress of having [*escaped Putin’s onslaught*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , some are facing poverty, while others have even taken their own lives, The Independent has learned.

But while Ukrainian citizens are able to receive aid from the international community, their African counterparts have been left to fend for themselves or rely on grassroots organisations for support.

Speaking to The Independent from her family home in Nigeria, student Eshi, 24, said: “There were other people living in Ukraine with Ukrainians and, regardless of the colour of our passports, the colour of our skin or hair; we’re all human beings.

“We actually had our lives in that country; not everyone was students, some had businesses and family members.”

Following the outbreak of war, international students were advised to “go home”, however, help wasn’t forthcoming from many governments.

A great number believed returning to their birth countries without a degree wasn’t a viable option and instead sought refuge in neighbouring European countries in a bid to secure future study.

A key reason why many migrated to Ukraine in the first place, was the affordable tuition fees, access to special loans, and the opportunity to make better lives for themselves.

International students from Ukraine are not allowed to transfer to UK universities, so the UK is a no-go zone for many of the thousands of African students seeking to finish their studies there. The only exception is the University of Manchester, which is accepting students from Ukraine who aren’t nationals of the country.

While facing the prospect of repeating two years of studies due to the war’s disruption, many students have been asked by their universities to pay inflated tuition costs, an additional fee to graduate and shell out large amounts of cash for manuscripts, which they cannot afford. Anyone who falls behind with fees faces being expelled.

And some Ukraine universities are forcing international students to return and sit exams before they can be awarded their degrees, The Independent has learned.

Defending its decision, the Ukrainian government cited the need for “academic integrity and quality control”. However, with many students facing financial hardship and difficulty with securing visas, returning to the besieged country is not a viable prospect.

As the world acknowledges the first anniversary of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, many students feel their plight has largely been forgotten.

An earlier investigation by The Independent revealed that non-white refugees fleeing Ukraine were being detained in EU immigration facilities without reason. No one has been held accountable for this.

Following social media posts about racism at the borders, The Independent interviewed students who had experienced this amid a sea of speculation from critics that the online commentary about discrimination was “lies” and a “Russian disinformation campaign”.

Eventually, the United Nations released a statement acknowledging that the accounts were true and pledging to take action as celebrities, including Beyonce, showed solidarity with the international students.

This week, over 70 MPs and peers, including the former home secretary Priti Patel, signed an open letter calling on the government to act now to help thousands of white ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are facing homelessness in the UK. Commentators have pointed to a disparity in public and political concern about the welfare of Black students who fled Ukraine.

Korrine Sky, 27, a second-year medical student who studied in Dnipro before fleeing the war, is now based in Leicester.

The Zimbabwe-British dual citizen was devastated to learn that she could not transfer to continue studying in the UK as the General Medical Council (GMC) had stopped accepting medical qualifications from her school. She has not received any support from the UK government or agencies, as citizen, since arriving back a year ago.

Reconciling with the trauma of escaping war, having a gun pointed at her head and being lunged at while facing discrimination at borders, the prospect of delaying her dream of becoming a doctor has been a lot to bear, she says.

“At the time I felt that I experienced an identity crisis because a major part of my identity was that of a medical student,” she said. “I pursued my hopes of becoming a doctor but I (have since) felt that I had to let that dream go in order to fully heal (...).

“I’m trying to remind myself that what happened, how the war affected me, was not my fault and I’m not less of a person,” the mother-of-two added between tears.

Some international students who struggled with this plight have since taken their own lives, Ms Sky said.

“It’s as if the racism that was experienced in Ukraine (at the borders) is now being reinforced in several other countries,” Ms Sky said.

“We’re being told again and again: ‘Ukrainians only’. empathy is not being extended to our community because it’s not our country, as we’ve been told numerous times.

“That has left many of us struggling with our mental health, but also living in different European countries without having any support.

“I empathise with a lot of my peers who have resulted in taking their own lives; I have felt that depression where you’re wondering what to do next.”

A 22-year-old student from Ukraine, who fled to Portugal after the war, told The Independent that distance learning classes were not good enough and teaching support has been lacking.

The student, who has dealt with flashbacks and nightmares since leaving Ukraine, said: “To the world, it might seem like this one year -but to me, it doesn’t seem like so much time has passed.

“I’m out of the war zone but it still feels fresh in my memory. I’m glad that people have moved on, but the problems that Ukraine (universities) keeps bringing up, it’s not easy for some of us to move on.”

The group Africans in Ukraine Education Fund (AIUEF), established by Ms Sky, is raising money for students to continue their studies and has called on global agencies and organisations to “provide fair treatment” to all students.

An [*online petition calling on universities*](https://www.change.org/p/what-next-for-african-students-who-fled-ukraine-aiuef-official?recruiter=1295876896&utm_source=share_petition&utm_medium=twitter&utm_campaign=psf_combo_share_initial&utm_term=psf_combo_share_initial&recruited_by_id=30583fe0-b0c1-11ed-8fba-8dc2869bd87f&share_bandit_exp=initial-33230805-en-US) in the EU, Britain, and the US to put in place support packages and scholarships for African students forced to leave Ukraine has garnered almost 35,000 signatures.

“We are asking that African students be offered access to university places on the same terms as their Ukrainian counterparts. Everyone should have a right to education and this should not be a right that is given to some and not others.”

The Independent has approached the United Nations, Ukraine’s government and the UK government for comment.

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2023

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[*Inside Politics: Noisy court*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65T9-VM71-JBNF-W16P-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1145 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Nicola Sturgeon sets out proposed date for second referendum as Boris Johnson contends with cabinet row on defence spending while at Nato summit, writes Matt Mathers

**Body**

Wimbledon is well underway, with Serena Williams and Harmony Tan serving up a cracking match in SW19 last night. Boris Johnson is contending with a noisy court at home, as defence secretary Ben Wallace ramps up calls for extra spending as the PM attends the Nato summit in Madrid. Elsewhere, Nicola Sturgeon has set out a proposed date for a second referendum on Scottish independence.

Inside the bubble

Our political commentator Andrew Grice on what to look out for today:

There’s no cabinet meeting this week, and so no opportunity for the ministerial mice to play while Boris Johnson continues his eight-day, three-summit tour at Nato’s meeting in Madrid. But prime minister’s questions carries on in his absence, as a battle of the deputies: Dominic Raab versus Angela Rayner. The deputy PM will come armed with Rayner’s supportive remarks about strikes.

Questions to Scottish Office ministers will cover Nicola Sturgeon’s plans for an independence referendum in October next year.

Ministers appearing at select committees include George Eustice (on environmental protection); Richard Harrington (***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***) and Anne-Marie Trevelyan (the trade deal with Australia).

Sajid Javid will announce a digital health and care plan to tackle Covid backlogs. Lisa Nandy, the shadow levelling up secretary, will address the Local Government Association’s conference in Harrogate on the financial problems facing councils.

Daily Briefing

With or without you

Nicola Sturgeon is proposing 19 October 2023 as the date for [*another referendum on Scottish independence.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9uaWNvbGEtc3R1cmdlb24tc2NvdHRpc2gtaW5kZXBlbmRlbmNlLXJlZmVyZW5kdW0tZGF0ZS1iMjExMTE5Mi5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B67f22046&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760331618%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BCCr2hYZY9y6HNSo6TFyIXw2hlBHDQiizSNWUINu9Vg%3D&reserved=0) The SNP leader, who said the question would be the same as the one on the last ballot – “Should Scotland be an independent country?”, has written to Boris Johnson asking for permission to hold the vote. This is because UK constitutional matters are reserved for the government in London.

So far, the prime minister has refused to grant something called a section 30 order, which would give Sturgeon the power to hold the vote, saying that now is not the time for another divisive election campaign – some 8 years after Scots voted to stay in the union. That position is unlikely to change following the SNP leader’s address to SNPs in Holyrood yesterday.

In a move that has somewhat blindsided Johnson, Sturgeon conceded that the legality of holding a second referendum without consent from London – a “wildcat poll”, like the one seen in Spain’s Catalonia region in 2017 – was contested and demanded an urgent ruling from the supreme court in London. “What I am not willing to do, what I will never do, is allow Scottish democracy to be a prisoner of Boris Johnson or any prime minister,” Sturgeon said.

Whatever your views on Scottish independence, the move by Sturgeon is clever politics for several reasons. Firstly, it eases pressure on the FM from the grassroots of her party, who are demanding another poll [*despite most recent polls showing that there is no majority*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9zY290bGFuZC1jb25zZXJ2YXRpdmUtc2NvdHRpc2gtaW5kZXBlbmRlbmNlLW5pY29sYS1zdHVyZ2Vvbi1iYmMtYjIxMTE1OTEuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Ba71ebad8&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760331618%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=Q5lbY7nHZTaga%2FVQfR3qU3UI0Z%2B%2F87WkYzMzHN8upIg%3D&reserved=0) for independence. Secondly, Sturgeon has got ahead by referring the matter herself to the court, where the issue probably would have ended up anyway.

If judges rule that the vote is legal, she gets what she wants and the poll goes ahead. If they don’t, then Sturgeon will use the decision as a recruiting sergeant for the independence cause and she has vowed to fight the next general election campaign on that single issue. If she wins that election with a majority she will then say that she has a democratic mandate for independence. One way or the other, it looks like there will be a vote on Scotland’s future. The court has confirmed that it has received the referral from the Scottish government’s lord advocate, although it did not put a date on when it would respond.

Defence row

Johnson, with his in-tray already overflowing, responded to Sturgeon’s call by saying that she should focus on getting the economy back on track as he argued that the UK is “stronger together”.

The PM is well into his sojourn abroad as questions about his future continue at home. He landed in Madrid last night for the Nato summit and will meet with other leaders there today to discuss [*Vladimir Putin’s war in Ukraine.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1ydXNzaWEtbnVjbGVhci13YXItbmF0by1wdXRpbi1iMjExMTY4NC5odG1sP3BhZ2U9MyNwb3N0LTcyMjI0Mw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B5cec6b08&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760331618%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2BsZsdAG9Ygr48XndfZblU9W565MgkbGhBFuiqWYy3qY%3D&reserved=0)

But his trip on the world stage threatens to be overshadowed by yet another cabinet row –this time on defence spending. As the PM issued a grand call to his counterparts at the summit to step up Nato spending, Ben Wallace, his own defence secretary, [*criticised the UK’s “smoke and mirrors” military budget.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLW5hdG8tc3BlbmRpbmctd2FsbGFjZS1iMjExMTQzOC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B133a8793&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760331618%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=c7D0n2o4kp7%2Ff1QdwEOUkTQqMohlUpkajw1S3loT7LY%3D&reserved=0)

Wallace said UK forces had for too long survived on “a diet of smoke and mirrors, hollowed-out formations and fantasy savings” – after calling for the PM to commit to a 20 per cent spending increase.

“If governments historically responded every time the NHS has a winter crisis so must they when the threat to the very security which underpins our way of life increases,” Wallace told the Royal United Services Institute think tank.

Labour also accused the PM of “breaking” his own 2019 manifesto promise on defence spending, after a senior government source said the pledge to hike annual military spending by 0.5 per cent above inflation may no longer be met.

On the record

“My determination is to secure a process that allows the people of Scotland, whether yes, no or yet to be decided, to express their views in a legal, constitutional referendum so the majority view can be established fairly and democratically.”

Sturgeon sets out date for second referendum campaign.

From the Twitterati

“The fact the Met is now formally in special measures makes it seem all the more remarkable that Boris Johnson and Priti Patel were so keen to keep Cressida Dick in post.”

George Parker, FT politics editor, on the news that the Metropolitan Police service has been placed in special measures.

Essential reading

John Rentoul, The Independent: [*Nicola Sturgeon has told her party what it doesn’t want to hear on a second independence referendum*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy9uaWNvbGEtc3R1cmdlb24taW5keXJlZjItc25wLXNjb3R0aXNoLWluZGVwZW5kZW5jZS1iMjExMTIwNi5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bf6e048bc&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760487810%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7NttMsSAywJ7UDuhMUbWOinuzabtrBsyeVnI%2F32ekAs%3D&reserved=0) Jess Phillips, The Independent: [*I don’t regret my abortion – stop trying to make women feel guilty for being angry about Roe v Wade*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdm9pY2VzL3JvZS12LXdhZGUtYWJvcnRpb24td29tZW4tamVzcy1waGlsbGlwcy1iMjExMDkyNy5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B24c7bd01&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760487810%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=j8u1r0PKbmXkpWp23gaYt3rJij1LuoLuEQWINvx715Q%3D&reserved=0) Marina Hyde, The Guardian: [*In this government by Grand Designs, Johnson has spaffed the budget and the roof is leaking*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhlZ3VhcmRpYW4uY29tL2NvbW1lbnRpc2ZyZWUvMjAyMi9qdW4vMjgvYm9yaXMtam9obnNvbi10cmVlaG91c2UtZnJlZS1zY2hvb2wtbWVhbHMtdWtyYWluZQ%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bc7d98ef5&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760487810%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=skZAoIUZzefs5FY47lOr8kbN5zUAbIuTyHehIy8EOaQ%3D&reserved=0) Hamish McRae, The Independent: [*What happens to Europe if Russia cuts off the gas?*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F28210734.47825%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy9ydXNzaWEtZ2FzLXN1cHBseS1nZXJtYW55LWV1cm9wZS1mdWVsLWIyMTExMzE5LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bda0a360c&data=05%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C05c119a0c1074770b92e08da599e8d13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637920834760487810%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=r996UCeLbg853dlWE0FoDd8AVKDmRXd%2FjZMpfqe6gjw%3D&reserved=0)

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[*Word war: In Russia-Ukraine war, information became a weapon*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M8-JBT1-DY4H-K417-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Length:** 1189 words

**Byline:** David Klepper

**Highlight:** In the year since Russia invaded Ukraine, disinformation and propaganda have emerged as key weapons in the Kremlin's arsenal

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is the deadliest conflict in Europe since World War II, and the first to see algorithms and [*TikTok*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tiktok) videos deployed alongside fighter planes and tanks.

The online fight has played out on computer screens and smartphones around the globe as Russia used disinformation, propaganda and conspiracy theories to justify its invasion, silence domestic opposition and sow discord among its adversaries.

Now in its second year, the war is likely to spawn even more disinformation as Russia looks to break the will of Ukraine and its allies.

“The natural question is: What's next to come? We know that Russia is preparing for a protracted conflict,” said Samantha Lewis, a threat intelligence analyst with the cybersecurity firm Recorded Future. “Ukrainian morale is almost certainly a key target of Russian psychological operations. And there’s the risk of international complacency."

A look at Russia's disinformation war since the conflict began:

DIVIDE AND CONQUER

The Kremlin's propaganda efforts against Ukraine began many years ago and increased sharply in the months immediately before the invasion, according to Ksenia Iliuk, a Ukrainian disinformation expert who has tracked Russia's information operations.

Russia tailored the messages for specific audiences around the world.

In [*Eastern Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eastern-europe) , Russia spread baseless rumors of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** committing crimes or taking local jobs. In Western Europe, the message was that corrupt Ukrainian leaders couldn't be trusted, and that a long war could escalate or lead to higher food and oil prices.

In Latin America, Russia’s local embassies spread Spanish-language claims suggesting its invasion of Ukraine was a struggle against Western imperialism. Similar messages accusing the U.S. of hypocrisy and belligerence were spread in Asia, Africa and other parts of the world with a history of colonialism.

Russia's information agencies flooded Ukraine with propaganda, calling its military weak and its leaders ineffective and corrupt. But if the message was intended to reduce resistance to the invaders, it backfired in the face of Ukrainian defiance, Iliuk said.

“Russian propaganda has been failing in Ukraine," she said. “Russian propaganda and disinformation are indeed a threat and can be very sophisticated. But it's not always working. It's not always finding an audience.”

BLAME THE VICTIM

Many of Russia's fabrications try to justify the invasion or blame others for atrocities carried out by its forces.

After Russian soldiers tortured and executed civilians in Bucha last spring, images of charred corpses and people shot at close range horrified the world. Russian state TV, however, claimed the corpses were actors, and that the devastation was faked. Associated Press journalists saw the bodies themselves.

Russia initially celebrated a missile strike on a rail station in the Ukrainian town of Kramatorsk, until reports of civilian casualties surfaced. Suddenly Russian news outlets were insisting the missile wasn't theirs.

“When they realized that civilians were killed and injured, they changed the messaging, trying to promote the idea that it was a Ukrainian missile,” said Roman Osadchuk, a research associate at the Atlantic Council’s Digital Forensic Research Lab, which has tracked Russian disinformation since before the war began.

One of the most popular conspiracy theories about the war also had Russian help. According to the claim, the U.S. runs a series of secret germ warfare labs in Ukraine — labs conducting work dangerous enough to justify Russia's invasion.

Like many conspiracy theories, the hoax is rooted in some truth. The U.S. has funded biological research in Ukraine, but the labs are not owned by the U.S., and their existence is far from secret.

The work is part of an initiative called the Biological Threat Reduction Program, which t aims to reduce the likelihood of deadly outbreaks, whether natural or manmade. The U.S. efforts date back to work in the 1990s to dismantle the former Soviet Union’s program for weapons of mass destruction.

EXTENDED WHACK-A-MOLE

As European governments and U.S.-based tech companies looked for ways to turn off the Kremlin's propaganda megaphone, Russia found new ways to get its message out.

Early in the war, Russia relied heavily on state media outlets like RT and Sputnik to spread pro-Russian talking points as well as false claims about the conflict.

Platforms like Facebook and Twitter responded by adding labels to the accounts of Russian state media and government officials. When the European Union called for a ban on Russian state media, YouTube responded by blocking the channels of RT and Sputnik. TikTok, owned by a Chinese company now based in Singapore, did the same.

Russia then pivoted again to tap its diplomats, who have used their Twitter and Facebook accounts to spread false narratives about the war and Russian atrocities. Many platforms are reluctant to censor or suspend diplomatic accounts, giving ambassadors an added layer of protection.

After its state media was muzzled, Russia expanded its use of networks of fake social media accounts. It also evaded bans on its accounts by taking identifying features — such as RT's logo — off of videos before reposting them.

Some efforts were sophisticated, like a sprawling network of fake accounts that linked to websites created to look like real German and British newspapers. Meta identified and removed that network from its platforms last fall.

Others were far cruder, employing fake accounts that were easily spotted before they could even attract a following.

GETTING AHEAD OF THE CLAIMS

Ukraine and its allies scored early victories in the information war by predicting Russia's next moves and by revealing them publicly.

Weeks before the war, U.S. intelligence officials learned that Russia planned to carry out an attack that it would blame on Ukraine as a pretext for invasion. Instead of withholding the information, the government publicized it as a way to disrupt Russia's plans.

By “ prebutting ” Russia's claims, the U.S. and its allies were attempting to blunt the impact of disinformation. The next month, the White House did it again when it disclosed suspicions that Russia might seek to blame a chemical or biological attack on Ukraine.

The invasion prompted tech companies to try new strategies, too. Google, the owner of YouTube, launched a pilot program in Eastern Europe designed to help internet users detect and avoid misinformation about refugees fleeing the war. The initiative utilized short online videos that teach people how misinformation can trick the brain.

The project was so successful that Google now plans to roll out a similar campaign in Germany.

Iliuk, the Ukrainian disinformation researcher, said she believes there's a greater awareness now, a year after the invasion, of the dangers posed by Russian disinformation, and a growing optimism that it can be checked.

“It is very hard, especially when you hear the bombs outside of your window,” she said. “There was this huge realization that this (Russian disinformation) is a threat. That this is something that could literally kill us.”

**Load-Date:** February 23, 2023

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[*LOCALIZE IT: Support for Ukraine varies among US communities*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67JV-JW21-DY4H-K1WW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 16, 2023 Thursday 3:52 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1317 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

EDITORS/NEWS DIRECTORS:

As Russia’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) reaches its first anniversary, humanitarian needs in the war-torn country remain high, especially during the brutal winter.

[*Charities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charities) , churches, nonprofits and individuals continue to work with governments and corporations to meet the needs of Ukrainians, both those still in the country and those who have fled. Pope Francis encouraged people to have a “humble Christmas” and donate the savings to Ukrainians. However, there are signs that support is declining.

[*Support*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/support) also varies widely from community to community. It sets up an important line of local reporting. What is your community doing to support Ukrainians? Is that support decreasing? Has it been effective?

Here are some ways to localize reporting on efforts to provide support — food, medicines, toys, clothing and cash — to where it’s needed the most while also helping readers avoid being fleeced.

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READ [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) 'S LATEST

Ukraine aid support softens in the US: AP-NORC Poll

UN agencies seek $5.6B to help Ukraine, its refugees abroad

Find additional coverage plans around the one-year anniversary of the invasion here.

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HOW TO BE SURE DONATIONS REACH THE PEOPLE

Charity Navigator, which evaluates the financial health and transparency of American nonprofits, recommends donating to registered 501(c)(3) organizations. Donations to those charities are tax deductible and how they have used gifts in the past can be traced through public records they file annually with the Internal Revenue Service. Though few nonprofits have filed their 2022 990 forms, they should still be able to provide documentation of donations reaching Ukrainians in the past year.

For those who prefer giving to the numerous crowdfunding campaigns, GoFundMe still recommends donating to verified fundraisers that are vetted by the platform.

People also donate directly to the Ukrainian government to fund its armed forces through the National Bank of Ukraine. Those donations are not tax deductible in the United States, and many organizations prohibit fundraising for military weapons. However, some believe that’s the most effective way to help Ukrainians fighting the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invasion.

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RED FLAGS THAT A CAMPAIGN MAY BE A SCAM

During times of crisis or anniversaries, scam artists often exploit the emotions of people who want to help. Be suspicious of charitable ads or social media posts that make you especially angry or sad. While advertising often plays on human feelings, fraudsters will try to use graphic images or loaded language to overload a consumer’s common sense.

Misinformation experts say the old maxim still applies even in the internet age: If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Sometimes the desire to help can make us act rashly. If you’re unsure about giving to any organization, take some time to think it over before making the donation.

Be cautious of online charitable appeals. Fake ads for charities can look like the real thing. Avoid giving directly to individuals soliciting donations unless it’s someone you know and trust. Instead, find trusted organizations with experience in philanthropy. Before giving money to an unfamiliar organization, check to see if a charity you already know is reliable is raising money for Ukraine. If you don’t know about a charity’s background, do some internet research.

Check to see where the organization is located, and whether they have a physical address and phone number. Legitimate organizations will; scammers may not. Many organizations, including Charity Navigator and the Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance rate charities based on their transparency and how they use donated money. Look up any group you’re unfamiliar with before giving.

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LOCALIZATION TIPS

Here are some potential sources for local stories about giving:

— State and local officials: In many states, the state attorney general or secretary of state offers tips on how to avoid falling for scam charities. They may have online guides or tip sheets that can help educate consumers. They may also be familiar with charitable scams operating in your community.

— Business groups: Experts at groups like the Better Business Bureau can offer further tips for consumers who want to make sure their donations go to the right place.

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RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS MOBILIZING TO HELP

The Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, a church that dates back more than a century to the founding of parishes by Ukrainian immigrants, launched relief efforts soon after the war started and has raised more than $2 million last year. It says it has partnered with Ukrainian Orthodox churches to distribute hundreds of thousands of dollars in aid within Ukraine and in neighboring countries receiving refugees. It has also provided funds to Ukrainian diplomatic representatives in Istanbul to deliver food and medical aid to Ukraine. Use this URL to see if there’s a parish in your area: [*https://www.uocofusa.org/directories\_parishes*](https://www.uocofusa.org/directories_parishes)

The church also partners with International Orthodox Christian Charities, a 30-year-old U.S.-based relief agency that pools the efforts of several Orthodox groups. The IOCC has also created its own Ukraine relief fund to raise $1 million to provide food and shelter for people in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, as well as relief supplies for refugees in other countries.

Catholic Relief Services, the main U.S. Catholic umbrella group for providing humanitarian relief overseas, has partnered with charities such as Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Poland to provide shelter, meals, hygienic supplies, transport, counseling and other services to those displaced by the war.

The Jewish Federations of North America, which coordinates the work of local Jewish federations, reports raising more than $84 million so far to fund more than 50 NGOs providing humanitarian relief to those affected by the war in Ukraine and neighboring countries, and sending over 100 North American volunteers to aid displaced Ukrainians.

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COMMUNITY CONNECTION

Much of those funds were raised at the local level, through community fundraisers and individual donations. Check with the local affiliates of those groups and other nonprofits in your community.

Questions to ask:

— Have ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** settled in your community? How have local groups supported them?

— What are they doing to support Ukraine during the war? Are they working to send relief materials to Ukraine? If so, what, specifically?

Contact residents, businesses and churches in your community that may have ties to Ukraine or Russia.

Questions to ask:

— Are they in communication with friends and family back home? What do they say they need most in this stage of the war?

— Are they organizing efforts to help Ukrainians? Do they have specific ideas for how local organizations and citizens can assist?

Talk to your local government officials. Many cities and towns across the country have passed resolutions or launched efforts to help Ukraine. Questions to ask:

— Are they aware of any upcoming fundraisers?

— What other steps can a community take to help besides raising money?

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GOING BEYOND MONEY TO SHOW SUPPORT

Part of how to help can be simply learning about Ukrainian communities in your area and engaging with them. Consider reaching out to expatriate Ukrainians and local Ukrainian American organizations, and ask them what besides money would be helpful.

Questions to ask:

— What kinds of gestures — writing letters, holding candlelight vigils, rallying publicly in protest, gathering to enjoy Ukrainian delicacies — would be meaningful expressions of solidarity with those caught up in the war?

— How are these groups using the war to raise greater awareness of Ukraine’s rich history and its predicament in being sandwiched between Russia and the West?

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Localize It is an occasional feature produced by The Associated Press for its customers’ use. Questions can be directed to Katie Oyan at [*koyan@ap.org*](mailto:koyan@ap.org)

**Load-Date:** February 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Varadkar pledges unwavering solidarity with Ukraine on day-long visit to Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RG-SDV1-DY4H-K3K9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 19, 2023 Wednesday 8:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1284 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** The Irish premier visited a range of sites and memorials to pay tribute to those who have died in the war.

**Body**

Ireland’s premier said coming to face to face with the horrors inflicted by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has convinced him that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) will ultimately emerge from the war victorious.

Taoiseach [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) pledged to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes after holding talks with President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

On a day-long unannounced trip to the Ukrainian capital, Mr Varadkar visited the sites of several atrocities committed in the early weeks of the Russian invasion.

He was taken to the church grounds where a mass grave was found and a bridge where fleeing civilians were bombed and laid a soft toy at a memorial for children killed in the conflict, the youngest just two days old.

The Taoiseach also participated in a number of other wreath and flower-laying ceremonies to commemorate those who have lost their lives defending Ukraine.

“I came face to face with the horror that Russia’s forces have inflicted on civilians here in Ukraine,” he said afterwards.

After an hour-long meeting with President Zelensky, Mr Varadkar reiterated Ireland’s support for Ukraine’s accession to the EU and called for the negotiation process to start before the end of the year.

He also committed to taking a lead role to set up international tribunals to prosecute crimes committed in Ukraine and to assist in efforts to de-mine vast swathes of Ukrainian land.

The Taoiseach 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 kakhovka dam and other areas.

“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.”

He added: “We will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes. Ukraine will prevail and Ukraine will be rebuilt.”

Mr Varadkar also revealed that an investigation is under way into an image of a drone downed in Ukraine which had a “Made In Ireland” stamp on it.

Asked how such a part could potentially have got into Russian hands, Mr Varadkar said: “We don’t believe any Irish companies have evaded sanctions, but there are third parties that find ways around the sanctions, and it’s really important that we crack down on that and we do take it very seriously.”

Mr Zelensky thanked the people of Ireland for taking in tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the Russian invasion began.

“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.

Travelling with [*@LeoVaradkar*](https://twitter.com/LeoVaradkar?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) in Kyiv today as he visited sites that still bear the scars of the Russian offensive to capture the Ukrainian capital in the early weeks of the war.[*@PA*](https://twitter.com/PA?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/A4UOqOYPAz*](https://t.co/A4UOqOYPAz) — David Young (@DavidYoungPA) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DavidYoungPA/status/1681633251356471296?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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,” he said.

“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”.

After the engagement with the president, Mr Varadkar then met Ukraine’s Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal and the chairman of the Verkhovna Rada parliament, Ruslan Stefanchuk.

The Taoiseach’s intensive schedule of engagements began in the early morning when he disembarked from an overnight train from Poland to travel to the Kyiv Oblast region on the northern outskirts of the city.

He was taken to the small cities of 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 Ukrainian freelance journalist Oleksandra “Sasha” Kuvshynova, 24.

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 Ukrainian 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 from 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 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.

Later in the day, Mr Varadkar met a Ukrainian actor who was assaulted in Dublin last month.

Oleksandr Hrekov was attacked in Dublin city centre shortly after performing at the city’s Abbey Theatre.

He was part of a Kyiv theatre company that had travelled to Dublin to put on a production of Translations by Irish playwright Brian Friel. The actor required stitches in hospital.

Mr Varadkar visited the Lesya Ukrainka National Academic Drama Theatre company in Kyiv on his visit to the Ukrainian capital.

They performed a song for the Taoiseach before presenting him with a copy of Translations signed by the cast.

The Taoiseach then spoke to Mr Hrekov, shaking his hand and enquiring about his well-being since the assault.

**Load-Date:** July 19, 2023

**End of Document**



[*In pro-Putin Serbia, liberal-minded Russians seek a home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67GN-HWY1-DY4H-K0HF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 6, 2023 Monday 8:20 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1170 words

**Byline:** Jovana Gec and Dusan Stojanovic

**Highlight:** About 200,000 Russians have left their homeland for Serbia since the start of the war in Ukraine

**Body**

At a central square in Serbia's capital of [*Belgrade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgrade) , dozens of Russians gathered recently to denounce President Vladimir Putin's war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , holding up photos of political prisoners from their homeland.

Across the plaza, a billboard touts the Russian propaganda outlet RT, which has launched an online news portal in the country but is banned elsewhere in Europe. Heroic portraits of a bare-chested Putin adorn souvenir T-shirts and coffee mugs, or are painted on city walls.

These conflicting images reflect the complex and delicate relationship these days between Russia and Serbia.

The Slavic country is Moscow's closest ally in Europe, with historic, religious and cultural ties that are bolstered by Kremlin political influence campaigns. Russia backs Serbia’s claim over its former province of Kosovo, which declared independence in 2008 with Western support. And Serbia has refused to impose sanctions on Moscow over the invasion.

At the same time, Serbia wants to join the European Union. Populist President [*Aleksandar Vucic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aleksandar-vucic) has denounced the invasion, and about 200,000 Russians have flooded into the country in the past year, with many seeking a new life in a brotherly land free of Kremlin oppression.

“Here in Belgrade, we are not perceived with hostility, and that means a lot,” said Anastasia Demidova, who arrived in the Balkan nation from Moscow three months ago.

“I’ve been talking to a lot of Serbian people here and other foreigners. When they ask me ‘what are you doing here,’ I say: ‘We are against Putin and for a democratic Russia and we are against the war in Ukraine, obviously,’” she told The Associated Press.

Others say they fled to avoid being drafted or because Western sanctions crippled their businesses or took away their jobs.

As a result, Russian can be heard spoken everywhere in Belgrade, a city of about 2 million. Russian-owned restaurants and bars have sprouted. Private Russian enterprises have mushroomed, especially in the IT sector. The influx has sent the price of real estate soaring.

This reminds some here of the wave of Russians fleeing the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, and many of those who stayed in Serbia left their mark on its culture and art.

These modern Russians, however, are maintaining links to their homeland, including financial ties, said historian Aleksej Timofejev. Unlike their predecessors, he said, they can't go onward to the West because of the sanctions and still need visas to travel to richer countries in Europe.

“They did not choose this country but came here because it is the only one that would have them,” Timofejev added.

The newcomers say they can still feel Moscow’s heavy-handed influence, especially when it comes to Serbians' approval for Putin, via media outlets like RT.

Russian activist Petar Nikitin calls it a “coordinated propaganda effort.”

Nikitin first came to Serbia in the early 2000s. Back then, “this admiration for the Russian government was a lot more marginal ... and I saw it grow exponentially,” he said.

Russians “who recently arrived, who didn’t know much about Serbia before, yes, many of them told me they were completely shocked to see this idolization specifically of Putin, and this picture of Russia that is completely divorced from reality,” Nikitin said.

Moscow has boosted this sentiment in the pro-Russia media by feeding Serbian anger with the West over Kosovo following the breakup of Yugoslavia in the 1990s. The dispute between Serbia and Kosovo has been a source of tension since the war in 1998-99 that ended when a NATO bombing campaign forced Serbia to pull out of the former Serbian province after a bloody crackdown against Kosovo Albanian separatists and civilians

Serbia's rejection of Kosovo's declaration of independence has Moscow's support — one of the reasons why Belgrade maintains friendly relations with Putin and has refused to join Western sanctions.

While Vucic has criticized the invasion of Ukraine, he puts a uniquely Balkan spin on it.

“We do support territorial integrity of Ukraine, as we do support territorial integrity of Serbia,” he told the World Economic Forum in Davos last month. “So … they ask me, ‘Is Crimea part of Ukraine or Russia?’ Yes, it’s part of Ukraine. Donbas is part of Ukraine. If you ask us."

His country "will stick to that, and we will be more loyal to territorial integrity of U.N. member states than many others that changed their stance on territorial integrity of Serbia,” Vucic added, referring to the support for Kosovo's independence from Washington and other countries.

Western officials have stepped up pressure on Vucic to make a decisive turn away from Moscow if Serbia wants to join the EU. They fear that Russia could stir trouble in the Balkans through its Serbian proxies to avert some of the international attention from Ukraine.

Recently, the Russian private military contractor Wagner Group ran advertisements on RT's Serbian-language outlet recruiting Serbs to fight in Ukraine. It is illegal for Serbs to take part in conflicts outside the country, although about a dozen joined Russia-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine after battles broke out there in 2014.

Owned by Putin-linked oligarch Yevgeny Prigozhin, Wagner has taken a prominent and active role in Ukraine and also has sent its mercenaries to several African countries. Last month, U.S. State Department Counselor Derek Chollet held talks with Vucic to voice concerns about Wagner’s activities in Serbia.

Nikitin, the Russian activist who has formed a group called Russian Democratic Community, has teamed up with a Serbian lawyer to file a lawsuit demanding an investigation of the mercenary group. That led to increased threats against more liberal Russians from right-wing Serbian organizations with close links to Wagner and Moscow.

“The threats that I receive directly and to my inbox are quite carefully worded — they are quite obvious,” Nikitin said. “They range from ‘get out of Serbia’ to very obscene insults involving my family. And veiled threats that I am soon going to meet people who are dead.”

Nikitin said his more liberal-minded countrymen in Serbia are eager to show they don’t support Putin’s war or his crackdown on opposition groups at home.

“We want to be very open about who we are and why we hold the views that we hold,” he said.

Artem, a 33-year-old web developer from St. Petersburg, said that he fled to Serbia with his wife and two pets shortly after the war began on Feb. 24. He spoke with the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) on condition that his last name not be used for “safety reasons.”

Speaking at a Belgrade bar that's an unofficial hub for more liberal Russians — its Wi-Fi password is “Nowar2402” — he said he's been helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Serbia through online aid campaigns, providing information on how to start a new life.

Leaving Russia “was some kind of protest because I didn’t agree at all with the war,” Artem said. “War for me is not an answer for any conflict or anything.”

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Follow AP's coverage of the war in Ukraine at: https:// apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine

**Load-Date:** February 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*EXPLAINER: Free courts at stake as EU mulls Poland funding*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KJ-T361-DY4H-K43M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 2, 2022 Thursday 8:45 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1024 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The independence of Poland's courts is at the heart of a dispute with the European Union, which has withheld billions in pandemic recovery funds to Warsaw over the matter

**Body**

Poland's prime minister recently asserted that the vast majority of Polish judges under scrutiny by a controversial judicial chamber were drunk drivers, rapists or thieves.

That claim was quickly rejected by nearly 60 judges being investigated by the so-called Disciplinary Chamber at the Supreme Court of Poland.

In an open letter to Prime Minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki) , they said none among them had committed crimes, and all were instead being targeted for defending judicial independence.

Their fate - and the independence of Polish courts more broadly - is at the heart of a dispute with the European Union, which has withheld billions of euros in pandemic recovery funds to [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) over the matter.

Here is a look at some of the key issues at play as [*European Commission*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-commission) President Ursula von der Leyen visits Warsaw on Thursday to discuss the matter.

WHAT LEVERAGE DOES THE EU HAVE?

For months, the EU has prevented the government in Warsaw from accessing its share of the bloc's pandemic recovery funding over the issue of judicial independence.

Poland badly needs the money as it struggles to absorb around 2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** at a time of nearly 14% inflation.

The European Commission, which is the EU's executive branch, finally approved Poland's pandemic recovery plan Wednesday night but said the release of nearly 36 billion euros ($38.5 billion) in grants and loans would depend on Warsaw reforming its judiciary.

Some are accusing the commission of capitulating to Warsaw, only days after it gave in to Hungary's authoritarian leader by giving Budapest a near-total exemption from an oil embargo on Russia.

It approved Poland's recovery fund as Warsaw has held up a plan to impose an EU-wide minimum 15% tax rate on multinationals.

WHAT DOES THE EU SEE AS THE PROBLEM?

When the governing Law and Justice party first held power, from 2005 to 2007, it saw its ambitions for a conservative remake of Poland derailed by the courts. After the party returned to power in 2015, leader Jaroslaw Kaczynski set about ensuring it had more compliant courts before pushing through other changes.

Once the party gained near-total control over the Constitutional Tribunal, it harnessed it to help enshrine conservative values in the law.

In an example of the court's power to affect regular citizens, it ruled in late 2020 that abortion of congenitally damaged fetuses - previously allowed under the law - was unconstitutional.

The ruling, which further restricted one of Europe's strictest abortion laws, triggered the largest protests in Poland's 30 years of post-communist history.

HOW HAS POLAND'S GOVERNMENT TARGETED JUDGES?

Two other key areas of controversy center on how judges are selected, and how they can be disciplined by being stripped of having their powers to sit in court and issue judgements.

The ruling party changed the rules governing the body which appoints judges to courts, the National Council of the Judiciary. It was established to ensure judges' independence, but since 2018 it has come under the political control of the ruling party. Some of the judges the council has appointed sit on the Disciplinary Chamber of the Supreme Court.

Last year a European umbrella group, the European Network of Councils for the Judiciary, expelled the Polish council, saying it no longer safeguarded the independence of the judiciary or individual judges.

The EU court ruled last year the Disciplinary Chamber to be illegal and ordered Poland to pay a fine of 1 million euros per day fine as long as it operates.

ARE POLISH JUDGES HONEST?

Dariusz Mazur, a Krakow judge, vice-president and the spokesman of Themis, an association of judges, said Polish judges have for years been the target of a disinformation campaign by the ruling party which seeks to discredit them by unfairly depicting them as corrupt.

He recalled a state-funded 2017 billboard campaign that sought to justify new judicial laws by citing the case of a judge who shoplifted. "The information was true, but the judge was already retired for many years and was mentally ill," he said.

Mazur said that only 10% of current disciplinary proceedings involve actual misconduct by judges, while 90% are politically motivated proceedings against judges who defend the independence of the judiciary.

Mazur himself is the subject of four disciplinary proceedings over public statements in defense of an independent judiciary.

John Morijn, a law professor at the University of Groningen in the Netherlands, said that in the years before Law and Justice won power in 2015, Polish courts had a reputation for being slow but not corrupt.

The allegations made by ruling authorities amount to "a witch hunt against judges," he said.

WHAT DOES THE GOVERNMENT SAY?

The Polish government has repeatedly denounced EU court rulings and attempts to link funding to democratic behavior as attacks on the country's sovereignty.

It argues that EU institutions have no right to interfere in judicial matters and that Warsaw has the right to shape its own legal system.

In fact, EU member states are free to organize their own judiciaries as long as their systems respect the principle of judicial independence.

WHAT CHANGES DOES THE EU WANT?

The European Commission has described "milestones" Poland should reach to unlock funds. These include abolishing the Disciplinary Chamber, reforming the disciplinary regime and reinstating unlawfully dismissed judges.

None of these conditions have been met.

A plan approved by parliament last week abolishes the Disciplinary Chamber and replaces it with a Chamber for Professional Accountability that would operate in much the same way. It would be filled with judges chosen by the disputed National Council of the Judiciary.

And only one suspended judge, Pawel Juszczyszyn, has so far had his suspension lifted. After 839 days, he returned to work at the District Court of Olsztyn in recent days only to learn that he was being transferred from working on civil law cases - his field for more than 20 years - to family law. He was also ordered to go on leave.

"These decisions are made in gross violation of the law," Juszczyszyn said Wednesday, vowing to fight them.

**Load-Date:** June 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian offensive turns to key Donbas city, heavy shelling*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65HD-DYF1-DY4H-K3YP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 23, 2022 Monday 5:08 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1057 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russian forces are bombarding a key city in eastern Ukraine with artillery and missiles in an attempt to take more of the Donbas region

**Body**

Buoyed by a visit from a neighbor and ally, Ukrainians were digging in to defend the eastern city of Sievierodonetsk, which came under heavy bombardment from Russian forces trying to take the industrial area known as the Donbas.

Sievierodonetsk is the main city under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province, which together with Donetsk province make up the Donbas.

Luhansk's governor, Serhii Haidai, said Sunday that the Russians were "simply intentionally trying to destroy the city ... engaging in a scorched-earth approach."

He said the Russians had occupied several towns and cities in Luhansk after indiscriminate, 24-hour shelling. Haidai said Moscow was concentrating forces and weaponry there, bringing in forces from Kharkiv to the northwest, Mariupol to the south, and from inside Russia.

The sole working hospital in Sievierodonetck has only three doctors and supplies for 10 days, he said.

The Ukrainian military said Russian forces had mounted an unsuccessful attack on Oleksandrivka, a village outside of the city.

While Russian and Ukrainian forces battled along a 551-kilometer (342-mile) wedge of Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland, Poland's president traveled to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) on Sunday to support Ukraine's [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) aspirations, becoming the first foreign leader to address the Ukrainian parliament since the start of the war.

President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) received a standing ovation when he thanked the lawmakers for letting him speak where "the heart of a free, independent and democratic Ukraine beats." Duda said Ukraine need not submit to conditions given by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Unfortunately, in Europe there have also been disturbing voices in recent times demanding that Ukraine yield to Putin's demands," he said. "I want to say clearly: Only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future. Only Ukraine has the right to decide for itself."

It was Duda's second visit to Kyiv since April. Poland has become an important ally of Ukraine, welcoming millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and becoming a gateway for Western humanitarian aid and weapons. It is also a transit point for some foreign fighters who have volunteered to fight the Russian forces.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the visit "a historic opportunity not to lose such strong relations, built through blood, through Russian aggression. All this not to lose our state, not to lose our people."

Duda credited the U.S. and President Joe Biden for unifying the West in supporting Ukraine and imposing sanctions against Moscow.

"Kyiv is the place from which one clearly sees that we need more America in Europe, both in the military and in this economic dimension," said Duda, a right-wing populist leader who clearly preferred the former U.S. president, Donald Trump, over Biden in the 2020 election.

Poland is ramping up efforts to win over EU members who are more hesitant about accepting Ukraine into the bloc. Zelenskyy has urged the 27-member EU to expedite his country's request to join, and it is to be discussed at a Brussels summit in late June.

France's European Affairs minister Clement Beaune on Sunday told Radio J it would be a "long time" before Ukraine gains EU membership, perhaps up to two decades. "We have to be honest," he said. "If you say Ukraine is going to join the EU in six months, or a year or two, you're lying."

On the battlefield, grinding, town-by-town fighting continued as Russian troops try to expand the territory that Moscow-backed separatists have held since 2014 in the Donbas.

To bolster its defenses, Ukraine's parliament voted Sunday to extend martial law and mobilize the armed forces for a third time, until Aug. 23.

Ukrainian officials have said little since the war began about the extent of their country's casualties, but Zelenskyy said at a news conference Sunday that 50 to 100 Ukrainian fighters were being killed, apparently each day, in the east.

In a general staff morning report, Russia said it was also preparing to resume its offensive on Slovyansk, a city in Donetsk province that saw fierce fighting last month after Moscow's troops backed away from Kyiv.

The conflict was not confined to Ukraine's east. Powerful explosions were heard early Monday, for example, in Korosten, about 160 kilometers (100 miles) west of Kyiv, the town's deputy mayor said. It was the third straight day of apparent attacks in the Zhytomyr District, Ukrainian news agencies reported.

In Enerhodar, a Russian-held city 281 kilometers (174 miles) northwest of Mariupol, an explosion Sunday injured the Moscow-appointed mayor at his residence, Ukrainian and Russian news agencies reported. Ukraine's Unian news agency said a bomb planted by "local partisans" wounded 48-year-old Andrei Shevchuk, whose lives near the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, Europe's largest.

On Monday, a Ukrainian court was expected to reach a verdict for a Russian soldier who was the first to go on trial for an alleged war crime. The 21-year-old sergeant, who has admitted to shooting a Ukrainian man in the head in a village in the northeastern Sumy region on Feb. 28, could get life in prison if convicted.

Ukrainian Prosecutor General Iryna Venediktova has said her office was prosecuting war crimes cases against 41 Russian soldiers for offenses that included bombing civilian infrastructure, killing civilians, rape and looting.

In other developments, Ukraine's first lady, Olena Zelenska, gave a rare interview to national broadcaster ICTV alongside her husband and said she has hardly seen him since the war began.

"Our family, like all Ukrainian families, is now separated," she said, adding that she speaks to him mostly by phone.

"Unfortunately, we cannot sit together, have dinner with the whole family, talk about everything," she said.

Zelenskyy called the interview itself "a date on air," and the couple, who have two children, joked in front of the journalists.

"We are joking, but we are really waiting, like everyone else, to be reunited, like all families in Ukraine who are separated now, waiting for their relatives and friends who want to be together again," he said.

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Becatoros reported from Donetsk. Associated Press journalists Yuras Karmanau in Lviv, Andrea Rosa in Kharkiv and other [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) staffers around the world contributed.

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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 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*James O'Brien tears apart Priti Patel's Ukraine refugee policy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y6-1Y11-JBNF-W0P5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 12:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 111 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

James O'Brien has laid into [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) for hers and the [*government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) 's handling of the [***Ukraine***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugee crisis***.

Hundreds of thousands of [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) are fleeing the country as a result of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion, and [*LBC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lbc) 's O'Brien is not happy about the home secretary's refugee policy.

UK ministers have been slammed for allegedly only issuing 50 [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) for migrants, as millions more are expected to flee Ukraine as the war continues.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome)

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters) to sign up to our free newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Senate ships $40B Ukraine aid bill to Biden for signature*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65GS-HFY1-JBNF-W0MS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 20, 2022 Friday 5:28 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1051 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The Senate has whisked a $40 billion package of military, economic and food aid for Ukraine and U.S. allies to final congressional approval

**Body**

The [*Senate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senate) has whisked a $40 billion package of military, economic and food aid for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and U.S. allies to final congressional approval, putting a bipartisan stamp on America's biggest commitment yet to turning Russia's invasion into a painful quagmire for Moscow.

The legislation, approved 86-11 Thursday was backed by every voting Democrat and most Republicans. While many issues under President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) have collapsed under party-line gridlock, Thursday's lopsided vote signaled that both parties were largely unified about sending Ukraine the materiel it needs to fend off Russian President Vladimir Putin's more numerous forces.

"I applaud the Congress for sending a clear bipartisan message to the world that the people of the United States stand together with the brave people of Ukraine as they defend their democracy and freedom," Biden said in a written statement.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the United States. "This is a demonstration of strong leadership and a necessary contribution to our common defense of freedom," he said in his nightly video address to the nation.

With control of Congress at stake in elections less than six months off, all "no" votes came from Republicans. The same thing happened in last week's 368-57 House vote, fueling campaign-season Democratic warnings that a nationalist wing of the GOP was in the thrall of former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) and his isolationist, America First preferences.

Trump, who still wields clout in the party, has accused Biden of throwing money at Ukraine while mothers lack baby formula, a crisis sparked by a supply chain problem over which the government has scant impact.

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., called it "beyond troubling" that Republicans were opposing the Ukraine assistance. "It appears more and more that MAGA Republicans are on the same soft-on-Putin playbook that we saw used by former President Trump," said Schumer, using the Make America Great Again acronym Democrats are using to cast Republicans as extremists.

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., a strong backer of the measure, warned his GOP colleagues that a Russian victory would move hostile forces ever closer to the borders of crucial European trading partners. That would prompt higher American defense spending and tempt China and other countries with territorial ambitions to test U.S. resolve, he said.

"The most expensive and painful thing America could possibly do in the long run would be to stop investing in sovereignty, stability and deterrence before it's too late," McConnell said.

Passage came as Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. had drawn down another $100 million worth of Pentagon weapons and equipment to ship to Kyiv, bringing total U.S. materiel sent there since the invasion began to $3.9 billion. He and other administration officials had warned that authority would be depleted by Thursday, but the new legislation will replenish the amount available by more than $8 billion.

Overall, around $24 billion in the measure is for arming and equipping Ukrainian forces, helping them finance weapons purchases, replacing U.S. equipment dispatched to the theater and paying for American troops deployed in nearby countries.

There is also $9 billion to keep Ukraine's government afloat and $5 billion to feed countries around the globe reliant on Ukraine's now diminished crop yields. And there is money to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the U.S., seize Russian oligarchs' assets, reopen the U.S. embassy in Kyiv and prosecute Russian war crimes.

The measure, which officials have said is designed to last through September, tripled the size of the initial $13.6 billion in Ukraine aid that lawmakers approved shortly after the February invasion.

The combined $54 billion price tag exceeds what the U.S. has spent annually on all its military and economic foreign assistance in recent years, and approaches Russia's yearly military budget.

"Help is on the way, really significant help. Help that could make sure that the Ukrainians are victorious," said Schumer, voicing a goal that seemed nearly unthinkable when Russia first launched its brutal attack.

If the war drags on, as seems plausible, the U.S. may have to eventually decide whether to spend more even as inflation, huge federal deficits and a potential recession loom. Under those circumstances, winning bipartisan approval of any future aid bill could become tougher, especially as November draws near and cooperation between the parties frays.

Several potential 2024 GOP presidential contenders voted for the measure, including Sens. Ted Cruz of Texas, Tom Cotton of Arkansas and Marco Rubio of Florida. Another - Josh Hawley of Missouri - voted no. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin and Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, who perhaps face this fall's toughest reelection races among GOP senators, backed the measure.

Three Democratic senators missed the vote. Chris Van Hollen of Maryland is recovering from what he's called a minor stroke. Sherrod Brown of Ohio's office said he woke up "not feeling well," took precautionary tests at George Washington University Hospital, was resting at home and plans to return to the Capitol next week. Jacky Rosen of Nevada's office said she was attending her daughter's law school graduation.

Biden had proposed a $33 billion plan that lawmakers bolstered with added defense and humanitarian spending. He had to drop his request to include $22.5 billion more to fuel the government's continued fight against the pandemic, spending that was opposed by many Republicans and got entwined in a politically complicating fight over immigration.

No Republican opposed to the legislation spoke during Thursday's debate. After passage, Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., among the 11 conservatives who voted "no," questioned whether voters would support the bill if Congress asked them to pay for it.

"I wonder if Americans across our country would agree if they had been shown the costs, if they had been asked to pay for it," said Paul. "We simply borrow it. 'Put it on my tab' is what Congress says."

Paul, who often opposes U.S. intervention and makes a habit of derailing bills on the brink of approval, had used Senate procedures to upend Schumer's and McConnell's plans to approve the Ukraine assistance last week.

**Load-Date:** May 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Protesters vent fury at French company for staying in Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65F3-DF81-JBNF-W36M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2022 Thursday 8:58 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1007 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** In the weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine, a protest movement was born in Poland urging people to boycott companies that have chosen to keep operating in Russia

**Body**

A man in a Russian military uniform stood at the entrance of a large home improvement store in Poland's capital, saluting shoppers and thanking them for funding Russian President Vladimir Putin's war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

His chest bedecked with medals, Polish activist Arkadiusz Szczurek was protesting at the French-owned retailer Leroy Merlin in Warsaw as shoppers flocked to buy plants and gardening equipment with spring's arrival. Some shoppers turned around to go elsewhere. Others were indifferent or irritated.

"Millions of Ukrainians are forced to flee the bombs and shooting, (and) people are dying," Ukrainian activist Natalia Panchenko said at the small rally last weekend. "But they keep doing business and see no problem with financing the war."

It marked the latest protest in Poland over Leroy Merlin's decision to keep operating 112 stores in Russia, even as many other Western companies have suspended operations there. Leroy Merlin wouldn't comment other than to say it's not responsible for the war. It's among the foreign companies with a large footprint in Russia that have had to choose between taking the financial hit of leaving or face damage to their reputation by staying.

It is a painful choice for companies based in countries like France and Italy, which do extensive business in Russia and are keeping their sights on future trade once the war is over. However, many corporations with big stakes in Russia have pulled out and are enduring the hit to their bottom lines.

McDonald's closed its 850 stores in Russia in March, but is still paying its 62,000 employees. The fast-food chain said it's losing $55 million per month in sales from Russia and expects to lose $100 million worth of inventory because of store closures. Energy company Shell says it's taking a $3.9 billion charge to cover the cost of exiting investments in Russia, while rival BP said it's taking $25.5 billion in pretax charges to exit its holdings in Russian energy producer Rosneft.

Other companies are still partially operating in Russia. PepsiCo, Nestle, drugmaker Johnson & Johnson are still supplying essentials like medications and baby formula while halting nonessential sales. Italian tiremaker Pirelli and Danish brewer Carlsberg say they are operating just enough to support their Russian workers.

Leroy Merlin, with stores similar to Home Depot, is among the foreign companies with the highest revenue in Russia. It says it has helped ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, including its workers. Parent company Adeo Group in Paris didn't reply to multiple requests for comment.

Such [*French*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/french) companies with significant operations in Russia have been singled out by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as aiding Russia's war effort. In an address to the French parliament in March, he mentioned carmaker Renault, Leroy Merlin and two other retailers belonging to Adeo Group: supermarket chain Auchan and sporting goods chain Decathlon.

Soon after, Renault and Decathlon said they would suspend Russian operations, but Leroy Merlin and Auchan stayed.

To many in Ukraine, where Leroy Merlin shut its six stores amid bombings, that feels like a betrayal. In Poland, which borders Ukraine and has accepted more refugees than another other country, many people are highly critical of the French company.

Poland is a member of NATO, but there are still fears it also could become a target of the Kremlin's revived colonial ambitions, particularly if Russia claims victory in Ukraine.

Dominik GÄsiorowski, top organizer of the Polish Leroy Merlin Boycott movement, believes withholding business to a company that's a major taxpayer in Russia is one of the few concrete things regular people can do to influence the outcome of the war.

"If we, as Western nations, support businesses staying in Russia, we are paying Putin to invade us eventually," he said. "I refuse to believe that my people, Polish people, cannot make such a small gesture of solidarity during a genocide as choosing another shop a few kilometers away."

During last weekend's picketing, activists held a poster of a container alongside Leroy Merlin's green logo, calling it a "bin for a corpse" with the message "Leroy Kremlin supports the Russian invasion."

It was designed by artist BartÅomiej KieÅbowicz, who also has created fake labels people have been sticking on shelves inside Leroy Merlin stores, including one for a broom and dustpan "for sweeping away guilt." There is another for hammers - "for killing."

Andrzej Kubisiak, deputy director of the Polish Economic Institute, said it's too soon to know the full effect of the protests but that an app monitoring movement on streets has showed less traffic going to Leroy Merlin, Auchan and Decathlon stores. A Polish bank analysis of card payments also shows a fall in purchases.

But Kubisiak said historically boycott movements lose steam over time, and he expects this one will, too, as Poles, facing inflation of over 12%, will be guided by consumer prices above all else. All three French retailers are known for their competitive prices.

Polish shoppers' reaction to the protests has been mixed.

WiesÅaw Bobowik, a 64-year-old teacher, said he found the boycott ridiculous and wasn't persuaded to shop elsewhere.

"I would be hurting the French, and they are our friends," he said, loading potted plants and large bags of soil into his car trunk. "Why would I do that?"

The activists also are encouraging people not to shop at Auchan. GÄsiorowski said the movement is focusing mostly on Leroy Merlin because it was the foreign company with the second-highest revenue in Russia in 2020, following cigarette maker Philip Morris International, which has suspended investments. Auchan was No. 6.

But the movement, he stresses, is larger than Leroy Merlin.

"Every other company is looking at them as an example," he said. "If they succeed while collaborating with Putin, all the major players will return to Russia."

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Colleen Barry in Milan, Anne D'Innocenzio in New York, Dee-Ann Durbin in Detroit, and Kelvin Chan in London, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2022

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[*Private school heads criticise 'frustrating' visa process for Ukrainian pupils*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65D6-33Y1-JBNF-W1FC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 8, 2022 Sunday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 965 words

**Byline:** Catherine Lough

**Highlight:** Heads say the visa process is preventing pupils in danger from reaching them quickly.

**Body**

Private school heads who have welcomed refugee pupils to their schools have said the visa processing for vulnerable students travelling to the UK is too slow.

Steve Marshall-Taylor, head of senior school at [*Brighton College*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brighton-college) , said his school had made 17 offers of free places for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with 16 having already arrived.

An experienced pastoral teacher is working with the students individually to create a suitable curriculum and gauge their level of English.

What I think we're aware of is a sort of ongoing sense of them navigating the trauma of the destruction of their home country but also so many people that they've left behind, and friends

Steve Marshall-Taylor

"What I think we're aware of is a sort of ongoing sense of them navigating the trauma of the destruction of their home country, but also so many people that they've left behind, and friends," he said.

"Every day they are navigating what we see on the news or hear on the radio," he said.

Mr Marshall-Taylor said visas were not being processed quickly enough, with a host parent who was a trained legal professional spending five to six hours filling in the forms with the Ukrainian mother and daughter she was supporting.

"It was incredibly difficult just to complete the forms and then there was a huge time lag for almost all of them, I think, and that sort of void of uncertainty ... we knew we had wonderful families, we had school places, we had uniform and everything was ready, we had a sense we could provide some good opportunities, but there has just been this wait."

A silver lining of this, he said, was that pupils had become involved in the democratic process through writing to their local MP to ask about the progress of the visas.

Samantha Price, head of Benenden School and president of the Girls' Schools Association, said her school had opened up a boarding place for a Ukrainian student this term, so that she could start studying her [*A-levels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/levels) in science in September, while two day school places had been offered to other refugee pupils.

She added that for the student who would be boarding, "it's complex and it's really frustrating".

"She's going to be travelling on her own and her mother has managed to get her out of the Ukraine - they live in Odesa. But her visa hasn't come through ... because she's going to be a minor travelling on her own and there's a worry about trafficking."

The girl can no longer stay with her mother in [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , so she could either travel with her mother back to Odesa or to the UK, but at the moment the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) is not granting her a visa.

The girl's proposed guardian in the UK has now offered to fly to Moldova, which Ms Price said she hoped would be "a way forward".

Ms Price added that she understood the concerns about trafficking, "but I think there must be a better system if guardians over here through an expected scheme have been recognised, there must be a way then for those pupils being able to fly over without having to go through this level of delay and uncertainty".

Ms Price said that if a guardian had gone through barring checks pupils should be able to fly over on their own to speed up the visa process.

She said her school was offering "bespoke" support to the pupils - one pupil who has limited English will be able to take qualifications in Russian as well as studying biology and English as an additional language.

"It's also the fact that these students are coming from a war zone and ensuring that they have the right levels of pastoral care, with trauma counselling and so on."

The boarding school pupil's peers have opted to "kit out" her dorm in order to welcome her, with duvet covers, cushions, fairy lights and plants "so that when she arrives she has a happy dormitory to go into", while parent donors have offered to cover the cost of any extra-curricular trips or activities for the pupils.

Tim Firth, headmaster of Wrekin College, said his school had a link with the country, as there were four Ukrainian pupils on roll prior to the conflict, and that he had been in contact with them to ensure they had not gone back to Ukraine over the holidays.

The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference, a group of leading UK private schools, wrote to Wrekin asking if they could help and he offered up free places for refugee pupils fleeing the conflict.

One girl is due to start in September in the sixth form, and two younger pupils in key stage three have already started at the school, as they are related to a British-Ukrainian family at the school.

"Apart from it being a privilege and proper to help, Ukrainian pupils are often really impressive," he said, adding "their English is tremendous".

"So this is about them helping us and lifting our community," he said.

The school's Wrekin International Group has held a parade in honour of Ukraine and Mr Firth said pupils were having their "eyes opened" about the realities of the conflict.

"If you're sitting next to somebody who's telling you on the way to mass about what happened to them, that's a better lesson than most of us get while we're at school ... You just really have your eyes opened, and that sort of soft education's going on all the time, and that's PSHE, without being pompous, at its best."

Mr Firth said he was using his school's foundation, which raises money for bursaries in order to provide free places but that it would be helpful for the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) to fund places, particularly at boarding schools.

"Would we like to do more? Gosh, yes. Is money preventing us from doing it? To a large extent it is. So would it be great if the Government funded places at very good schools like Wrekin, yes."

"Boarding schools in particular, they can take children and it's not ridiculous to think that they could take children of Ukrainian parents still out there," he said.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2022

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[*Live Updates | UK says Russia trying to boost troop numbers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6568-VGP1-DY4H-K09H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 10, 2022 Sunday 9:55 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1110 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Britain's Ministry of Defense says that Russia's armed forces are seeking to respond to mounting losses by boosting troop numbers with personnel who had been discharged from military service since 2012

**Body**

LONDON --Britain's Ministry of Defense says that Russia's armed forces are seeking to respond to mounting losses by boosting troop numbers with personnel who had been discharged from military service since 2012.

In an intelligence update on Twitter, the ministry also said Sunday that the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) military's efforts to "generate more fighting power" also include trying to recruit from Trans-Dniester, a breakaway region in Moldova that borders [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Russia maintains some 1,500 troops in the region, which is not internationally recognized.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Zelenskyy: Russian aggression not limited to Ukraine alone

- Zelenskyy, in [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) interview, says he seeks peace despite atrocities

- Poland-Ukraine ties seen as target of Russian disinformation

- War Crimes Watch: A devastating walk through Bucha's horror

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

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

BORODIANKA, Ukraine - Firefighters continued searching Saturday for survivors or the dead in the debris of destroyed buildings in a northern Ukrainian town that was occupied for weeks by Russian forces.

Residents of Borodianka expect to find dozens of victims under the rubble of the several buildings destroyed during fighting between Russian forces and Ukrainian troops. The town is about 75 kilometers (47 miles) northwest of the capital of [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) and had more than 12,000 residents.

Russian troops occupied Borodianka while advancing towards Kyiv in an attempt to encircle it. They retreated during the last days of March following fierce fighting. The town is without electricity, natural gas or other services.

A 77-year-old resident, Maria Vaselenko, said her daughter and son-in-law's bodies have been under rubble for 36 days because Russian soldiers would not allow residents to search for loved ones or their bodies. She said her two teenage grandchildren escaped to Poland but are now orphans.

"The Russians were shooting. And some people wanted to come and help, but they were shooting them," she told The Associated Press. "They were putting explosives under dead people."

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MARIUPOL, Ukraine --Shelling by Russian forces of Ukraine's key port of Mariupol on the Sea of Azov has collapsed several humanitarian corridors and made conditions seldom right for people to leave.

It was not clear Saturday how many people remained trapped in the city, which had a prewar population of 430,000. Ukrainian officials have put the number at about 100,000, but earlier this week, British defense officials said 160,000 people remained trapped in the city.

Ukrainian troops have refused to surrender the city, though much of it has been razed.

Resident Sergey Petrov said Saturday that recently two shells struck around him in quick succession, but neither exploded upon landing. He was in his garage at the time and said his mother later told him, "I was born again."

"A shell flew in and broke up into two parts but it did not explode, looks like it did not land on the detonator but on its side," he said.

He added that when another shell flew in and hit the garage, "I am in shock. I don't understand what is happening. I have a hole in my garage billowing smoke. I run away and leave everything. I come back in several hours and find another shell lying there, also unexploded."

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ATHENS, Greece - A Ukrainian soccer club on Saturday opened a series of charity games on a government-backed "Global Tour for Peace" wearing the names of heavily bombarded cities on its jerseys.

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

Its first game Saturday was a 1-0 loss to Greek league leader Olympiakos.

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 already was displaced from its home of Donetsk in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Playing in the Athens area on Saturday, Shakhtar players replaced their names on the back of their jerseys with those of cities bombarded by Russian forces, including Mariupol.

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BUCHA, Ukraine --Civilians remaining in Bucha lined up Saturday for food donated by the local church in the battered Kyiv suburb where Ukrainian forces and journalists reported evidence of war crimes after Russian soldiers withdrew.

With other civilians fleeing in the wake of Russia's invasion, most of the people remaining in Bucha were elderly, poor or unable to leave loved ones. Russian troops withdrew more than a week ago.

Volunteer Petro Denysyuk told The Associated Press that he and fellow church friends started providing food, with a wide array of basic foodstuffs and hot meals.

"We have gathered together with the youth from our church and prepared food for the needy," Denysyuk said. "We prepared pilaf, boiled eggs, prepared meat, sausages, noodles."

Ukrainian forces and journalists that went into Bucha saw bodies strewn in the streets, evidence of summary executions and the remains of people who could not have threatened soldiers. Russia has denied accusations of war crimes and accused Kyiv of staging them.

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KYIV, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy thanked the leaders of Britain and Austria for their visits to Kyiv on Saturday and pledges of further support.

In his daily late-night video address to the nation, Zelenskyy also thanked European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau for a global fundraising event that raised more than 10 billion euros ($11 billion) for Ukrainians who have had to flee their homes.

Zelenskyy said democratic countries were united in working to stop the war. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer became the latest of several European rulers to meet Zelenskky in Kyiv.

"Because Russian aggression was not intended to be limited to Ukraine alone, to the destruction only of our freedom and our life," he said. "The entire European project is a target for Russia."

Zelenskyy repeated his call for a complete embargo on Russian oil and gas, calling them the sources of Russia's "self-confidence and impunity."

"But Ukraine does not have time to wait. Freedom does not have time to wait. When tyranny begins its aggression against everything that keeps the peace in Europe, action must be taken immediately," he said.

He added: "And an oil embargo must be the first step. Moreover, by all democratic states, the entire civilized world. Then Russia will feel it. Then it will be an argument for them to seek peace, to stop the senseless violence."

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Excluding trans women who 'don't look feminine enough' from female toilets is cruel*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654Y-MXK1-JCS0-D03B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 4, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 31

**Length:** 1153 words

**Body**

Maya Forstater and others want to exclude trans women from women's toilets. Would they welcome trans men? I suspect that the presence of bearded, gruff-voiced blokes might worry them. Or perhaps they think all trans people should use the men's toilets?

I know from personal experience that a row of men at a urinal can find it very disconcerting when they see a woman in the mirror. And the real threat to a trans woman's safety in those circumstances is surely greater than the imagined threat of a non-trans man abusing equality legislation to gain entrance to women's spaces.

Of course, Caroline Ffiske, Forstater and Heather Binning are not asking to see original birth certificates at the door to the loos. They want to exclude those trans women who don't pass as women, and will never know or care about those who do. That is just cruel.

Rachael Padman Newmarket, Suffolk

<strong>Robinson's holiday cut short</strong>

Whatever one thinks of Tommy Robinson, his entry into Mexico being refused followed by his deportation from Mexico when on a family holiday (News, yesterday) is ridiculous and an infringement on his civil liberties. In a video he posted from his detainment area in Mexico, he conjectures that it was because of his views on Islam.

Can someone not have a view on religion without being persecuted for it? Is this the New Inquisition? One is reminded of Ian Paisley Sr's views on the Pope, for example. Apparently, at a loyalist rally in 1969, he said that Catholics "breed like rabbits and multiply like vermin". I recall Noam Chomsky saying the Bible was "probably the most genocidal book in the literary canon".

We have laws against religious hatred and incitement to violence. These laws should be followed and those breaking them should be charged and given their day in court. But it's wrong to condemn someone for the person they are perceived to be or for comments it is assumed they will make.

Tommy Robinson was travelling to Mexico with his children for a holiday in Cancun. By persecuting these individuals, we are collectively constructing a society that will eventually take away everybody's freedoms unless we make a stand at some point along the way.

Louis Shawcross County Down, Northern Ireland

<strong>What is the point of the Tories?</strong>

If the Tories can't - or won't - help more than 2.5 million British citizens, taxpayers and voters to put enough food on the table and warmth in their homes for themselves and their kids, in the worst cost of living crisis in nearly a lifetime, then what is the point of them?

Ian Henderson Norwich

<strong></strong>

<strong>Just when you thought that the "Nasty Party" couldn't get any nastier, they prove us wrong. The chancellor's spring statement was merely rubbing salt into the wounds of those already suffering acute poverty and ensuring that many more would join them in the food bank queues.</strong>

<strong>The so-called help with energy costs is both totally inadequate and designed to plunge people further into debt given that part of it is effectively a loan to be repaid. The only hope is that those Tory backbenchers with a conscience, such as David Davis, are correct in assuming that this government's fiscal policies will come back to bite them at the next general election.</strong>

<strong>Unfortunately, this is a long time to wait for those millions suffering abject poverty and the lasting trauma that this is bound to cause. In addition, even if we get a government of a different hue, it will still take some time to reverse the legacy left by this cruel and unfeeling administration.</strong>

<strong>David Felton Cheshire</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>Tolerance and understanding</strong></strong>

<strong>Your regular contributor to the letters pages, Dr Munjed Farid Al Qutob, expresses sentiments with which I often agree. His opinion that we are already in a third world war is almost certainly correct (Ukraine is a stark reminder of war's incalculable cost, yesterday).</strong>

<strong>Putin's invasion of Ukraine has been on the cards for a long time. Russia is a very powerful nation, most of whose citizens seem to be thoroughly brainwashed, and with a long history of suppression and acceptance of dictatorship.</strong>

<strong>China, too, keeps the lid on its population's opinions. Both these nations are bubbles waiting to burst. Elsewhere in the world, conflicts show no signs of resolution, right-wing ideologies are gaining footholds everywhere and the chaos of climate change is starting to make itself felt.</strong>

<strong>At this point in the evolution of planet Earth, humanity needs tolerance, understanding and cooperation from all quarters if it is to survive. This appears to be the opposite of what is happening at present.</strong>

<strong>Steve Edmondson Cambridge</strong>

<strong><br /></strong>

<strong><strong>If only it were fantasy...</strong></strong>

<strong>The news from Ukraine shows Russian armed forces behaving like the orcs in Lord of the Rings, with their indiscriminate bombardment of cities and lawless killing and maiming of civilians. Yet Russians, unlike Tolkien's orcs, are not a brutish, aggressive and malevolent race - far from it.</strong>

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<strong><br /></strong>

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<strong>There was a dalliance with the philosophy of herd immunity at the beginning of the outbreak that contributed to seeding a nationwide infection prior to the first lockdown, and an ideological reluctance to enlist the assistance of local authorities, preferring to invest in expensive and less effective systems of tracking and tracing. We should also remember the failure to respond promptly to new variants and the hasty relaxation of restrictions.</strong>

<strong>So, in all, a significant percentage of the UK's 165,000 coronavirus deaths were avoidable. But then again, sound bites may distract in the short term but real, effective governance actually requires equal measures of compassion, effectiveness and, perhaps most importantly, accountability.</strong>

<strong>Nigel Plevin Somerset</strong>

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Excluding trans women who don't 'pass' from women's toilets is cruel*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654T-HYR1-JBNF-W3DY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 3, 2022 Sunday 2:53 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 1213 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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County Down, Northern Ireland

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Cambridge

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)

Lord of the Rings

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Nigel Plevin

Somerset

**Load-Date:** April 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rishi Sunak’s five pledges: What are they and can they be achieved? -OLD*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:677P-51W1-DY4H-K30J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 4, 2023 Wednesday 6:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1160 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** Labour was quick to accuse Rishi Sunak of making promises he would ‘struggle not to keep’, after the Prime Minister delivered a major speech.

**Body**

The [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) used his first major speech of the new year to set out five pledges he said would address “the people’s priorities”, including halving inflation by the end of the year and and bringing down [*NHS*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nhs) waiting lists.

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) , addressing an audience in Stratford in east London, called them “five foundations on which to build a better future for our children and grandchildren”.

Labour was quick to accuse Mr Sunak of making promises he would “struggle not to keep”, but what commitments did the still-new Prime Minister make and what will they mean for the country over the next 12 months?

1. Inflation

Mr Sunak said that the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) will “halve inflation this year to ease the cost of living and give people financial security”.

Soaring inflation, in part driven by the war in Ukraine, has been among the biggest challenges for the Government and the rising cost of living has caused misery for millions of households.

The Prime Minister, who was chancellor under Boris Johnson, told reporters that the halving of inflation, currently at 10.7% according to the Consumer Prices Index, would be part of a “path to restoring inflation back to where it belongs, which is the 2% inflation target that we set the Bank of England”.

Hopes had already growing that the worst inflation has now passed, with rates forecasted to ease back sharply throughout 2023.

Economists have said that inflation will steadily fall back over 2023, and halve as the Prime Minister hopes by the end of the year.

But many attribute that to the impact of the predicted recession in the UK, as well as drops in the price of oil and some food ingredients.

2. Growing the economy

Mr Sunak promised to “grow the economy, creating better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country”.

The UK’s sluggish growth rates has been one of the key talking points for politicians in recent months and was a major pre-occupation of Mr Sunak’s short-lived predecessor Liz Truss.

Growing the economy, with better paid jobs across the UK, was also a central pre-occupation of Boris Johnson’s levelling-up agenda and Mr Sunak re-iterated that promise on Wednesday as he said that he would deliver “greater investment in local areas, to boost growth, create jobs”.

But in the short-term, the economy faces serious challenges.

The Office for Budget Responsibility in November predicted that the economy would contract by 1.4% in 2023, while unemployment could also rise by more than 500,000.

Labour pointed out that “the UK is one of the only advanced economies to not grow this year, so we could hardly do worse than we were”.

3. National debt falling

In his speech, the Prime Minister said that the Government would ensure that the UK’s “national debt is falling so that we can secure the future of public services”.

The language chimes with the former chancellor’s reputation for fiscal rectitude, but the promise is not new.

Much of the Chancellor’s autumn statement was focused on putting UK finances back on a more sustainable footing, with Jeremy Hunt repeatedly warning that difficult decisions were needed to balance the books.

Mr Sunak admitted as much as he took questions from reporters, as he said: “We already have got plans in place to make sure that debt does fall in the medium term”.

“The key is sticking to those and making sure that we have the discipline to do so because that’s not always easy, but it’s the right thing to do to secure the future of public services and indeed to combat inflation.”

4. Falling NHS waiting lists

With the NHS under severe pressure and senior medics offering increasingly stark warnings about the state of the health service, the Prime Minister promised that “NHS waiting lists will fall and people will get the care they need more quickly”.

The Government has acknowledged that waiting lists are a major issue, even as Downing Street stopped short of calling some the pressures of recent weeks a full-blown crisis.

Blame has largely fallen on Covid-19 and the impact of the flu cases and Strep A, even as medics point to longstanding issues with the health service.

“Covid has imposed massive new pressures and people are waiting too long for the care they need,” Mr Sunak said.

“We’re fixing that, but we need to do more.”

The NHS in England has previously estimated that the waiting list will be reducing by around March 2024.

While the renewed promise was welcomed on Wednesday, many pointed out that the speech lacked a clear plan for achieving it.

NHS Providers’ director of communications Adam Brimelow said: “The Prime Minister’s pledge to cut waiting lists so that people get the care they need more quickly is an ambition that everyone in the NHS shares.

“But his speech was short on detail about how this will be achieved.”

5. Illegal migration

The Prime Minister has spoken at length before about illegal migration and Channel crossings, which he has repeatedly described as among his top priorities.

“We will pass new laws to stop small boats, making sure that if you come to this country illegally, you are detained and swiftly removed,” he said.

Plans for the new legislation had already been announced last year, with the prime minister offering little extra detail on Wednesday with no clear timeline of when that legislation will pass.

“Ultimately [*Parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) decides how long it takes to pass that legislation,” he said.

He told reporters that he deliberately “chose not put a specific month on each of them because I don’t think that’s responsible or the right thing to do with with goals that are so complicated, where many of the forces that will impact our ability to hit them are out of my control as well”.

Pressed by reporters on a more specific timeline for his pledge to stop the arrival of small boats on the south coast, he said that it was “ultimately the country will judge”.

“The country will be the judge of whether we as a Government are straining every sinew to focus on their priorities and deliver meaningful progress and change on them.”

Labour hit out at the Government, as it said that “successive Tory prime ministers have repeatedly promised to stop the boats.

“Instead, their new laws have made the problem worse and the boats are at a record high”.

Government policy, as well as the language used Home Secretary Suella Braverman to describe migrants, has repeatedly drawn criticism.

Others have questioned the feasibility of the kind of pledge made by Mr Sunak.

Enver Solomon, chief executive of the Refugee Council, said: “The way to stop small boat crossings is to create safe routes, such as that set up for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, for those fleeing war and persecution.

“The Prime Minister’s proposal to remove anyone who arrives in the UK on a small boat will in fact simply leave thousands of men, women and children in limbo.”

**Load-Date:** January 4, 2023

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[*Disrupting Russia's Gazprom 'could end war tomorrow', Extinction Rebellion Ukraine founder says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651D-HK81-JBNF-W33J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 5:54 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,CLIMATE; Version:3

**Length:** 1053 words

**Byline:** Zoe Tidman

**Highlight:** Exclusive: 'It's very important to stop the source of the issue,' leading climate activist in the country says

**Body**

The war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) could be stopped "tomorrow" by causing disruption to [*Gazprom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gazprom) , the founder of the Ukrainian branch of [*Extinction Rebellion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/extinction-rebellion) (XR) has said, calling on climate protesters worldwide to demonstrate at the Russian energy giant's offices.

The climate activist, who wanted to go only by his first name Grisha, told The Independent it was a "problem" to be expressing solidarity with Ukraine while still funnelling money into the invading country through oil and gas imports, and said Russian [*fossil fuels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fossil-fuels) should be "blocked".

He is one of millions who have been displaced by the [*Russian invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-missiles-lviv-latest-news-b2038716.html) which started just over three weeks ago. The war has decimated several cities and is reported to have [*killed thousands of civilians.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-mariupol-ukraine-theatre-war-crime-b2037821.html)

Speaking to The Independent from Ukraine, Grisha said his whole country was mobilising to resist the attack. His contribution is not joining the fight on the front line, but rather stepping up the battle against fossil fuels.

"I am not an army man. I don't know how to fight or shoot with (a) gun," he said. "We try to focus on different things other people can do."

The climate activist said he wanted to see more civil disobedience across Europe targeting Russian fossil fuels, which could include XR groups and other protesters rallying outside Gazprom offices and preventing people from going to work.

"We believe that if Gazprom stops today, tomorrow the war ends," the 38-year-old said.

Gazprom, the world's largest natural gas company by production, wields considerable influence both in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and beyond as it supplies around 40 per cent of Europe's gas. Its subsidiaries have offices across the continent, including several in the UK.

Other companies have moved to distance themselves from the Russian state-owned energy firm since the war in Ukraine started, including Shell, which [*cut ties with Gazprom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/shell-russian-gas-gazprom-exit-b2025157.html) earlier this month.

In the UK, the health secretary has reportedly [*told hospitals to stop using gas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/news-analysis/gazprom-uk-sanctions-public-authority-b2028834.html) from the energy giant. Germany [*blocked a new Gazprom pipeline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/nord-stream-2-germany-russia-ukraine-b2020364.html) in response to Russian aggression days before the war started.

Europe has so far stopped short of banning Russian gas imports. But the war in Ukraine has sparked even more alarm over the world's reliance on fossil fuels.

As well as its impact on the climate crisis, world leaders have been expressing concern over how this money ends up being spent in the Russian context.

Earlier this week, a European Union environment chief said the bloc's dependence on Russian fossil fuels was financing a "war chest".

US president Joe Biden banned Russian oil and gas imports last week over the war in Ukraine, saying it would help to serve a blow to Vladimir Putin's "war machine".

Concerns have also [*been raised in the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/russia-oil-gas-uk-ban-liberal-democrats-b2031878.html) - where Russian oil is being phased out - that the public could inadvertently be funding the war by filling up cars or paying energy bills.

Grisha - as translated by a fellow Ukrainian XR activist, Nastya - said his group wanted to encourage the global community to protest against fossil fuels as the war wages on and had created slogans and posters for this, although it was difficult to work on activism with air raid sirens frequently going off and attacks happening in the background.

The 38-year-old XR Ukraine founder said it was important to see groups around the world helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, but that this was only a sticking plaster.

"A lot of people in Ukraine want to stay and they don't want to leave and they want to come back to their countries. So it's also very important to stop the source of the issue, not the outcome," he was translated as saying.

Svitlana Krakovska, a Ukrainian scientist involved in the most recent [*Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report*](https://www.independent.co.uk/climate-change/news/ipcc-un-report-ten-findings-b2024549.html) , told [*The Guardian*](https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/mar/09/ukraine-climate-scientist-russia-invasion-fossil-fuels) fossil fuels were driving both the climate crisis and the war in Ukraine.

"Burning oil, gas and coal is causing warming and impacts we need to adapt to. And Russia sells these resources and uses the money to buy weapons. Other countries are dependent upon these fossil fuels, they don't make themselves free of them," she said.

"This is a fossil fuel war. It's clear we cannot continue to live this way, it will destroy our civilisation."

The UK said last week it would no longer import Russian oil by the end of the year and was exploring options to reduce gas imports.

Meanwhile the European Union said it was planning to [*phase out its dependency on Russian fossil fuels by 2027*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-european-commission-charles-michel-ukraine-versailles-b2033771.html).

Grisha told The Independent he thought it was "very strange" to see the EU slapping sanctions on Russia, yet still paying what he claimed was billions for Russian gas and oil since the war started.

According to a tracker run by campaign group Europe Beyond Coal, the bloc has paid Russia more than 17bn for fossil fuels since the invasion was launched on 24 February.

An EU official told The Independent it has launched an unprecedented sanctions response over the war in Ukraine and had just adopted a fourth package, which included a "far-reaching" ban on new investment on Russian energy.

"It's working, we see the effect on the Russian economy already - the stock market is closed, the rouble has lost half of its value and companies are fleeing the country," they said.

"Some transactions are still needed, though, to ensure the supply of certain energy products into the EU."

Gazprom and the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy have been approached for comment.

The head of Gazprom has called on its 500,000 employees to rally around Mr Putin to preserve Russia as a great power in the face of foreign attempts to break her, according to a letter published on Thursday.

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 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What they want: Allies meet in Europe for Ukraine summits*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652F-6SF1-JBNF-W1XB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 10:48 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1056 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Western allies have already clinched the most important part of what all will be looking for in three summits on Thursday held in Europe's diplomatic capital of Brussels

**Body**

Even before Air Force One touches down in Brussels to bring President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) to three [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) summits on Thursday, Western allies have already found what they are looking for - that all too rare sense of unity.

They have Russian President Vladimir Putin to thank for that.

After Russia's invasion of neighboring Ukraine on Feb. 24 and its brutal war since then over the past month, allies from [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) to Tokyo and Brussels have acted in unison.

And they did it with such staggering speed to hit the Kremlin with unprecedented sanctions and offers of help to Kyiv. That symbolism has the space to trump urgent problem-fixing this week.

With staccato rhythm, Biden will attend a NATO, Group of Seven and [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) summits all within 12 hours of driving around Europe's diplomatic capital from one headquarters to another. The only reason this is possible is because all agree on the major issues so, basically, little time will be needed to paper over deep differences.

On Friday, Biden will be traveling to Poland, the humanitarian hub of the crisis where more than 2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have arrived, and where U.S. forces have shored up NATO's eastern flank.

WHAT BIDEN WANTS

Beyond the all-important handshakes, group photos and warm scenes of togetherness, Biden will use his time in Brussels to announce new sanctions against Russia while underscoring the importance of closing possible loopholes in the avalanche of Western measures that have already been enacted.

At a time when it is essential to avoid fissures in what's been a largely unified Western response to Russia, the U.S. president will look to press important allies like Poland to dial back the idea of deploying a Western peacekeeping mission to Ukraine. It's an idea that the U.S. and some other NATO members see as too risky as they seek to deny Russia any pretext to broaden the war beyond Ukraine's borders.

For his domestic audience, look for Biden to once again underscore the heroics of the Ukrainian military and volunteers who have managed to hold off an imposing Russian military. He will highlight those remarkable efforts - as well as the generosity of the Poles and other allies at the front lines of the humanitarian crisis - as he redoubles his calls for Americans to stand firm against a Russian war that is spurring gas price hikes and adding to inflationary pressures in the U.S.

Overall, Biden also wants to revel in the scenes of unity at the headquarters of NATO and the EU, where memories of an unraveling trans-Atlantic bond riven with disputes under former President Donald Trump are far from forgotten.

WHAT NATO WANTS

That show of unity will also be paramount at NATO headquarters, where the United States has traditionally given orders, with the rest, sometimes grudgingly, going along.

The summit on Thursday will be a new opportunity for the 30-nation military organization to publicly show that Washington is consulting its allies, something that was sorely lacking under the Trump administration.

Biden and his counterparts are expected to discuss the kinds of "red lines" that might draw NATO out of its defensive posture - the world's biggest security organization has mostly bolstered its own defenses since the invasion a month ago - to respond with force.

Nuclear, chemical or a massive cyberattack appear the most likely triggers, but NATO remains wary of any response that might draw it into a full-scale war with nuclear-armed Russia.

The leaders are also set to discuss the longer-term future of NATO's defenses along its eastern flank, ranging from Estonia in the north, down around western Ukraine to Bulgaria on the Black Sea. Military commanders have been ordered to draw up options.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said last week that the "new defense posture" would include substantially more land forces at higher readiness, more air power filling NATO skies and aircraft carrier strike groups, submarines and combat ships "on a persistent basis" at sea. Expect applause and full support when such issues are raised.

WHAT THE EU WANTS

Even if it gained a brutal enemy on its eastern doorstep, the 27-nation bloc also fully regained an old friend, and it will be able to shake on that friendship when Biden attends a summit of all EU leaders which had already been months in the making.

No European will mind. Together with the Biden administration, the EU has been standing shoulder to shoulder in pushing through four packages of sanctions against Putin, his advisers and oligarchs, cutting deeper than many would have thought. This comes after feeling looked down upon for four years under Trump, who among other things, even slapped sanctions on the EU.

"It is to show this message of unity," said Europe Minister Clement Beaune of France, which holds the rotating EU presidency. He also set the scene for more sanctions pressure in a show of solidarity with Ukraine. At the same time, the EU is hoping Biden won't push demands for sanctions too far for a partner which has almost nine times as many exports heading to Russia than Washington does.

Such unity will also help the EU on the global stage since the optics of a strong embrace of Biden will also not be lost on Chinese President Xi Jinping, with whom the EU has a summit set for next week.

WHAT UKRAINE WANTS

There won't be a seat reserved anywhere for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, yet he will be on everyone's mind - not least because he has been crystal clear what he wants from Western allies.

With passion and rhetorical flair, he has pleaded with legislatures in the United States, the EU, Britain, Japan and Canada, for more military and humanitarian aid. But his demands for NATO to enforce a no-fly zone to protect his people have been rejected, with the alliance making clear it won't risk an all-out war with Russia.

Zelenskyy has been having a series of conversations with Western leaders in the days before Thursday's summits and he expects them to approve more sanctions to punish Russia and more help for Ukraine.

"We will work, we will fight, as hard as we can, to the last, bravely and openly," he said in a video address Wednesday.

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Lorne Cook in Brussels, and Aamer Madhani in Washington, contributed to this report.

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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**



[*Jewish refugee descendants open doors to Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653F-VNW1-JCS0-D073-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 28, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 985 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

As millions of Ukrainians flee from the devastation caused by Vladimir Putin's troops, many people in the UK have come forward to offer their homes. More than 150,000 Britons have signed up to the government's Homes for Ukraine hosting scheme.

The scheme itself has got off to a slow start, which has prompted some criticism. But the outpouring of compassion and willingness to help has been immense, and prospective hosts are hoping they will soon be able to offer traumatised refugees a roof over their head and some comfort.

Among those keenest to host are people for whom this refugee crisis feels particularly close to home, because it wasn't long ago that their own parents and grandparents were forced to make a similar escape, fleeing antisemitism in Europe and finding sanctuary in the UK.

The Independent has spoken to Britons whose Jewish ancestors fled either the pogroms in the late 19th and early 20th century or the Nazi regime during the Second World War, and have now signed up to become sponsors under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Louise Kaye, 64, from Chiswick, London

Both of my grandfathers fled from anti-Jewish violence in Ukraine in the 1890s. They came to England as an unknown country and they did not know what sort of welcome they'd receive, but they made good lives for themselves eventually.

My late husband and I signed up to host in 2019 to take a Syrian refugee, but he fell ill later that year so it didn't happen. When the Ukraine war started, I suddenly thought of my grandfathers, and thought if I can help ??' a mother and child or a couple of children - I have the space to do that.

I live alone now but I often have someone else living here. I have a big house and to justify staying here I have to have other people here. I love it. They can have the top floor: a bedroom, a kitchen with a little sitting room, a loo and there's a bathroom on the floor below which they can use too. I could just imagine my great-grandparents being in exactly that situation, being absolutely terrified of having their houses burnt down and just knowing they had to flee to save their lives and protect their children.

Lesley Schatzberger, 69, from York

I am the daughter of child refugees from Nazi Vienna. My father came on Kindertransport aged 12 in May 1939. His parents were due to travel on 9 September but war broke out on the 1st. They were taken to Auschwitz and died there.

My mum came with her family. Both my parents came here with very little. My dad had a small suitcase, a typewriter and his piano accordion. He had to build his life from that. They grew up in the Manchester area and met at a youth club. I felt like I couldn't not host. I wouldn't be alive if my parents were not given sanctuary here. They lost everything, and it's just unbelievable that this is happening again now. The lessons haven't been learnt.

We have a basement flat with a kitchen and its own bathroom, so we could host a family. We've had students there and have offered to host Syrian refugees before. We have enough space. The government should be looking at this as an opportunity for people to come to our society and for us to get to know them, to help them - and maybe they'll help us.

Jimmy Strauss, 62, from Belsize Park, London

My parents were born in Germany and they were Jewish refugees from the Nazi system. My father left relatively young in 1933. He came and made a life over here. My mother came here with her family in 1939. I'm steeped in a refugee background. The community where I worship ??' at Belsize Square synagogue ??' was founded by refugees and continues to use a number of their melodies.

Britain was very good to my family. I've got room in this house and I feel, and my whole family feels, it is our duty to help these people. I cannot begin to imagine what they're going through. We have a spare room with an ensuite bathroom - it could fit an adult and at least two children, possibly more, depending on what is needed. If we can provide a roof over their head, a bit of security, warmth and some food to begin to alleviate the pain they're going through, it's the very, very least we can do.

Katherine Richards, 61, from Hove

My mother was a Jewish refugee and fled Austria at the age of five with my grandmother in 1938. They escaped to Holland on foot at night-time. I know it would have been terrifying. At one point they were caught by the Nazis, but they got away and managed to catch the last boat to the UK.

They wound up in Hertfordshire with no English skills. My mother was the only female refugee in the village. She learnt to speak English from the get-go and taught my grandmother how to speak the language. Then grandfather got here and said: "Now we are here, we're going to stay here."

I think about my grandmother every day now. She'd be absolutely appalled. I think the very least we can do is open our border to those fleeing Ukraine. All this nonsense about visas and passports is so preposterous. I have space for a single person. I'll make sure they're warm, comfy, loved and cared for. My mum will be involved too. She wants to help and she of all people will understand their plight.

My family history is not usually at the forefront of my mind, but seeing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on TV has really resonated with me. My mother and grandmother had to make a terrifying escape. Ukrainians are going to have similar stories to tell.

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 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians organise evacuations and aid for Kharkiv with help of social media: 'People are really amazing'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-6YR1-DY4H-K0GB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 9:29 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1092 words

**Byline:** Gino Spocchia

**Highlight:** 'Right now in Ukraine social networks are really active'

**Body**

When 22-year-old Mariia Lohvynenko boarded a plane for [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) two days before [*Russian forces invaded*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-invasion-map-areas-b2037898.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20maps:%20Where%20is%20the%20invasion%20taking%20place?) Ukraine, she did not believe war was about to happen.

Neither did Mariia imagine returning to Kharkiv with a minibus and enough humanitarian aid to feed 500 people and a list of Ukrainians to evacuate to Lviv and Lutsk in the west almost two weeks later.

Speaking to The Independent, Mariia said she was able to organise two evacuations with help from Facebook friends and her connections across Ukraine, and even Instagram, where she has amassed a group of willing volunteers.

It began when a Facebook friend hired a bus to evacuate people from central Ukraine, when she realised she could also do the same for Kharkiv.

Like many Ukrainians, she has turned to helping [*those*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-unhcr-refugees-russia-b2037894.html) most in need - with the vulnerable, women and children either having already fled Russian aggression or waiting to do so.

"You know, right now in Ukraine social networks are really active," Mariia said, "as well as volunteers and volunteer organisations. So whenever I see some ([*social media*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/social-media) ) posts from my friends, or from my colleagues, we are all trying to help each other".

Her plan? To hire a minibus to drive people from her home city of Kharkiv to safety in western Ukraine - a distance of about 1,000km that required multiple days of driving from Lviv to Kharkiv in the east, and rest stops via Dnipro.

"I actually contacted a lot of people. It was different connections from different parts of my life," said Mariia from Poland, where she has now taken refuge with friends. "So I contacted a lot of people and finally, I found one CEO of a tech company in Dnipro."

Mariia said it was "impossible" to buy a minibus in Kharkiv or her nearby home town of Kup'yans'k, where people are also in need of evacuation, because of[*the deteriorating situation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-kharkiv-nuclear-reactor-b2033581.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20says%20Russia%20has%20bombed%20a%20facility%20with%20a%20nuclear%20reactor%20in%20Kharkiv) on the ground.

Her contact in Dnipro, who she says was part of a Ukrainian volunteer organisation, had been personally evacuating people from eastsern Ukraine and was able to give Mariia details of a bus owner in Lviv, however.

"We just managed to work together, and right now we are evacuating people from Dnipro and Kharkiv to Lviv," Mariia explained, "and also we are driving humanitarian help on the way back to Kharkiv".

She said her plan came together thanks to Facebook and social media, with Ukrainians sharing information about minibus evacuations, aid and opportunities for those abroad. Some of her friends share updates about upcoming minibus evacuations of their own, with people asked to call ahead of time.

"Some people are giving their own cars to strangers to evacuate their families, so people are really amazing," Mariia said. "They all understand that they're putting themselves in a dangerous position but these drivers who are still working as cab drivers or whoever evacuates people, they're truly amazing."

Like the recruiter, many Ukrainians have taken the rescue mission into their own hands by organising minibuses and driving for miles - sometimes also for days - to help those stranded closer to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's frontline.

Mariia said she knows one mother and a daughter who were stuck standing on a train for 24 hours waiting to leave Ukraine, and that traffic in certain areas is also making it harder for people to leave.

On Tuesday, authorities in Ukraine's largest easternmost city [*said some 500 civilians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/kharkiv-ukraine-russian-military-strikes-b2028960.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine:%20Kharkiv%20severely%20devastated%20by%20Russian%20strikes) had been killed by Russian attacks to date. Many others who have been forced to stay behind are meanwhile struggling to find basic supplies.

"So we are also driving with humanitarian aid through the districts of Kharkiv and this weekend we managed to deliver more than 500 people with some food," said Mariia, who keeps in touch with her team of volunteers on Instagram.

"Because I know that it depends from district to district, but for example, my stepfather is living far away from Kharkiv's centre, and it's so hard to take some food there. But yeah that's what we are doing right now".

Her own family, who like many of [*the 3 million refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-refugees-polish-train-station-b2037968.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainian%20refugees%20take%20shelter%20at%20Polish%20train%20stations%20as%20they%20flee%20war) who have fled Ukraine, have never been abroad before and were without passports. She was able to convince them to leave Ukraine last week despite having never been abroad before.

"I didn't think I had this level of psychological trauma they had," said Mariia, who had not experienced the nights of shelling and air raid sirens, but still could not sleep when the war began. "And they were so afraid to leave their home and feel even when the war started."

Mariia said although some of those she helped evacuate had friends in Poland, many had not wanted to go beyond Lviv, or western Ukraine, and are among some 200,000 estimated people to be calling the city home, at least temporarily.

While her Polish friends have provided Mariia and her family with a place to stay, she said she wanted to create resources for Ukrainians now stranded in Poland, Hungary and elsewhere and is working to create a website with information on work opportunities for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"As far as I know there are a lot of opportunities for Ukrainians," said Mariia. "For example in Poland, in Austria, in Germany, and in many many countries, but they are all divided into different websites and when you've just come from the war and you're so shocked, believe me I saw what huge trauma people had, and they are not able to just Google search information."

She says she also used a Google Doc to collect information from her Facebook friends across Europe about opportunities for Ukrainians, and also to reach those in need of evacuations.

While she works on creating the website and an app, further evacuations are planned and Mariia - like many others in Ukraine - say they will continue trying to help in any way they can.

"Because before that, it was like, the most safest opportunity to go away from Kharkiv was to take a train. But trains right now are super overcrowded".

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 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Micheal Martin tells Volodymyr Zelensky: Ireland is in solidarity with Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6511-3951-DY4H-K25D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 8:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1115 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Taoiseach spoke to the Ukrainian president in a phone call on Wednesday.

**Body**

The Ukrainian president offered his condolences to the Irish premier over the death of Irish journalist Pierre Zakrzewski during a call on Wednesday.

Both [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) and Micheal Martin tweeted that the pair had spoken, the day after US network Fox News cameraman died when the vehicle he travelling in was hit.

Mr Martin is currently in Washington DC on the second day of his trip to the US as part of the St Patrick's Day celebrations.

The [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) told the Ukrainian leader that everyone in [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) admired his leadership in the face of the war waged by Russia and stands in full solidarity with the besieged country.

Talked to Prime Minister [*@MichealMartinTD*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Discussed countering aggression & horrific crimes of Russia against civilians. Expressed condolences over the murder of journalist Pierre Zakrzewski by Russian soldiers. Thanked for helping the people of . [*#StopRussia*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StopRussia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - (@ZelenskyyUa) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1504164959403581445?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) During the 20-minute scheduled call, Mr Martin told Mr Zelensky that Ireland would show its support in any way the country could.Urging pressure be kept on Russia, the PA news agency understands that Mr Zelensky was also very appreciative of the support from Ireland, including the country's visa waiver scheme and the display of solidarity to mark St Patrick's Day.He also offered sympathies to the Taoiseach and family of Mr Zakrzewski.It is understood the Taoiseach told Mr Zelensky: "From the people of Ireland, the admiration of you and your people is very high. We as a [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) reflect that. They are behind you."The call with the Ukrainian president came as Mr Martin was due to address the US Chamber of Commerce.Acknowledging his delayed appearance, Mr Martin said he was "delighted and privileged" to take the call.Just spoke to President [*@ZelenskyyUA*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). I told him the Irish people stand fully behind [*#Ukraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). He thanked us for our continued humanitarian aid, shelter, global support and sanctions against Russia.He offered sympathy to the family of journalist Pierre Zakrzewski. [*pic.twitter.com/s3tsa7aAIJ*](https://t.co/s3tsa7aAIJ) - Michel Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*March 16, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1504164198988849159?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He said: "(Zelensky) articulated in the most passionate, determined and calm way the absolute vitality and importance of we continuing to keep the pressure on through the various methods that we've deployed so far in terms of sanctions and supports to the people of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). "He was conscious that as we came together for the St Patrick's Day programme that we were also, as as a key theme of our St Patrick's Day programme, (showing) solidarity with Ukraine. He was very much aware and thankful and grateful for that and for the humanitarian assistance that the Irish people have offered.He said that the Ukrainian leader offered an "outstanding example of leadership"."I was very taken by his controlled and calm but very firm approach in terms of what his country needs right now."Speaking to reporters earlier, Mr Martin said the Government is doing everything it can to procure accommodation for the thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Ireland. He 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.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 (we) possibly can."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)

Mr Martin said the sanctions against 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.

"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.

We are at a very dangerous moment in terms of where we are globally as a result of this war

Micheal Martin

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, 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

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[*What we know so far about the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651C-H7R1-DY4H-K0XV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 11:25 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1039 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** More than 150,000 Britons have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without family members in the UK will be able to apply for visas under a new scheme launching on Friday.

More than 150,000 [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians, and those who have someone to sponsor them will be able to apply when the first stage launches this week.

Detailed guidance is expected to be published on Friday, but for now, here is what we know about how the scheme will work and how to get involved.

- What is the scheme?

The [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) programme allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

NEW -UK individuals, charities, community groups & businesses can now record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through our new Homes for Ukraine scheme.Express an interest in becoming a sponsor now [*https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle*](https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/vbbINAz3XP*](https://t.co/vbbINAz3XP) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1503407897224622081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Anyone with a room or home available for at least six months can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering to host will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

The scheme will have two phases. The first - launching on Friday - will allow UK sponsors to nominate a named Ukrainian or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is working with a number of charities and NGOs to work out the best way to match people who are not yet connected with Ukrainians.

There is no limit to how many people can apply.

- How will it work?

Ukrainians who have a sponsor will be able to start their visa application from Friday.

This will include a section about their sponsor which they will need to complete, using information provided by their sponsor.

Security checks will take place concerning both parties, the application will be assessed and a decision made on whether to grant the visa.

- What should I do if I am not yet in touch with a Ukrainian refugee?

People are being encouraged to register their interest on the website homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk if they have not done so already.

The Government will be in contact with people who have registered their interest with more information once this is available, which is expected to be soon.

If they do not wish to wait, people can try to find a person to sponsor by approaching charities or Ukrainian groups in their local area.

Ukrainians abroad who are not in touch with a sponsor are also being encouraged to contact charities.

- When will people start to arrive?

It is not clear how many people have already identified Ukrainians who they wish to sponsor.

But refugee minister Lord [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) told MPs on Wednesday he expects "thousands of people" to arrive next week.

Councils will be told if there are particular hotspot areas where a high number of people have registered their interest in becoming sponsors.

- What checks will take place and when?

Sponsors, all adults in their households and Ukrainians being sponsored will need to submit to security checks, which will take place when the visa application is being assessed.

Biometric checks will be made after refugees arrive in the UK to avoid delays.

Once the visa is approved, information will be passed to the local authority where the sponsoring individual lives.

It will then be up to the council to carry out the necessary checks, including on the suitability of the accommodation that is being offered.

However, Lord Harrington has warned that it may not be possible for all accommodation to be checked before people arrive.

This has been echoed by James Jamieson, chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA), who said councils will not be able to do everything they would like to do "up front".

- What if a placement doesn't work out?

It is understood there will be safeguards in place to ensure people are not left homeless if they are unable to stay with their sponsor for whatever reason.

On arrival, people will receive a welcome pack with details of how to access basic services and claim benefits, but also of who to contact in the case of an emergency or if something goes wrong while they are being hosted.

- Who is eligible?

Sponsors can be of any nationality and any immigration status as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months and can offer accommodation for at least half a year.

People are eligible 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".

The scheme is open to adults and children within family units.

- What are people saying?

Robina Qureshi, director of Positive Action in Housing, has accused the Government of "unleashing chaos" through the scheme and warned that refugees could die before they are matched with a sponsor.

The charity runs Room for Refugees, the UK's longest running refugee hosting programme which has been in place since 2002.

Ms Qureshi said it is giving the "illusion of people helping because they're distracting from the fact that they haven't lifted visa restrictions".

And she said it could take "months and months of processing" to safely match people to appropriate homes.

The Refugee Council said it has several concerns about the scheme, specifically around red tape, safeguarding and resourcing.

Andy Hewett, head of advocacy, said it is concerned the scheme could be "too slow and complex" to help the most vulnerable, and said it favours those who already have a contact in the UK, who may not necessarily be the most at risk.

Councillor Jamieson, from the LGA, said councils will need to be given as much data as possible on who a visa has been issued to, such as their age, medical and educational needs, family make-up, and more clarity on the safeguarding and accommodation checks they will need.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia Ukraine War Advisory*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652F-PV61-DY4H-K2K6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 1:07 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1130 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

One month of war, still defiant. With its government still standing and its outnumbered troops battling [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) forces to bloody stalemates in multiple places, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is scarred, wounded, mourning its dead but far from beaten as it braces for a second month of bombing, combat, casualties and resistance.

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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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - One month of war, still defiant. With its government still standing and its outnumbered troops battling Russian forces to bloody stalemates in multiple places, Ukraine is scarred, wounded, mourning its dead but far from beaten as it braces for a second month of bombing, combat, casualties and resistance. When, on Feb. 24, Russia unleashed its Ukraine invasion force in Europe's biggest offensive since World War II and floated the prospect of nuclear escalation if the West intervened, a lightning-swift toppling of Ukraine's democratically elected government seemed possible. By Nebi Qena and Cara Anna. SENT: 1,300 words, photos, videos. WITH: RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-BIDEN - The future of Europe hanging in the balance, President Joe Biden will huddle with key allies in Brussels and Warsaw this week as the leaders try to prevent Russia's war on Ukraine from spiraling into an even greater catastrophe. By Chris Megerian and Aamer Madhani. SENT: 890 words, photos. UPCOMING: 990 words after 9 a.m. departure; arrival in Brussels scheduled for 3:50 p.m.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-EUROPE-SUMMITS - Western allies have already clinched the most important part of what all will be looking for in three summits on Thursday held in Europe's diplomatic capital of Brussels. U.S. President Biden will exemplify the sense of unity in the face of Russia's war in Ukraine when the leaders of NATO, the European Union and the Group of Seven. Biden will also use his time in Brussels to announce new sanctions against Russia while underscoring the importance of closing possible loopholes in the avalanche of Western measures that have already been enacted. SENT: 1,040 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-SPAIN-REFUGEES - As ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing bombs and bullets at home fan out across [*Western Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/western-europe) , few places they arrive feel as welcoming as a Spanish town known for years as "Little Ukraine." Even before Russian tanks rolled into Ukraine last month, one in seven residents of Guissona was originally from there. Guissona's population more than doubled to around 7,500 residents, and drew in a lot of immigrant labor, including the Ukrainians, after a regional supermarket chain opened a distribution center nearby two decades ago. SENT: 800 words, photos.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-PHILANTHROPY - As staggering as the immediate humanitarian need is for the more than 10 million displaced Ukrainians refugees, the leader of Open Society Foundations says their long-term needs will be even larger if they aren't also addressed now. By Business Writer Glenn Gamboa. SENT: 710 words, photo.

RUSSIA-OPPOSITION - Russia has unleashed a harsh crackdown on dissent over the past year by imprisoning opposition leader Alexei Navalny and silencing his supporters and his organization. SENT: 960 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-UN-HUMANITARIAN - The United Nations will face three resolutions on the worsening humanitarian situation in Ukraine after Russia decided to call for a vote on its Security Council resolution that makes no mention of its attack on its smaller neighbor. SENT: 860 words, photos. UPCOMING: General Assembly meets at 10 a.m.

POLAND-RUSSIA-ESPIONAGE - Poland has identified 45 Russian intelligence officers using diplomatic status as cover to stay in the country and authorities are seeking to expel them, officials said. SENT: 250 words, photo.

OLY-RUSSIA-ATHLETE-BACKLASH - Russian Olympic athletes who participated in a rally supporting President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) and the invasion of Ukraine are facing a backlash. They gathered on stage at the Luzhniki Stadium as part of the concert and entertainment program around Putin's speech. Olympic champion Evgeny Rylov is under investigation from the governing body of swimming. SENT: 590 words, photos.

UKRAINE-WAR-STREET-ART - Street artists around the world are painting murals in opposition to the war in Ukraine and in solidarity with its victims. In Los Angeles, artists are using dozens of urban canvases across the city to create colorful murals to garner support and donations for Ukrainian war refugees. UPCOMING: 700 words, photos by 1:30 p.m.

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BUSINESS

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-ENERGY PRICES - European governments are slashing fuel taxes and doling out tens of billions to help consumers, truckers, farmers and others cope with spiking energy prices made worse by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. But for some truckers, fishermen and others whose livelihoods hinge on fuel, the measures aren't enough. They have been staging protests to push politicians to ease their financial pain. SENT: 1,000 words, photos.

FINANCIAL-MARKETS - Global shares have gained following a rally on Wall Street led by technology companies. Benchmarks rose in Paris, London and Frankfurt and shares advanced across Asia. U.S. futures fell and the dollar gained against the Japanese yen. Investors are watching what might happen at a NATO meeting and EU Summit Thursday in Europe, where sanctions and the Russian oil embargo will likely top the agenda. SENT: 700 words, photo.

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PHOTOS

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-PNE MONTH PHOTO GALLERY --For weeks there had been warnings: Russian troops are massing near the border. President Vladimir Putin intends to seize control of Ukraine. And then, on Feb. 24, it happened. UPCOMING by 9 a.m.

XVG101 - A Ukrainian firefighter sprays water inside a house destroyed by shelling in Kyiv, Ukraine.

ABD101 - An elderly man rests inside his apartment damaged by shelling, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

ABD106 - A woman exercises near a car and apartments damaged by shelling, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

ABD104 - A woman looks at the street thought a destroyed window inside her apartment, damaged by shelling, in Kyiv, Ukraine.

XTS110 -A Ukrainian refugee waits with her daughters at a railway station in Przemysl, Poland.

PAR104 - Ukrainians fleeing the war wait outside at a help center in Paris.

MF103 - Trucks gather to protest against the high price of fuel in Parla, near Madrid, Spain.

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VIDEOS

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Here are links to some of the top consumer-ready VIDEOS:

Ukraine war forces more unwanted goodbyes.

- The AP

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Europe opens arms to millions of Ukraine refugees but how many people did countries take from other wars?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0KY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:39 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1210 words

**Byline:** Joe Middleton

**Highlight:** Poland alone has received more than 1 million Ukrainians since the conflict began

**Body**

Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has now forced millions of people to flee their homes, prompting European governments to welcome a new influx of refugees.

The United Nations says 2.8m Ukrainians left the country in the first three weeks of Vladimir Putin's war, and Poland alone has received more than 1.7 million refugees.

There has been an enormous mobilisation of resources and assistance at the borders involving volunteers, NGOs and civil society organisations from across the continent handing out food, offering advice and sorting out further transport to other countries.

The EU has moved swiftly to implement emergency plans to allow Ukrainians to live and work in the EU for up to three years.

The welcoming attitude and swift legislative responses are in some ways a stark contrast to the 2015 migrant crisis, when 1.3m people fled their countries.

Syrians escaping president Bashar al-Assad's horrifying civil war were joined by people fleeing fighting in Afghanistan, [*Iraq*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iraq) and Eritrea, [*but European partners squabbled over how many people to accept, and at times used dehumanising language about migrants.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/refugee-crisis-farright-s-rise-and-dehumanising-of-conflict-victims-are-greatest-barriers-to-joint-european-action-10492109.html)

The Independent looked at how many European countries took in refugees from war-torn countries after conflicts in the 21st century.

UKRAINE

The aerial bombardments from Russian forces battering Ukrainian cities has caused a mass migration of people in Central Europe, with footage and pictures showing terrified resident's fleeing the onslaught.

The EU 's top diplomat Josep Borrell thinks the continent could see as many as 5 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** if Russia's barrage of Ukraine continues.

The UN says that so far the following countries have taken in refugees from Ukraine, as of March 13.

Poland: 1,720,227

Hungary: 225,291

Russia: 131,365

Slovakia: 128,169

Republic of Moldova: 106,994

Romania: 84,671

Belarus: 1,226

Other: 304,000

SYRIA

Figures from 2015 to 2021\*

Turkey: 3,747,734

Germany: 648, 796

UK: 20,000

Sweden: 76,341

France: 22,340

Italy: 3,149

More than 6.6 million Syrian's have been forced to flee their homes after a brutal conflict in their country that has killed more than 350,000 people since 2014.

The vast majority fleeing the war live in the neighbouring countries of Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt. Turkey has taken more than 3.7 million Syrians, the largest number of any country to date.

European countries have taken more than 1 million asylum seekers and refugees but this number is deceptive and more than 70 per cent have been let by just two countries, Germany and Sweden, according to the UNHCR.

Germany took more than half a million Syrians, but by contrast other European countries took very small amounts, for example the UK only pledged to resettle 20,000 Syrians by 2020 -a target it has now reached.

Angela Merkel, Germany's chancellor at the time, was widely praised for her approach to the crisis, in stark contrast to the UK's prime minister in 2015 David Cameron, [*whose response was branded "morally unacceptable."*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/refugee-crisis-david-cameron-s-response-to-migrants-morally-unacceptable-say-leading-economists-a6845351.html)

AFGHANISTAN

Figures showing the level of refugees taken in 2020

Germany: 181,000

UK: 12,600

Italy: 13,400

France: 45,100

Sweden: 45,300

Afghanistan has suffered from decades of destabilisation caused by war both internally and externally, and was most recently retaken by the Taliban, 20 years after they were defeated by US-led forces.

Millions have fled their homes and sought out better lives, with the vast majority heading to nearby Pakistan or Iran, according to UNHCR figures from 2020.

Pakistan took in 1.45million and Iran took in 780,000, while Germany accepted the highest level of asylum seekers and refugees from the country at 181,100.

Other European countries took a comparatively small amount that year as Britain, who had engaged in a recent war with the country, took in 12,600 and Belgium took in 8,900.

After the Taliban retook Afghanistan the UK pledged to take in 5,000 Afghans in 2021.

The overall scheme will resettle 20,000 people in the coming years and will prioritise those who are most at risk from the Taliban's regime.

YEMEN

Figures show the level of refugees taken since the conflict began in 2014\*

UK: 1,052

Germany: 3,180

Sweden: 1, 413

France: 606

Italy: 148

Yemen is one of the poorest countries in the Middle-East but and has been wracked by a civil war that started in 2014.

The conflict has caused more than 233,00 deaths and thousands more have been wounded.

However, despite it being the scene of one of the world's worst humanitarian disasters fewer than 15,000 people have claimed asylum in the EU since 2014, according to Eurostat, the statistical office of the EU.

A policy paper by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, said: "The number of Yemenis in [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) doubled between 2014 and 2019 to just over 11,000, most of them in Germany. The figure, however, is strikingly low given the scale of the crisis in Yemen."

The group, which was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and monitors internal displacement, added in its paper that tough border policies in neighbouring countries and the sheer cost of making it to Europe are part of the reason for the lack of asylum claims.

IRAQ

Figures show the level of refugees taken since the invasion in 2003\*

UK: 12,749

Germany: 164, 074

Sweden: 33,925

France: 9, 343

Italy: 8,422

Iraq has experienced long stretches of war throughout its existence and has been involved in multiple conflicts.

The most recent was the UK and US invasion of the country in 2003, which led to the toppling of Saddam Hussein after the US claimed he was harbouring 'weapons of mass destruction'.

The constant strife in the country has caused a mass exodus of its population, with millions fleeing abroad to escape persecution and conflict.

The vast majority of refugees have taken by neighbouring countries, with Syria taking one million and Jordan accepting 800,000.

\*The figures are taken from the UNHCR's refugee finder tool. The numbers are the amount of asylum applications granted and other refugees granted some kind of protection.

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**



[*What we know so far about the Government's Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-29C1-DY4H-K4G9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 8:46 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1037 words

**Byline:** Jemma Crew

**Highlight:** More than 150,000 Britons have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians.

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without family members in the UK will be able to apply for visas under a new scheme launching on Friday.

More than 150,000 [*Britons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britons) have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians, and those who have someone to sponsor them will be able to apply when the first stage launches this week.

Detailed guidance is expected to be published on Friday, but for now, here is what we know about how the scheme will work and how to get involved.

What is the scheme?

The [*Homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/homes) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) programme allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses to bring people escaping the war to safety - even if they have no ties to the UK.

NEW -UK individuals, charities, community groups & businesses can now record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through our new Homes for Ukraine scheme.Express an interest in becoming a sponsor now [*https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle*](https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/vbbINAz3XP*](https://t.co/vbbINAz3XP) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1503407897224622081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Anyone with a room or home available for at least six months can offer it to a Ukrainian individual or a family, though those offering to host will be vetted and Ukrainian applicants will undergo security checks.

The scheme will have two phases. The first - launching on Friday - will allow UK sponsors to nominate a named Ukrainian or family to stay with them in their home or in a separate property.

The [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) is working with a number of charities and NGOs to work out the best way to match people who are not yet connected with Ukrainians.

There is no limit to how many people can apply.

How will it work?

Ukrainians who have a sponsor will be able to start their visa application from Friday.

This will include a section about their sponsor which they will need to complete, using information provided by their sponsor.

Security checks will take place concerning both parties, the application will be assessed and a decision made on whether to grant the visa.

What should I do if I am not yet in touch with a Ukrainian refugee?

People are being encouraged to register their interest on the website homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk if they have not done so already.

The Government will be in contact with people who have registered their interest with more information once this is available, which is expected to be soon.

If they do not wish to wait, people can try to find a person to sponsor by approaching charities or Ukrainian groups in their local area.

Ukrainians abroad who are not in touch with a sponsor are also being encouraged to contact charities.

When will people start to arrive?

It is not clear how many people have already identified Ukrainians who they wish to sponsor.

But refugee minister Lord [*Richard Harrington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-harrington) told MPs on Wednesday he expects "thousands of people" to arrive next week.

Councils will be told if there are particular hotspot areas where a high number of people have registered their interest in becoming sponsors.

What checks will take place and when?

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Once the visa is approved, information will be passed to the local authority where the sponsoring individual lives.

It will then be up to the council to carry out the necessary checks, including on the suitability of the accommodation that is being offered.

However, Lord Harrington has warned that it may not be possible for all accommodation to be checked before people arrive.

This has been echoed by James Jamieson, chairman of the Local Government Association (LGA), who said councils will not be able to do everything they would like to do "up front".

What if a placement doesn't work out?

It is understood there will be safeguards in place to ensure people are not left homeless if they are unable to stay with their sponsor for whatever reason.

On arrival, people will receive a welcome pack with details of how to access basic services and claim benefits, but also of who to contact in the case of an emergency or if something goes wrong while they are being hosted.

Who is eligible?

Sponsors can be of any nationality and any immigration status as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months and can offer accommodation for at least half a year.

People are eligible 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".

The scheme is open to adults and children within family units.

What are people saying?

Robina Qureshi, director of Positive Action in Housing, has accused the Government of "unleashing chaos" through the scheme and warned that refugees could die before they are matched with a sponsor.

The charity runs Room for Refugees, the UK's longest running refugee hosting programme which has been in place since 2002.

Ms Qureshi said it is giving the "illusion of people helping because they're distracting from the fact that they haven't lifted visa restrictions".

And she said it could take "months and months of processing" to safely match people to appropriate homes.

The Refugee Council said it has several concerns about the scheme, specifically around red tape, safeguarding and resourcing.

Andy Hewett, head of advocacy, said it is concerned the scheme could be "too slow and complex" to help the most vulnerable, and said it favours those who already have a contact in the UK, who may not necessarily be the most at risk.

Councillor Jamieson, from the LGA, said councils will need to be given as much data as possible on who a visa has been issued to, such as their age, medical and educational needs, family make-up, and more clarity on the safeguarding and accommodation checks they will need.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What happens when you get your period during a war?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YX-R6V1-DY4H-K0JW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2022 Friday 5:17 PM GMT

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**Section:** WOMEN,LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 979 words

**Byline:** Laura Hampson

**Highlight:** WAR IN UKRAINE: As Ukrainian women are forced to flee their war-torn nation, many have to decide between sanitary products and food. Laura Hampson discovers why a lack of period care can be life-threatening

**Body**

In the two weeks since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , over two million [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have left the Eastern European nation. Those that have stayed have been living in shelters across the country in order to stay safe. But for the [*women*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/women) , of whom there are [*two million more*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/women/ukrainian-first-lady-olena-zelenska-tribute-b2028485.html) than there are men in Ukraine, they have another pressing thing to worry about: their [*periods*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/periods).

Most women, from their early teens to around their mid-fifties, menstruate once per month. This can be anywhere from three to seven days per month, sometimes longer, sometimes shorter. A woman's period can also come with period pains or cramps, which can make it difficult to perform regular tasks without the aid of pain medication.

While their period arriving may be the least of their worries for women currently in a war zone, or for those who have fled as refugees, when the time of the month comes, access to period products is crucial - but it might not be possible.

"People who are forced to leave their homes in a war zone are unlikely to be able to carry everything they need, or to be able to plan ahead - it's a crisis," Rachel Grocott, communications and public fundraising director of [*Bloody Good Period*](https://www.bloodygoodperiod.com/) tells The Independent. "If period products are available, they are often sold at such high prices that women are forced to choose between [the products] and other essentials, including food."

[*UN Women UK*](https://www.unwomenuk.org/) executive director Claire Barnett says that families have told the organisation that they are "leaving with only a few items they can carry" and that "women will not be able to bring the supply of period products with them that they need". She adds: "Some will have travelled for days without access to proper facilities. Shops are closed and many women fleeing will not have their own source of income to buy non-food items."

Grocott adds that access to period products isn't about "dignity", but rather necessity. She says: "We don't say that access to food, water or medicine is about dignity, and periods should be as much a part of humanitarian relief as any of those things."

Not having access to sanitary products can be life-threatening, too. Barnett explains that a lack of access to water, sanitation and hygiene facilities can be "deadlier than deaths directly as a result of war". She adds: "Reusing items like pieces of rubbish and rags as sanitary towels, which women often resort to in conflict situations, can cause serious infection as well as discomfort."

A [*2017 study*](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-womens-day-refugees-periods-feature-idUSKBN16F1UU) from Global One of refugee camps in Syria and Lebanon found that 60 per cent of female refugees did not have access to underwear and more had no access to sanitary products when they had their period. The study found that half of the women surveyed suffered from untreated urinary tract infections (UTIs) as a result.

War can result in heavier, more painful periods which require more access to menstrual products

Terri Harris, Bloody Good Period

Bloody Good Period's education programme manager Terri Harris, who has worked in a refugee camp in Lebanon, says lack of menstrual products among refugee women is "one of their greatest concerns". "We had reported cases of women using old rags, pieces of moss, pieces of mattresses. The use of such items coupled with poor water and sanitation facilities led to infections and other health problems," she explains.

"We also have to take into consideration that war is obviously an acute stressful condition, which will inevitably result in menstrual abnormalities. This might result in heavier periods, more painful periods, irregular periods -all issues which require more access to menstrual products."

A separate study from UN Women and its partner in Cameroon found that 99 per cent of women don't feel safe in refugee camp toilets. Barnett adds that women and girls who don't have safe places to change period products or go to the toilet are at "higher risk of sexual violence".

"Aside from the danger of violence caused where women will need to go to the toilet and change pads outside proper facilities, we are very concerned about the escalation we often see in conflict situations of sexual violence being used as a weapon," Barnett says. "We are also hearing reports from the borders of traffickers and exploitation of women and children leaving Ukraine."

Barnett adds that, during conflict, women's specific needs are "often overlooked", even in terms of the products people are sending across the border. "Period products are likely to be neglected. But as the majority of adults fleeing are women, the need will be great."

The fact that period products are often overlooked when it comes to donation drives "points to the way periods are regarded in general", Grocott says. "They're simply not factored into how we think about how society functions on a daily basis, because we've been taught that it's better not to talk about them," she adds.

UN Women is asking for[*urgent donations to help those misplaced in Ukraine*](https://www.unwomenuk.org/campaigns/support-women-in-ukraine) , while other other [*initiatives like Hey Girls*](https://www.heygirls.co.uk/hey-girls-stands-by-ukraine/) allows you to buy one, donate one with their range of period products.

When it comes to donating period products, Grocott says it's best to seek out a charity on the ground that can get local products directly to the women in need. "It's vital that women have choice and autonomy, and are not just expected to be okay with whatever products they're given," she says. "In the middle of conflict and crisis, no-one should be trying to manage with products that don't suit them."

Since the war in Ukraine broke out, Grocott says Bloody Good Period has received orders for 790 packs of period products for organisations supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the UK, including those from Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Albania and Sierra Leone. "Those are all crises no longer in our daily newsfeeds, but their impact is still very much being felt."

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*PM: West must end addiction to Russian energy and starve Putin of war funds*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-13H1-DY4H-K00R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 1:26 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:6

**Length:** 1009 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** More than 43,000 households have offered to put up those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine as part of the UK Government's sponsorship scheme.

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has urged the West to end its "addiction" to Russian energy as he prepares to head to Saudi Arabia to push for increased oil and gas production.

It came as the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) confirmed that, as of 9.30pm on Monday, more than 43,000 households had offered to put up those fleeing the conflict as part of the UK Government's sponsorship scheme.

A DLUHC spokesman said the total is "continuing to rise", with offers doubling within a matter of hours.

On Tuesday, the Prime Minister is set to travel to Saudi for talks with Crown Prince [*Mohammed bin Salman*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mohammed-bin-salman) in the hope the kingdom can increase its production of oil and gas to make up for a reduced reliance on Russia.

In an article for the Daily Telegraph, Mr Johnson said 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.

He said the "addiction" to Russian fuel had "emboldened" Mr Putin to bomb civilians during his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , while at the same time profiting from soaring global oil and gas prices.

"We cannot go on like this. The world cannot be subject to this continuous blackmail," said Mr Johnson, whose administration has already announced its plan to phase out importing Russian oil by the end of the year.

"As long as the West is economically dependent on Putin, he will do all he can to exploit that dependence.

"And that is why that dependence must - and will - now end."

It came as Latvian Prime Minister Arturs Krisjanis Karins, whose country shares its eastern border with Russia, told the BBC: "We have to think of all the things we can do in order to stop Putin because if we do not stop Putin he will simply continue in this way, in his fight against the democratic world."

Stating that Russia produces "virtually nothing else" that the "rest of the world wants to buy", Mr Johnson argued: "If the world can end its dependence on Russian oil and gas, we can starve him of cash, destroy his strategy and cut him down to size."

Offering a glimpse of what could be in his British Energy Security Strategy, which is due to be published this month, he said there is a need to press ahead with investment in renewables, including expanding the number of UK offshore wind farms and creating more solar power.

Mr Johnson also said there needs to be a "series of big new bets" on nuclear power to make sure the UK's energy supply is "no longer at the mercy of bullies like Putin".

However, the Prime Minister sought to level with the public, warning that diverging from Russian power will be "painful" and that financial assistance offered by Chancellor Rishi Sunak to help with rising bills this year cannot be afforded "for long".

On Tuesday, Mr Johnson will jet to Riyadh in a bid to secure the route to diverging from Moscow energy supplies - but the Prime Minister faced calls to scrap the trip over human rights concerns, particularly after recent reports of a mass execution of Saudi prisoners.

Before his evening flight, he is due to host leaders from the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), an alliance of northern European nations.

Representatives from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway had been expected to dine with Mr Johnson at his Chequers country retreat on Monday night before talks in London on Tuesday.

The latest intelligence update published by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) said Russia is "likely to make further attempts to subvert Ukrainian democracy" amid reports that Moscow is to install its own mayor in the city of Melitpol following the alleged abduction of his predecessor.

The MoD also said reports suggest Russia is planning to stage a referendum in the captured region of Kherson to legitimise it as a breakaway republic.

Domestically, Britons came forward in such large numbers to offer to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** that the website for registering interest crashed shortly after opening.

It is a huge honour to welcome Nordic and Baltic partners of the Joint Expeditionary Force to the UK. We'll work together to bolster European security and ensure we emerge from this crisis stronger and more united than before. [*pic.twitter.com/xlgJ2pq3ae*](https://t.co/xlgJ2pq3ae) - Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1503494971441172489?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The DLUHC spokesman confirmed that the Homes For Ukraine website "temporarily stalled" after it went live late on Monday afternoon due to the "enormous generosity of the British public" in expressing their interest to offer accommodation.Almost three million people have fled Ukraine since Mr Putin ordered the assault on Kyiv and civilians have continued to find themselves caught up in the fighting.Under the new scheme, sponsors can provide a route for Ukrainians without family ties to come to the UK for the first time.NEW -UK individuals, charities, community groups & businesses can now record their interest in supporting Ukrainians fleeing the war through our new Homes for Ukraine scheme.Express an interest in becoming a sponsor now [*https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle*](https://t.co/TnhlcpJEle) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/vbbINAz3XP*](https://t.co/vbbINAz3XP) - Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (@luhc) [*March 14, 2022*](https://twitter.com/luhc/status/1503407897224622081?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Sponsors can be of any nationality as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months.

Those putting up refugees can receive a tax-free monthly payment of £350 for each family they look after.

Separately, a new law was passed that will make it easier for ministers to impose sanctions on people linked to the Russian regime.

The Economic Crime (Transparency and Enforcement) Act cleared both Houses of Parliament on Monday evening, with the legislation receiving royal assent in the early hours of Tuesday.

The fast-tracked legislation allows Britain to automatically sanction those who have had their assets frozen by the EU, US or Canada, opening the door to potentially hundreds more individual sanctions amid criticism that the [*UK Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk-government) has been slow to target those with Kremlin links.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*2022 was year the horror of war returned to Europe*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:671X-8N81-JBNF-W4KW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

December 8, 2022 Thursday 2:19 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 1259 words

**Byline:** Jill Lawless

**Highlight:** This was the year war returned to Europe, and few facets of life were left untouched

**Body**

This was the year war returned to Europe, and few facets of life were left untouched.

Russia’s invasion of its neighbor [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) unleashed misery on millions of Ukrainians, shattered Europe’s sense of security, ripped up the geopolitical map and rocked the global economy. The shockwaves made life more expensive in homes across Europe, worsened a global migrant crisis and complicated the world’s response to climate change.

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“What do we hear today? It’s not just rocket explosions, battles, the roar of aircraft. It is the sound of a new Iron Curtain lowering and closing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) away from the civilized world.” — Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Feb. 24.

Russia’s pre-dawn attack on Feb. 24 shattered European peace and shocked the world. The war also confounded the near-universal expectation that Russian forces would quickly prevail. Ukraine put up fierce resistance, and Russian troops bogged down on the journey to the capital. Russia pulled back from the area around Kyiv in April, leaving blasted buildings, traumatized people and hundreds of corpses that Ukraine and its allies say are evidence of war crimes.

Fighting also raged in Ukraine’s south and east, where Russia pushed outward from territory held by pro-Moscow forces since 2014. The port of Mariupol fell after a brutal three-month siege that reduced the city to ruins.

The war revived Cold War-era enmity between Russia and the West, pushing Sweden and Finland to seek NATO membership and prompting NATO nations to flood troops and weapons into eastern Europe.

As winter approached Ukraine’s military — bolstered by weapons, ammunition and training from the U.S. and other allies — pushed Russian forces out of the southern city of Kherson, a morale-boosting victory amid a grinding war that showed no sign of ending.

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“We … are preparing for the worst winter of our lives.” – Kyiv resident Anastasia Pyrozhenko, Nov. 20.

As winter approached, Russia launched missile attacks aimed at Ukraine’s infrastructure, temporarily cutting power for swaths of the country and leaving millions facing a freezing, dark winter.

The war also sent global energy prices soaring as Moscow squeezed supplies to the West in retaliation for sanctions on Russia and support for Ukraine. [*Italy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italy) , Germany and other countries that relied on Russian oil and natural gas scrambled for alternative energy supplies. With millions of people suddenly struggling to pay their energy bills, governments came under intense pressure to step in with help.

Ukraine and Russia are key global suppliers of wheat, barley, sunflower oil and — in Russia’s case — fertilizer, and the war also drove up food prices and raised fears of global shortages. A U.N.-brokered deal to allow grain ships to leave Ukraine’s Black Sea ports was struck in July and, though shaky, held to prevent a worse crisis.

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“While states point fingers and trade blame, lives are lost.” — U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi on the “desperate situation” in the Mediterranean, Nov. 24.

The war added millions to the world’s grim tally of displaced people. More than 14 million Ukrainians left their homes, according to the U.N., with 7 million taking refuge in other countries.

Meanwhile, almost 100,000 people fleeing conflict and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa crossed the Mediterranean in overcrowded and sometimes unseaworthy vessels, as the European countries they aimed to reach bickered over where they should go. More than 2,000 people died attempting the journey or were missing at sea.

The English Channel became another flashpoint, as smuggling gangs packed dinghies and other small boats with people from around the world who travelled to northern France in hope of reaching the U.K. More than 40,000 succeeded in 2022. In response, the Conservative British government signed a deal with Rwanda to send people arriving by this route on a one-way trip to the east African country.

Critics called that inhumane and unworkable and launched a legal challenge. Many contrasted the hostile attitude to the boat migrants with the welcome given to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

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“Any further delay (in global action) will miss a brief and rapidly closing window of opportunity to secure a livable and sustainable future for all.” — the U.N.’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Feb. 28.

The war was bad news for the environment, as the energy crisis made countries rethink plans to stop burning fossil fuels. France restarted a shuttered coal plant, the Czech Republic reversed a plan to stop coal mining in a key region, Britain approved more North Sea oil and gas drilling — and environmentalists warned Europe was backsliding in the fight to limit climate change.

Some saw a silver lining to the crisis, suggesting that a heightened awareness about the fragility of fossil fuel supplies would impel nations to more rapidly switch to renewable energy sources.

Extreme weather provided a reminder of the stakes. Winter storms in northern Europe were followed by a summer drought across much of the continent. In Britain, a heat wave sent the temperature above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) for the first time.

Autumn brought more heavy rain. On the mountainous Italian island of Ischia, downpours in November triggered a massive landslide that pushed cars and buildings into the sea and killed at least a dozen people.

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“Hasta la vista, baby” — [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) ending his last appearance in Parliament as U.K. prime minister, July 20.

In Britain, 2022 will be remembered as the year of three prime ministers, a time of political turmoil that the world watched with sometimes amused fascination.

Months of mounting scandals finally caught up with Prime Minister Boris Johnson, who was ousted by his own Conservative Party in July. To replace him, the party chose libertarian lawmaker Liz Truss, whose ill-advised package of unfunded tax cuts spooked financial markets and rocked the economy.

Truss resigned after six weeks, and Rishi Sunak, the U.K.’s first leader of color, took office Oct. 25, leading an unpopular party and a fractious country.

Elsewhere in Europe, the far right made gains in several elections, though it was more a creeping tide than a tsunami. In France, Marine Le Pen’s National Rally made a breakthrough in legislative elections in June, while the Sweden Democrats won 20% of votes in the Nordic country’s September election. The same month Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni took the helm of Italy’s first far right-led government since the end of World War II.

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“The queen died peacefully at Balmoral this afternoon.” — Statement from Buckingham Palace, Sept. 8

In June, Britain celebrated Queen Elizabeth II’s Platinum Jubilee — 70 years on the throne — with parties, pageants and a service of thanksgiving. Three months later, the queen died, aged 96, at Balmoral Castle in Scotland.

Millions came out to leave flowers, pay tribute or simply watch the monarch's final journey to London and on to her final resting place at Windsor Castle. Hundreds of thousands lined up for hours to view her coffin lying in state in London’s Westminster Hall.

Despite indifference or antipathy toward the monarchy in some of Britain's former colonies, Elizabeth had been a stable point for U.K. royalists and republicans alike across often turbulent decades, as her son King Charles III noted in his first speech as monarch.

“Queen Elizabeth was a life well lived; a promise with destiny kept and she is mourned most deeply in her passing,” he said.

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Read all the news from Europe at [*https://apnews.com/hub/europe*](https://apnews.com/hub/europe)

**Load-Date:** December 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine is a 'Sarajevo in the making', warns Kosovo's PM*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-B7T1-DY4H-K0X6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 1:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:5

**Length:** 1038 words

**Byline:** Anna Isaac

**Highlight:** Russia's invasion has brought painful memories of warfare in the Balkans, and fresh fears, Albin Kurti tells The Independent's Anna Isaac as he calls Russia's actions genocide

**Body**

Albin Kurti doesn't want to talk about war. He would rather be drumming up foreign investment and courting the Kosovan diaspora in London.

Kurti was elected as prime minister of the country in March 2021, and he's keen to emphasise its healthy economic growth; its relatively high vaccination rate compared to other Balkan states and its new commercial court aimed at encouraging investors to the small country.

However, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has given fresh urgency to [*Kosovo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kosovo) 's sense of insecurity and drive to join the transatlantic defence pact, Nato.

"We would like to join Nato as soon as possible," Kurti says, leaning forward for emphasis. The political leader has used meetings with British officials in London this week to lay out his case for membership.

Brexit has not dented close ties between Pristina and London, officials on both sides claim. British diplomats and military personnel have not forgotten that amid talk of a no-fly zone in Ukraine triggering a third world war, an incident in Kosovo's capital's airport in 1999 is considered a historical near-miss for live engagement on Russian and Nato forces.

Still, despite Nato's historical interventions in the western Balkans, Kosovo is unlikely to be submitted to the defence pact any time soon. Four members, Spain, Romania, Greece and Slovakia, do not recognise Kosovo as an independent state. While more than 100 states do recognise it, Kosovo is not a member of the United Nations, thanks to a block from Russia.

It has not stopped historical comparisons between Ukraine and Kosovo from politicians, however. British prime minister, Boris Johnson, has compared the attacks on Ukraine to the Serbian atrocities carried out in [*Sarajevo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarajevo) in the 1990s.

It's a parallel that few in the western Balkans had failed to notice, not least Kurti himself. A political activist before seeking election, he did not fight in the conflict that engulfed the western Balkans after the breakup of Yugoslavia, but he was imprisoned and, according to sources close to him, tortured in [*Serbia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/serbia).

"It looks as if this is another Sarajevo in the making. We are looking at a siege of the capital [in Ukraine]," he says.

Kosovans do not see a TV screen when they look at Ukraine at the moment: it brings back sharply their experiences of the recent past, Kurti says, when Serbia carried out massacres and mass expulsions of Kosovan Albanians.

Fear for the elderly and children becomes all-consuming: "Not just every day, but every hour, maybe even every minute. And that amount of anxiety that deteriorates your being, its integrity. You turn yourself into the living dead, you consider yourself already dead," he says.

Seeing a country carved up on a map displayed by Belarussian president Alexander Lukashenko on Tuesday, along with the recent shelling of Kharkiv in Ukraine, has also painted a clear picture for Kurti of what Kyiv now faces.

"When a northern bigger power wants to frighten you and exterminate you. I see genocide taking place, where they see a territory without you. That's what's going on in Ukraine," he says.

"This Russian invasion, this military aggression is not political anymore. It is genocide."

The invasion's tactics are informed by a dark combination of logistics and demographics, he adds.

But more than the nature of war, the means are also troubling for Kosovo, Kurti says. His country can see some of the same Russia-made tanks at its border. Last autumn, there was a build-up of troops, tanks and MiG fighter aircraft, an escalation over a dispute involving number plates with Serbia.

Politically and economically, Serbia has close ties to Russia. That also means it will likely not escape Moscow's economic hurt from sanctions, something which Kosovo fears could harden hearts on its northern border.

Serbia refused to impose sanctions following the invasion of Ukraine, out of step with European peers. Its president, Aleksandar VuÄiÄ, suggested the step was payback for support from Russia in blocking Kosovo from the UN.

Kurti and fellow Kosovan politicians also see parallels in president Putin's rhetoric and distorted history which suggests a responsibility to protect "ethnic Russians", in arguments used by Serbia regarding the ethnic Serb minority who live in Kosovo. Serbia also claimed historical and cultural ownership of Kosovo as a basis for wiping out Kosovan Albanians in the 1990s.

"They don't acknowledge crimes from the past. And at the same time they have a very strong and wide variety of ties with Russia, so of course we are very vigilant and worried but we are not afraid," Kurti says.

Still, Kosovo alone cannot manage what he believes is a growing threat: "I also insist that Nato be way more vigilant than it already is," the prime minister says.

Kosovo is "in danger" because Putin is cutting off his own escape routes for de-escalation, Kurti says. He has to move forward rather than pursue peace in order to secure his political future, Kurti suggests.

Rather than open up a fresh military front himself, via Moldova or the Baltic states, Putin is more likely to leverage Serbia as a proxy, and use its military for expansion in the western Balkans, Kosovo fears. This would "outsource" the effort to paint Moscow's drive to grow its territory, Kurti claims.

For now, the state of just around two million citizens is limited in what it can do in the face of Russian aggression in its tense neighbourhood. It needs friends and allies with a sense of history, and a potentially less secure future Kurti says:

"Experience has shown that autocracies are much faster [to grow] than democracies. That's why I really welcome the decision of the German Bundestag on Sunday, to have completely another view on security and defence on European wellbeing, rights and freedoms.

"I want to see other countries within the EU and Nato taking the situation very seriously, and taking a leap forward."

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)

[*Why the UK and Nato are opposing a no-fly zone over Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/prime-minister-nato-ukraine-joe-biden-world-war-three-b2026712.html)

[*Russia bombs Ukrainian maternity hospital in Zhytomyr as mothers and children 'flee to basement'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-zhytomyr-hospital-bomb-b2026632.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Fear of new discrimination stalks the Romani refugees; With tens of thousands crossing from Ukraine into Hungary, the community faces a cold welcome from Orban's regime*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-G7M1-JCS0-D4C3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 12, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 28

**Length:** 1075 words

**Byline:** AMANDA COAKLEY

**Body**

As the warnings grew ever louder in the weeks before Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Romani man Maxsim became increasingly concerned about his family and their community in the western Ukrainian city of Vynohradiv.

While he was worried about what he would do if a war started and his work as a labourer dried up, the 21-year-old did not believe deep down that there would be full-scale conflict.

So when Russian missiles started raining down on Ukrainian soil on 24 February, Maxsim was stunned, and heartbroken. He knew his family needed a plan and immediately gathered with his Roma community to discuss their collective response and next steps.

Several men said they wanted to stay and fight for Ukraine. Wealthier families donated money to poorer ones to ensure they had basic supplies.

It was decided that some men would lead the women and children out of the country, find work abroad, and send the money back home to ensure more could leave in case their community was sidelined by the national humanitarian effort.

Maxsim was tasked with taking his 16-year-old wife, Christina, their one-year-old daughter, and his entire extended family - about 25 people in total - to Hungary, a journey that they said took two days despite it only being 20km as the crow flies.

"The second the invasion happened, the work we had lined up disappeared, so we had to go," Maxsim, who only gave his first name, told The Independent. "My parents refused to leave, so it was all up to me to navigate the transport and get everyone to safety."

When the group arrived at the Tiszabecs crossing between Ukraine and Hungary, Maxsim was not stopped despite Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's ban on men aged between 18 to 60 leaving the country. Maxsim says no one asked him questions when they saw he was a Roma.

Activists told The Independent that other Romani men have been prevented from leaving Ukraine at the border and conscripted into the military, seemingly making the outcome dependent on how a particular border guard views the community.

Approximately 100,000 Romani people have left Ukraine in the last two weeks, according to figures given from the European Roma Rights Centre, although the real number is likely to be considerably higher.

Before the invasion and ensuing exodus, there were believed to be anywhere between 300,000 and 400,000 Romani people in Ukraine, according to various estimates.

Although well established and self-sufficient in the country, the Roma have long been sidelined by Ukrainian society and subjected to discrimination and violence.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) last November warned there was widespread online hate speech against the Roma community in several cities, and said that while attacks on Romani people were frequent, official investigations tended to fall by the wayside.

And now the war has exposed them to new challenges.

Although the majority of Roma live in Ukraine's western Zakarpattia region, those settled in the north and east of the country are finding it difficult to reach safety due to a lack of cash and identification documents. Furthermore, they are unsure of how they will be received abroad, that is if they are even allowed to enter another country.

"At the moment there is unprecedented support and tolerance for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***??? however, we are already seeing unequal treatment of Romani refugees," said Jonathan Lee, spokesperson for the European Roma Rights Centre.

"They are more likely to be refused at borders, more likely to be neglected by local authorities once they cross ??? and they are also less likely to be hosted in small family apartments in European cities."

The journey to Tiszabecs was particularly hard for Christina, who had been terrified she might have to make the journey alone.

"Having my husband and family with me has made a scary situation better," she said, cradling her infant in the village hall in Tiszabecs.

She has no idea what is in store in the days and weeks ahead, but hopes Maxsim will ultimately find work on construction sites in the capital, Budapest, in order to ensure their survival and send money home to help get the rest of their family out of Ukraine.

However, their prospects in the country could well hinge on the stance of the government and nationalist leader Viktor Orban towards the Roma community - with campaigners fearful of how things might develop as the number of Romani arrivals increases.

Mr Orban has long been accused of anti-Roma sentiment, while his government has supported the segregation of Romani children in schools and hinted that the community should not be entitled to the same family state benefits as the rest of the population.

"There have been some reports of ethnic profiling on the Hungary-Ukraine border, but several aid organisations have been working to counter that," Bernard Rorke, a long-time campaigner for Roma rights in Hungary, told The Independent.

"This government is without scruples and their behaviour is determined by what they deem to be political necessity. Orban has not hesitated before to single out the Roma for political gain as he has scapegoated the LGTBQ community," he added.

Hungary has received more than 214,000 refugees from Ukraine so far - amid an exodus that has seen at least 2.3 million people flee in total - although it is unknown how many of these are Romani people. Members of the Roma community have also fled to other neighbouring countries including Moldova and Romania.

Across Eastern Europe, observers and analysts have pointed out how Ukrainians have been treated favourably compared to the millions of people from nations such as Afghanistan, Syria, and Eritrea who have been arriving at the EU's borders and shores in recent years.

Nevertheless, the local community in Tiszabecs have opened their arms to all those fleeing Russia's war, according to the village's army of volunteers.

The village hall has been inundated with so many donations that they have started to turn away perishable goods, while a stall selling Langos, a Hungarian street dish, has been set up to feed people in need of a hearty meal after their long trek to safety.

"Teachers, old people, chefs, everyone has come to help people in need and in many cases that's Romani people," said Peter Borbely, the village's headmaster who closed his school for three days to focus on the humanitarian response.

"Everyone needs some support and that is what we will continue to provide. We'll keep going until the very end."

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland faces increased cyber attack threat - foreign affairs minister*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-S4J1-DY4H-K3KG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 5:04 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1033 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Foreign Affairs minister also indicated that Ireland is currently preparing to send defence equipment to Ukraine.

**Body**

[*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) is facing an increased threat from cyber attacks since the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the Foreign Affairs Minister has warned.

The Oireachtas Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee heard from [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) on Thursday, who said the Irish [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) was taking precautions against potential cyber attacks.

His appearance comes amid the backdrop of the ongoing war in Ukraine, with Ireland poised to potentially take in tens of thousands of refugees from the war-torn country.

"There is an increased cyber threat in our assessment. And we are taking the the appropriate precautions in relation to that in terms of a heightened sense of awareness and concern in that space," Mr Coveney told TDs and senators.

That is an outrageous act of aggression that cannot go unchecked.

Simon Coveney, on the Mariupol maternity and children's hospital attack

The Foreign Affairs minister, responding to a question from Fine Gael TD David Stanton, also indicated that Ireland is currently preparing to send defence equipment to Ukraine.

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 already committed to providing non-lethal equipment only.

Mr Coveney 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."

Mr Coveney began his brief appearance at the committee by condemning the "unconscionable attack" on a maternity and children's hospital in Mariupol.

"This event speaks directly to the need for international pressure to be brought to bear, so that this senseless conflict can be halted," he told politicians.

"That is an outrageous act of aggression that cannot go unchecked and we will, as I believe many other countries will as well, ensure there is accountability through all the legal mechanisms available and the legal entities available globally, to to respond to atrocities like that."

However, Mr Coveney was less than certain about the likelihood of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) appearing before the International Criminal Court (ICC) to answer for alleged war crimes committed by Russian troops in Ukraine.

The ICC has already announced that an investigation has begun into the situation in Ukraine and any possible war crimes.

"I'm a big supporter of the ICC. So is Ireland. But there are lots of powerful countries who aren't and so it's really important that this process has begun and in terms of gathering of information and evidence and so on. Whether it will actually result in a prosecution of a President Putin remains to be seen," he said.

Mr Coveney did not rule out the possibility of further sanctions being imposed on Russia by the EU.

"The key priority now is the rapid and effective implementation of all of sanctions agreed to date. Discussions will also continue at EU level on possible additional sanctions," he said.

"The implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine for all of us in Europe, are profound. Every part of Government is working intensely," he said.

Stressing that Ireland is playing a key role in the global moves to resist Russian aggression in Europe, he said that it was vital that civilians are protected as the conflict continues.

"Whatever is agreed, or not agreed - on humanitarian corridors or other measures - civilians and civilian infrastructure must be protected.

"This applies both to those who choose to leave and those who choose to remain. It is a core obligation under international humanitarian law."

Mr Coveney also said that around 45 Irish citizens remain in Ukraine, while 157 have left the country.

He added that the country remains a welcoming place to Russian and Belarusians and had no issue with the citizens of either country.

He went on: "The Russian and Belarusian communities in Ireland are part of the fabric of this nation and it is important that we continue to show them that they are welcome here, just as we will for the many Ukrainians now seeking refuge here with us in Ireland."

Mr Coveney was also quizzed on reports that the Irish ambassador to Russia, Brian McElduff, was summoned by the Russian authorities in Moscow.

"In terms of of our ambassador in Moscow, I'm not going to go into conversations that have happened between the ambassador and authorities in Moscow apart from to say - it's not that unusual when there's tension, for our ambassador abroad to be called in by a foreign office in another country.

"It's happened in Israel many times," he said.

"He was asked in, after the incident in the Russian embassy here in Dublin, which was an unfortunate incident actually, because it's distracted away from some of the core messages that we need to be delivering.

"But that was not an unexpected conversation. And I'm not overly surprised by it at all."

Mr Coveney repeatedly expressed his admiration for the proactive response of the EU and the warm welcome ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have received.

"The generosity of the response has just been breathtaking as far as I'm concerned. I mean, the most difficult issue, politically, in the European Union for the last 10 years has been migration.

"We couldn't agree on anything in terms of how to deal with migration, how to burden share in the EU, how countries in northern and western Europe could support countries in the south that were being impacted by significant numbers of migrants and asylum seekers coming from North Africa and the Middle East and so on.

"And within the space of 48 hours, the EU effectively signed off on a temporary protection mechanism, which essentially allowed an unlimited number of Ukrainians to come into the EU, anywhere in the EU, and effectively be treated as EU citizens.

"The response from countries that are highly sensitive politically, to migration, generally, like Hungary, Slovakia and Poland in particular over the last number of years, have just set all of that aside," he said.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'More weapons, more visas': Thousands gather in London to protest about invasion of Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XN-J4G1-JBNF-W53J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 9:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1008 words

**Byline:** Colin Drury

**Highlight:** Multi-national rally in centre of capital calls for more visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

**Body**

An hour before she stood in a rainy Trafalgar Square demonstrating against the Russian war in Ukraine, Angelina Kopachevskaya was on a call to her mother and grandma in a basement in the bombarded city of Kharkiv.

"They are being super-brave," the 32-year-old said. "But they not sleeping, they are running out of food, my grandma's medicine is running out. All they are hearing for the last few days is explosions. My grandma - she is 78. She doesn't deserve for this to be happening to her."

Roughly 2,000 people attended a Stand With Ukraine rally in London on Saturday afternoon and, among them, there were countless such stories of heartbreak: of families cowering beneath ground, of cousins preparing to fight on front lines, of men debating if they themselves should leave happy lives in the UK to go and defend the homeland.

"I cannot believe this is happening in 2022," said Ms Kopachevskaya, who has lived in London for seven years. "It doesn't feel real. My grandmother in a warzone? How can that be? I speak to them and I can hear shells exploding."

Her Spanish husband said he had suggested her family should consider leaving several weeks ago when Russian president Vladimir Putin first started moving troops onto Ukraine's borders. "But they never thought he would really invade. Neither did I. Even with all the troops there, they thought this is not possible. It is barbarism in Europe."

She felt especially hopeless because she had also been speaking to her brother who works in Moscow. "He says that no one there believes what is happening," she said. "They say Putin is liberating Ukraine. They say the soldiers are heroes. How can this be stopped if people are brainwashed?"

The rally itself was a multi-national sea of blue and yellow. Demonstrators waved flags - Ukraine and Union Jacks mainly - held up homemade placards, and sang slogans. They repeatedly made three clear demands of the UK and western governments: more weapons for Ukraine's fighters, more visas for the war's refugees, and the implementation of a no-fly zone over the country to stop Russian warplanes acting with impunity.

But they also warned that Putin would not stop, even if he conquered Kyiv; that a wider war, one way or another, was bearing down on Europe.

"When the last Ukrainian soldier falls, Putin will come for you," read one massive banner. Another echoed a similar theme: "It was 'just Poland' in 1939."

For Chrystyna Chymera-Holloway such history hung heavy in the air.

The 37-year-old charity worker was born and bred in West Yorkshire after her Ukrainian grandparents moved to the UK during the Second World War - but she had never forgotten a story her grandfather told about being given a blue and yellow ribbon in occupied 1930s Ukraine.

"He was only 10 or so but he had to hide it because it was so dangerous to have," she said. "Now, it's 90 years later and I have cousins there who could be in the same situation. It is just unbearable."

She had brought her two children - four-year-old Mila and two-year-old Teodor - to the demonstration. "It was the Nineties before my grandparents went back to Ukraine because of the Soviet occupation," she said. "Now, if [Russia occupies]... how long will it be before my children can visit? Ukraine is their country. It can't just be taken from them."

The family, in fact, were due to visit in February to introduce Teodor to the wider family after two years of lockdowns had made such trips impossible. Now, she said, some of her cousins were joining the front lines. "What if they never get to meet him?" she asked helplessly.

She was, she said, very much in favour of Nato implementing a no-fly zone over Ukraine. Even if that meant risking a nuclear war? "Yes," she said simply. "Ukrainian children are dying."

It was a thought echoed by Voldymyr Svitlyk and Igor Rotko. The two friends - both 42 - left Ukraine for London more than 20 years ago. But, now, both of them - each one a father-of-two - had been thinking about returning home to fight.

"I do not think I would be much use as [a fighter]," said Mr Rotko, a chef by profession. "I have no military training. For now, I think I can be of more use here raising money, helping with logistics, these sorts of things. But if it comes to it, yes, I would go. I would be fearful but I would go. Because it would be the right thing to do."

It may, he admitted, be easier said than done.

"My wife knows I'm serious," he said. "This is why she has hidden my passport."

It was not just Brits and Ukrainians here, it should be said. Latvians, Estonians and Lithuanians all appeared to be heavily represented, along with Poles, Italian, French, Lebanese and Brazilians. There were also a spattering of Russians.

Katja did not want to give her full name because she feared potential reprisals against her family back home in Mordovia - but the 22-year-old held a sign openly declaring her nationality and saying she stood with Ukraine.

"I am ashamed," she said. "I am angry this is being done in the name of people I love. It is unforgivable; murder and human rights violations committed by Russians."

Like Ms Kopachevskaya, she too had been speaking to her family just a few hours before arriving in Trafalgar Square. "My grandma, she is a Putin supporter. She says they are only targeting terrorists. I send her pictures - she says these are lies."

How does that make her feel? "I love her," she said. "But I don't know how things can ever be the same again."

Things, in fact, may never be the same for all of us, according to some here.

Monika Ciesielska is Polish and has lived in London five years but she has now found herself thinking up contingency plans for her family back home in Wroclaw for if Russia should turn its eyes on Warsaw next.

"This isn't implausible anymore," the 25-year-old business analyst said. "I don't think everyone in the UK understands the seriousness of what is happening. That is why there are only a couple of thousand people here today. It feels far away and too abstract but this is a war in Europe. We cannot look the other way."

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*McDonald's, Starbucks, Coke, Pepsi join exodus out of Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YD-1CY1-DY4H-K3H8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 12:08 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1006 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** McDonald's, Starbucks, Coca-Cola, PepsiCo and General Electric all announced Tuesday they were suspending their business in Russia in response to the country's invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

McDonald's, [*Starbucks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/starbucks) , Coca-Cola, [*PepsiCo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pepsico) and General Electric \_\_ ubiquitous global brands and symbols of U.S. corporate might \_\_ all announced Tuesday they were temporarily suspending their business in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in response to the country's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

"Our values mean we cannot ignore the needless human suffering unfolding in Ukraine," McDonald's President and CEO Chris Kempczinski said in an open letter to employees.

The Chicago-based burger giant said it will temporarily close 850 stores but continue paying its 62,000 employees in Russia "who have poured their heart and soul into our McDonald's brand."

Kempczinski said it's impossible to know when the company will be able to reopen its stores.

"The situation is extraordinarily challenging for a global brand like ours, and there are many considerations," Kempczinski wrote in the letter. McDonald's works with hundreds of Russian suppliers, for example, and serves millions of customers each day.

Last Friday, Starbucks had said that it was donating profits from its 130 Russian stores \_\_ owned and operated by Kuwait-based franchisee Alshaya Group \_\_ to humanitarian relief efforts in Ukraine. But on Tuesday, the company changed course and said it would temporarily close those stores. Alshaya Group will continue to pay Starbucks' 2,000 Russian employees, Starbucks President and CEO Kevin Johnson said in an open letter to employees.

"Through this dynamic situation, we will continue to make decisions that are true to our mission and values and communicate with transparency," Johnson wrote.

Coca-Cola Co. announced it was suspending its business in Russia, but it offered few details. [*Coke*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coke) 's partner, Switzerland-based Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Co., owns 10 bottling plants in Russia, which is its largest market. Coke has a 21% stake in Coca-Cola Hellenic Bottling Co.

PepsiCo and General Electric both announced partial shutdowns of their Russian business.

Pepsi, based in Purchase, New York, said it will suspend sales of beverages in Russia. It will also suspend any capital investments and promotional activities.

But the company said it will continue to produce milk, baby formula and baby food, in part to continue supporting its 20,000 Russian employees and the 40,000 Russian agricultural workers who are part of its supply chain.

"Now more than ever we must stay true to the humanitarian aspect of our business," PepsiCo CEO Ramon Laguarta said in an email to employees.

General Electric also said in a Twitter post that it was partially suspending its operations in Russia. GE said two exceptions would be essential medical equipment and support for existing power services in Russia.

McDonald's is among those to take the biggest financial hit. Unlike Starbucks and other fast food companies like KFC and Pizza Hut, whose Russian locations are owned by franchisees, McDonald's owns 84% of its Russian stores. McDonald's has also temporarily closed 108 restaurants it owns in Ukraine and continues to pay those employees.

In a recent regulatory filing, McDonald's said its restaurants in Russia and Ukraine contribute 9% of its annual revenue, or around $2 billion last year.

Yum Brands, the parent company of KFC and Pizza Hut, said Monday that it is donating all of the profits from its 1,050 restaurants in Russia to humanitarian efforts. It has also suspended new restaurant development in the country. Burger King said it is redirecting the profits from its 800 Russian stores to relief efforts and donating $2 million in food vouchers to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

McDonald's said Tuesday it has donated more than $5 million to its employee assistance fund and to relief efforts. It has also parked a Ronald McDonald House Charities mobile medical care unit at the Polish border with Ukraine; another mobile care unit is en route to the border in Latvia, the company said. PepsiCo said it is donating food, refrigerators and $4 million to relief organizations.

Some of the companies have a long history operating in Russia. PepsiCo entered the Russian market in the early 1960s, at the height of the Cold War, and helped to create common ground between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Later, McDonald's was one of the first U.S. fast food companies to open a store in Russia, a sign that the Cold War had thawed. On Jan. 31, 1990, thousands of Russians lined up before dawn to try hamburgers \_\_ many for the first time\_\_ at the first McDonald's in Moscow. By the end of the day, 30,000 meals had been rung up on 27 cash registers, an opening-day record for the company.

But since the Ukraine invasion last month, many corporations have ceased operations in Russia in protest. Among them is consumer goods conglomerate Unilever, which on Tuesday said it has suspended all imports and exports of its products into and out of Russia, and that it will not invest any further capital into the country. In a more limited move, Amazon said Tuesday the company's cloud computing network, Amazon Web Services, will stop allowing new sign-ups in Russia and Belarus.

Pressure had been mounting on companies that remained in the country. Hashtags to boycott companies like McDonald's, Coca-Cola and PepsiCo quickly emerged on social media.

Last week, New York State Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli \_\_ a trustee of the state's pension fund, which is a McDonald's investor \_\_ sent letters to McDonald's, PepsiCo and eight other companies urging them to consider pausing their operations in Russia.

"Companies doing business in Russia need to seriously consider whether it's worth the risk. As investors, we want assurances that our holdings are not in harms way," DiNapoli said Tuesday in a statement. "I commend the companies that are taking the right steps and suspending their operations in Russia."

In his letter, Kempczinski cited influential former McDonald's Chairman and CEO Fred Turner, whose mantra was, "Do the right thing."

"There are countless examples over the years of McDonald's Corp. living up to Fred's simple ideal. Today is one of those days," Kempczinski said.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*No-fly zone over Ukraine 'would not help', says head of UK's armed forces*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-6BK1-JBNF-W195-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 1:05 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 985 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Admiral Sir Tony Radakin said most of the offensive was coming from Russian artillery.

**Body**

It is not inevitable that Russia takes over [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the head of the UK's armed forces has said, but a no-fly zone "would not help".

Chief of the Defence Staff [*Admiral*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/admiral) Sir Tony Radakin said the invasion "is not going well" for the Kremlin, with Russia's military might not proving as strong as expected in the face of the Ukrainian resistance.

But he said the key call of Kyiv - a no-fly zone - would not help those on the ground.

Asked if it was inevitable that Russia takes over Ukraine, he said: "No. I think we've seen a Russian invasion that is not going well. I think we're also seeing a remarkable resistance by Ukraine, both its armed forces and its people."

On Sunday, Ukrainian newspaper The Kyiv Independent reported that 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."

But 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 (Vladimir) Putin because that would be a massive escalation, but also that feeds Putin's narrative," he told the Trevor Phillips On Sunday programme 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".

General Philip Breedlove, a former Nato supreme allied commander Europe, told Times Radio that 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."

The minister 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."

The hopes of a temporary ceasefire in two Ukrainian cities were revived on Sunday, after a previous attempt on Saturday could not go ahead due to continued shelling.

Eduard Basurin, the head of the military in separatist-held Donetsk territory, said safe passage corridors for residents of the besieged port city of Mariupol and the city of Volnovakha will reopen.

Asked whether he thought the second attempt would hold, Mr Raab told the BBC's Sunday Morning programme: "I'm very sceptical about any assurances or commitments that President Putin makes.

"Of course, we want to do everything we can. We should exhaust all opportunities to try and provide humanitarian relief. But I think you only have to look at his track record in Syria to see that we need to be very careful to test any assurances Vladimir Putin gives."

Ukrainian deputy prime minister Olha Stefanishyna told the programme Ukrainians would "never trust" what the Russians say and that they know "the Russian playbook by heart".

Meanwhile, Mr Raab defended the UK's support to Ukrainians fleeing the country, after reports in the French media that 150 refugees had been turned away at Calais because they did not have a visa.

French interior minister Gerald Darmanin is reported to have written to Home Secretary Priti Patel accusing London of a "totally inadequate response" and "lack of humanity" and calling on her to set up a proper consular presence in Calais to deal with the humanitarian crisis.

Mr Raab did not deny the refugees had been turned away, and said: "Look, if we just open the door not only will we not benefit the people that we need to, the genuine refugees, but I think we undermine the popular support for this very thing, so I don't think that's the right thing to do. We need to make sure that we're acting for those that need our support."

More than 1.5 million refugees have fled Ukraine in the past 10 days in the fastest-growing refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War, the United Nations has said.

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**



[*Risk 'a new Iron Curtain will descend upon Europe' as Russia's isolation grows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-3901-JBNF-W36T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 6:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1036 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Ben Wallace said the world faced the prospect of a 'new Cold War' after Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

**Body**

There is a risk of a "new Cold War" and that "a new [*Iron Curtain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iron-curtain) will descend upon Europe", the Defence Secretary has warned.

[*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) said Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) was "playing with fire" by attacking the Zaporizhzhia nuclear site in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - a move Western officials deemed unprecedented.

Officials said the site was now likely to be under Russian control but with Ukrainian staff still on the ground to maintain safety.

Speaking at a press conference in Copenhagen, Mr Wallace said the move was "incredibly dangerous".

"It's not just dangerous for Ukraine and Russia, it's dangerous for Europe, and it is playing with fire that really is beyond anything that has to do with logic or necessity," he said.

The attack was being discussed on Friday at an emergency meeting of the United Nations Security Council, which Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) had called for in the early hours of the morning following a conversation with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky.

The UK's permanent representative to the UN said Russia "must keep fighting away from and protect the safety and security of nuclear sites".

Dame Barbara Woodward said: "This is the first time that a state has attacked a fuelled and functioning nuclear power plant.

"International law requires special protection for nuclear facilities and it is difficult to see how Russia's actions were compatible with its commitments under Article 56 of the additional protocol of the (Geneva) Conventions. It must not happen again."

It comes as the isolation of Russia and its people from the rest of the world continued, with the BBC announcing it would "temporarily suspend" the work of all its journalists and support staff in the country after authorities passed legislation which director-general Tim Davie said appeared to "criminalise the process of independent journalism".

Russia's Duma passed laws that meant anyone spreading "fake" - in the Kremlin's view - information about the military could be jailed for up to 15 years.

Reports have suggested Russia's media regulator has blocked independent news sources such as the BBC, and the broadcaster has distributed information on how to access its services on the dark web.

Mr Davie said: "This legislation appears to criminalise the process of independent journalism."

He added: "Our BBC News service in Russian will continue to operate from outside Russia."

Ukrainian foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba called on the media to "spread the truth about Russia's crimes against Ukraine".

Meanwhile, the Metropolitan Police's War Crimes Team is gathering evidence in relation to alleged war crimes in Ukraine to support the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation, the force said.

In a video clip posted on his Twitter account on Friday evening, the Prime Minister addressed Ukrainians directly and said he was "heartsick at the destruction and loss of life".

He added: "Putin has made a grave miscalculation. The free world is united in its resolve to stand up to his barbarism, and the fortitude and defiance of the Ukrainian people in the face of this unjust and unwarranted aggression is moving hearts around the world.

"I've spoken almost every day to President Volodymyr Zelensky, and I marvelled at his bravery, his calm, his sense of purpose, just as I marvel at the heroism and resolve of the Ukrainian people.

"And I know that however long it takes, however arduous, Putin must fail. Our thoughts and our sympathies are with the whole of Ukraine in its battle for freedom."

Earlier, Mr Wallace warned that the shared values of the West were "under threat" from Mr Putin and his invasion of Ukraine.

Speaking in Denmark, where he was visiting allies in the UK Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), the Defence Secretary said the Russian leader was "bombarding, ordering the killing, invasion of a sovereign country for simply having the nerve to choose a different future for itself".

He added: "Now is the time for us to stand together in common values and in determination, both in soft and hard power."

Western officials said on Friday that Ukraine continued to hold the majority of the country's main cities, but over the last 24 hours there had been a high level of air and artillery attacks, including those hitting civilian sites.

They believe the resistance of the Ukrainians was having a psychological impact on Russian troops, and the lack of progress made by the Kremlin's forces had forced senior commanders into the front of the battle, resulting in some being killed.

It comes as the Home Secretary met ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are due to apply to join family members in the UK under an expanded scheme.

Today I am in Poland to launch the United Kingdom's Ukraine Family Scheme.From today anyone settled in the United Kingdom can bring their Ukrainian family to safety.The British Government is doing everything it can to support the Ukrainian people as they fight for freedom. [*pic.twitter.com/Q6rbpEeHw1*](https://t.co/Q6rbpEeHw1) - Priti Patel (@pritipatel) [*March 4, 2022*](https://twitter.com/pritipatel/status/1499718495105388544?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Priti Patel met with families, women, and children on the Polish border in Medyka as she confirmed the immediate and extended family members of British nationals and people settled in the UK could stay in the country for three years.

The scheme applies to immediate family as well as parents, grandparents, adult children and foster children, and application centres have been bolstered to be able to handle 6,000 appointments a week.

Ms Patel said: "It's heartbreaking to have met families, women and children forced from their homeland because of the monstrous Russian invasion.

"Our expanded Ukraine Family Scheme is now fully open and to see the first people who will apply was wonderful. While we want people to be able to return to their homes at the end of this diabolical invasion, giving thousands of people a route to the UK is the right thing to do."

Mr Johnson, meanwhile, has been continuing to speak to foreign leaders about the crisis.

The Prime Minister agreed with Turkish President Recep Erdogan that there must be "total international condemnation of Russia's barbaric actions", a Downing Street spokesperson said.

He also spoke with Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic and French President Emmanuel Macron on Friday.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: Boris Johnson always wanted to be Churchill, but this is the wrong kind of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WT-1TG1-DY4H-K54V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 5:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 932 words

**Byline:** John Rentoul

**Highlight:** The prime minister gave a stirring speech in Poland today, but when it comes to asking the British people to pay a price for solidarity with the Ukrainians, Johnson has been muted, writes John Rentoul

**Body**

Boris Johnson has made some good speeches since Vladimir Putin invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) seven days ago. He has [*spoken*](https://hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2022-02-22/debates/057FABBB-4F1C-4425-A304-4A168EC069EB/Ukraine#contribution-A2D56A17-F86F-4212-97EF-66871F202243) in the Commons, he has [*addressed*](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EjXP29y0Mj_sXeiIRCKa8bNJaFiilutKiozhDM8zFt8/edit?usp=sharing) Ukrainians in their Catholic cathedral in London, and he gave a [*speech*](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/prime-ministers-speech-in-poland-on-the-russian-invasion-of-ukraine-1-march-2022) this morning in Poland.

Three speeches; three different responses. In parliament, he was given unstinting support by his own MPs, who only a month ago had been on the verge of voting him out of office. The only criticism came from Keir Starmer, for the opposition, who said he had not gone far enough in applying economic sanctions to the Putin regime.

In the cathedral, where he said "I am not a great preacher" before launching into "the story in the gospel" of the Samaritan, he was greeted with a standing ovation and chants of, "thank you, thank you." And then in Warsaw this morning, he was asked why he wouldn't enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine by a tearful Ukrainian journalist who accused him of being afraid. He listened and explained, as mournfully as he could, that it would not be a good idea for the UK to go to war with Russia, and that it was Putin and Putin alone who must bear responsibility for the tragedy unfolding in Europe.

They were good speeches, better suited to Johnson's oratory than many of the speeches he gave during the pandemic. The best of his pandemic speeches was when he had just come out of hospital and paid tribute to the immigrant nurses who had looked after him and the doctors - "several of them for some reason called Nick" - who treated him. In that one he managed to tell a personal and political story of his devotion to the ideal of the National Health Service: "It is the best of this country. It is unconquerable. It is powered by love."

But for most of the pandemic, the tension between the prime minister's liberal instincts and the desire to lead the nation in a total war - against a virus - meant that his message was confused and contradictory.

An actual war ought to be a better subject for Johnson's Churchillian instincts - instincts that he has never hidden. It was only eight years ago, while he was still mayor of London in 2014, that he wrote The Churchill Factor: How One Man Made History. It is a terrible book, put together in a hurry, and padded out by awarding "Churchill Factor" ratings out of 10 to all and sundry, but its message could not have been more obvious. I am a man of destiny, it said, ready to be called from the wilderness to save my country in its hour of need.

In a way, that is what Johnson did, for the narrow majority of his fellow citizens who voted to leave the EU. But that didn't turn out to be a moment of moral clarity akin to standing alone against the Nazis. It turned out to be rather difficult, complicated and bureaucratic, and our Churchillian prime minister seemed rather bored by customs declarations.

Now, though, we have a war in Europe, a war of national survival. But it is a war of national survival for Ukraine, not Britain, and Britain is prevented by the reality of nuclear deterrence from direct military intervention. Again, the Churchillian template doesn't fit. This is a war by proxy and by sanctions, fought in the belief that Putin is bound to fail and the UK should do what we can from the outside to make that happen more quickly, while we are unable, as Johnson tried to explain to Daria Kaleniuk, the Ukrainian journalist, to wage war ourselves.

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)

Nor does the Churchillian demand for national sacrifice match the moment. We can see how much Johnson admires [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , the Ukrainian president, to whom he seems to speak nearly every day - a leader who is prepared to summon his people to a supreme effort of national resistance. But when it comes to asking the British people to pay a price for solidarity with the Ukrainians, Johnson has been muted.

In the Commons it was Starmer, not the prime minister, who spoke of the "economic pain" that we would have to suffer in order to put meaningful pressure on Putin's regime. It was only in his speech in Poland today that Johnson declared: "We should recognise that this crisis will impose costs on ourselves and our electorates, that sanctions have consequences for us as well as for Russia, and no step is free of risk."

That reference to "our electorates" was most un-Churchillian, and a clue to Johnson's realisation that he is not going to emulate his hero this time, either. The unspoken question behind the rapidly changing foreign policy of not just Britain, but Germany, the US and other Nato allies, is about how much pain the voters in the world's democracies are prepared to endure, and for how long. It is the question behind cutting the world off from Russian oil and gas, and in a different form, it is the question behind our policies towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

It is wrong to see refugees as a burden, as several MPs said in the debate in the Commons on the statement by Priti Patel, the home secretary, today, but that is nevertheless how they may be seen if the British people's generosity is not sustained over the long run.

In his speech in the Ukrainian Catholic cathedral, the prime minister said: "Never in all my study, my memory of politics and international affairs have I seen such a clear distinction between right and wrong, between good and evil, between light and dark." That kind of Churchillian moral clarity may be admirable, but Johnson may be wondering how useful it is as a guide to action.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

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[*Domestic woes overshadow European war for some US voters*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64W3-8V01-DY4H-K3R0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 26, 2022 Saturday 6:23 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1038 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Wisconsin is one of America's most politically divided states in this crucial midterm election year

**Body**

From the [*Chinese*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chinese) restaurant he runs in the western suburbs of [*Milwaukee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/milwaukee) , Charles Yee has watched with alarm this week as Europe confronts the greatest threat to its peace and security since the end of World War II. But, at least for now, he's more troubled by challenges at home.

As the pandemic stretches into its third year, the 62-year-old Brookfield, Wisconsin, native is trying to keep his business running amid a staffing shortage. Disruptions to the supply chain make it hard to keep basic supplies like to-go containers on hand. Perhaps nothing hits Yee harder than the rise in prices fueled by inflation, which makes everything more expensive. He would like a full day off at some point.

The ever-present headwinds make Russia's invasion of Ukraine seem like a distant problem to Yee, who is a Republican. He's not excusing Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's norm-shattering efforts to topple the government of a neighboring democracy, threatening the lives of civilians in the process. But his own persistent hurdles resonate more deeply to him.

"It's not my top priority," Yee said of the invasion. "I'm just kind of, sort of - you know - getting by."

In one of America's most politically divided states, Yee is not alone. More than a dozen interviews with voters across the demographic and political spectrum on the eve of and immediately after the Russian attack suggest a broad focus on domestic issues, particularly the economy. While [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) were often quicker to express concern for Ukrainians, they were also reluctant to become too engaged in an overseas conflict.

Harshman Sihra, an 18-year-old Democrat, said he wants "everybody to be safe and healthy."

"But we're really concerned about American citizens first," he said. "So that's great, but us first."

That sentiment poses a challenge for Democrats in a critical election year. President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has cast Putin's aggression as a "contest between democracy and autocracy." But if he hopes for his party to prevail in November, he must also keep talking about issues that are more tangible to voters.

That's especially true in a place like Wisconsin, which is home to closely watched races for governor and Senate this year. In one of his first trips outside of Washington after next week's State of the Union address, Biden is expected to travel to Superior, Wisconsin, to highlight the on-the-ground impact of his massive infrastructure spending legislation.

The president is balancing the competing priorities as many in the U.S. are deeply skeptical of foreign entanglements after two decades of failures overseas, including the Iraq War and the botched withdrawal from Afghanistan. Just 26% say the U.S. should have a major role in the Russian conflict, according to a poll released this week from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

Democrats were more likely than Republicans to think the U.S. should play a major role in the conflict - 32% to 22 % - but were still overwhelmingly opposed.

Like much of the nation, Brookfield is a growing, changing community sorting through the latest crisis that once seemed unthinkable. Long the political epicenter of Republican-heavy Waukesha County, it has become more diverse as families move here from Milwaukee or places beyond Wisconsin, attracted to the schools and access to housing and health care.

That's made the area more competitive for Democrats, who have picked up state legislative seats and eaten into GOP margins in statewide elections.

Regardless of their political views, many in this teeming, diverse suburb are closely following the developments in Ukraine. Few may be more attentive than Lorika Hintz, a 40-year-old small business owner who doesn't identify with either political party. But she's informed by her experience surviving three years of street-level warfare in her Kosovo neighborhood as a teenager in the 1990s.

"People should be concerned. And I know it's far away from us. But it's really going to be bad. I'm most worried about the children," said Hintz, who has a 5-year-old daughter and will vote in a U.S. election for this first time this year.

For Democrat Anne Leggio, an interior designer, the crisis is a primary worry that reminds her of what she has read about the start of World War II.

"I almost have kind of the sense of stomach churning when I hear the news, and I hate it," she said.

But some Republican residents took a more hardline view.

"I'm more concerned about the United States. I know that sounds selfish, but I'm more concerned with what's happening here," said Republican Dina Bernotas, a 35-year-old owner of a Brookfield bar and grill. "Inflation, the lack of border control, the lack of police presence. I'm more concerned with keeping America safe and our cities safe and our communities safe - our people safe - than what's happening overseas."

Retired Milwaukee police officer Bob Chapman was moved by the thought of his grandsons in uniform.

"I don't want them going to Ukraine, based upon what I know, to die for somebody else's situation," said Chapman, a 72-year-old Marine veteran said, as tears welled in his eyes.

One thing that virtually everyone agreed on was that, regardless of whether the U.S. becomes more involved in the conflict, Americans will ultimately feel the consequences of the invasion.

Republican Gary Post, another retired Milwaukee police officer, said he expected market instability prompted by the war to trim his retirement spending power.

"Like the stock markets," said Post, 62, who flies a flag supporting former President Donald Trump in front of his house. "We've already seen ... how things can get disrupted."

Hintz, the immigrant from Kosovo, fears for the waves of desperate ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to American shores.

"There are going to be humanitarian consequences at home people don't understand," she said.

Even Yee, the Chinese restaurant owner who said he was more focused on his own pocketbook issues, acknowledged the invasion will likely eventually take a toll in the U.S.

"Everything's connected," he said before returning to the kitchen. "Sooner or later, it'll bite us in the butt."

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Associated Press journalist Carrie Antlfinger in Brookfield, Wisconsin contributed to this report

**Load-Date:** February 26, 2022

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[*Ukraine: War crimes investigation begins after UK pushed for action on Putin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-C831-JBNF-W493-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 1:20 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1156 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** More than one million Ukrainians have fled since the invasion began a week ago - the swiftest exodus of refugees this century.

**Body**

A war crimes investigation has begun after [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) accused Vladimir Putin of committing atrocities by bombarding cities in his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The International Criminal Court (ICC) opened an investigation on Wednesday night after Britain and 37 allies referred Russia over what the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) described as "abhorrent" attacks.

The move came as Ukraine's capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) braced for a siege, its second-largest city [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) reeled from further strikes and the control of port city Kherson was contested by the Russian military.

While according to the UN refugee agency, one million people have now fled Ukraine - making it the swiftest exodus of refugees this century.

The tally from UNHCR amounts to more than 2% of Ukraine's population on the move in under a week. The World Bank counted the country's population at 44 million at the end of 2020.

ICC prosecutor Karim Khan said work would begin "immediately", with his team already collecting evidence, after the co-ordinated referral freed him to get to work without the need for judicial approval.

Mr Johnson warned the Russian president he "cannot commit these horrific acts with impunity".

A second round of talks aimed at ending the fighting was expected on Thursday, but there were little hopes of a breakthrough.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss will meet counterparts from the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as part of the UK's effort to demonstrate support for eastern Nato allies.

The Prime Minister had spoken to Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday, promising further support and weapons for the forces resisting Russia's military and sharing his "disgust" at the Kremlin's attacks.

Strikes that damaged the Babi Yar Holocaust memorial in Kyiv and the central square in Kharkiv have caused revulsion, and Western allies fear it is a sign of a shift in Russian tactics further towards the indiscriminate targeting of urban areas.

Active investigations formally commence in Ukraine situation upon receipt of referrals by 39 states parties: [*https://t.co/DDkDs7qHlc*](https://t.co/DDkDs7qHlc) - Karim A. A. Khan QC (@KarimKhanQC) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/KarimKhanQC/status/1499142784510574600?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Moscow's international isolation was further displayed when the UN General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to demand it immediately withdraws its military from Ukraine, with 141 nations backing the motion and only five, including alleged co-aggressor Belarus, opposing it.For the first time the UK explicitly accused Mr Putin of war crimes, with Downing Street claiming "horrific acts" were occurring on an almost hourly basis as population centres are targeted.At Prime Minister's Questions, Mr Johnson said: "Putin has gravely miscalculated; in his abhorrent assault on a sovereign nation, he has underestimated the extraordinary fortitude of the Ukrainian people and the unity and resolve of the free world in standing up to his barbarism."He added: "What we have seen already from Vladimir Putin's regime in the use of the munitions that they have already been dropping on innocent civilians, in my view, already fully qualifies as a war crime."More than 2,000 civilians have died since the invasion began, Ukraine's state emergency service said, although that figure has not been independently verified.On Monday, Mr Khan said he planned to open an investigation into events in Ukraine "as rapidly as possible", but the referral from the 38 nations also including Ireland, Germany and Spain allowed him to launch "active investigations".They will look for possible war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide committed by any person on the territory of Ukraine. and 37 of our allies have referred atrocities in Ukraine to the [*@IntlCrimCourt*](https://twitter.com/IntlCrimCourt?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Russia is using indiscriminate force against innocent civilians in its illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine. The Putin regime must be held accountable.- Liz Truss (@trussliz) [*March 2, 2022*](https://twitter.com/trussliz/status/1499118079061671945?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss had said: "Putin's military machine is targeting civilians indiscriminately and tearing through towns across Ukraine.

"The UK will work closely with allies to ensure justice is done."

Justice Secretary Dominic Raab, a former lawyer who has prosecuted war crimes, said the UK will assist the ICC in hunting down suspected Russian war criminals.

The deputy prime minister told The Daily Telegraph that Britain could house Russian commanders suspected of atrocities in its prisons - in addition to proving a safe haven for witnesses who testified against them.

He added that "few countries around the world" had the UK's "lead information" which would likely prove "absolutely critical" to the ICC.

At PMQS, Mr Johnson promised to publish a list of people associated with Mr Putin who could be liable for sanctions, as he said "the vice is tightening on the Putin regime" through the restrictions imposed by the West.

But he was urged by Labour leader Sir Keir Starmer to immediately ramp up the measures against allies of the Russian leader.

Sir Keir, who called for Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich to face sanctions, said: "Now is the time to sanction every oligarch and crack open every shell company so we can prove Putin wrong."

The Russian-Israeli billionaire later announced he will sell the club, with the "net proceeds" going to a charity supporting victims of the war in Ukraine.

UK officials have said more sanctions are coming, against oligarchs, Russian National Security Council members and banks, and that they believe the economic shock of the moves has been more significant than Mr Putin was expecting.

They said they wanted sanctions to go further, including the Swift payment system ban being applied to all Russian banks.

In other developments:

- Mr Johnson announced the Government would match donations to the Disasters Emergency Committee's Ukraine appeal, starting with £20 million.

- The European Union announced that seven Russian banks were being excluded from the Swift system which allows fast and efficient interbank transactions.

- Ukrainian ambassador to the UK Vadym Prystaiko was given a standing ovation by MPs in the Commons.

The Russian defence ministry claimed that Kherson, in the south of Ukraine near the Crimean peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014, was under the "complete control" of Russian soldiers - but the Ukrainian military disputed this.

The lack of progress in meeting the aims of the invasion had led to a change in tactics, focusing on aerial and artillery bombardment of cities rather than the kind of lightning military advances originally envisaged by the Kremlin, Western analysts believe.

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)

[*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)

[*Sarah Everard's family pay tribute and say they miss her 'all the time'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/sarah-everard-metropolitan-police-london-met-cps-b2027440.html)

[*Neighbours axed after 37 years as Australian soap fails to find new broadcaster*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/neighbours-australian-twitter-sophie-ellisbextor-hollywood-b2027431.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Two years of war in Ukraine: Russia’s invasion in numbers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BDB-HWC1-DY4H-K0N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 24, 2024 Saturday 8:57 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1825 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Ukraine – two years of war: The figures which tell the story of Putin’s deadly invasion

**Body**

Two years ago to the day, [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) shocked the world by lauching a brutal all-out [*invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/invasion) of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*sending troops, tanks and warplanes in their masses across*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-latest-news-b2501791.html%22%20title=%22Russia-Ukraine%20latest:%20Kyiv’s%20stark%20warning%20to%20West%20on%20two-year%20anniversary%20as%20Putin%20‘behaving%20like%20Nazis’) [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s border under the cover of darkness.

While the Kremlin is reported to have believed its “special military operation” would bring the capital Kyiv under Russia’s grip in just 10 days, the extraordinary show of defiance by Ukrainians willing to defy one of the world’s largest armies to fight for their country’s existence has instead seen the [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) now enter its third year.

Over the course of 24 months, battle lines have shifted dramatically as [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) ’s troops pushed Russian invaders back hundreds of miles to enter into a grinding war of attrition centred in battle-hardened Donbas, where both armies are paying for small tactical and symbolic gains with thousands of lives.

Yet while the fighting hotspots have become more centralised, albeit along a 600-mile front line, the fate of Ukraine is increasingly at the mercy of geopolitical developments.

Seeking to justify his lengthy war, and his moves to transform Russia’s economy into a vast war machine, Putin is increasingly casting the conflict as an existential battle against the West.

With an ever-watchful eye on [*wrangling in Washington over military aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/david-cameron-ukraine-congress-house-of-representatives-poland-b2496688.html%22%20title=%22Lord%20Cameron%20says%20he%20is%20not%20lecturing%20US%20after%20Trump%20ally’s%20‘kiss%20my%20ass’%20reply) and the upcoming US presidential elections – in which a victorious Donald Trump could ultimately [*take a wrecking ball to Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/trump-nato-allies-russia-delinquent-b2494256.html%22%20title=%22Trump%20says%20he%20would%20encourage%20Russia%20to%20‘do%20whatever%20they%20want’%20to%20Nato%20allies%20who%20fail%20to%20pay%20bills) , and force Ukraine into an unsatisfactory peace deal by choking its funding – it is a battle the Russian president may believe he can win merely if Moscow’s appetite for victory outlasts that of its global adversaries.

Here The Independent takes a takes a look at the key [*statistics*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/statistics) defining two years of war in Ukraine:

30,457: The number of civilian casualties of Putin’s war

In a report published on Thursday, the UN’s human rights monitoring mission said it had verified 30,457 civilian casualties since 24 February 2022 – however Ukraine believes the true figure is several times higher.

A total of 10,582 civilian deaths have been confirmed, while 19,875 have been injured. These figures include 587 children killed and 1,298 injured.

Civilian casualty numbers were particularly high during the first few months of the war, with thousands of killed and injured every month. While they have gradually decreased, an average of 163 civilians lives were still claimed each month in 2023.

More than 90 per cent of these casualties were caused near the frontline by explosive weapons, such as shelling from artillery, tanks and multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS), cruise and ballistic missiles, and air strikes.

However a significant number also occurred far from the frontline, with the UN warning that Russia’s use of long-range missiles “left virtually no place in the country entirely safe from the hostilities”.

505,000: The top end of Ukrainian and Russian troop casualty estimates

With Ukraine treating its troop casualty figures as a state secret and Russia’s official figures citing a death toll several multitudes lower than any credible estimates, gauging the true scale of death among soldiers in the two-year war is close to impossible. However, intelligence reports and painstaking open-source investigations can provide some insights.

The most major recent intelligence-led hint came in the form of a declassified US assessment shared with Congress in December, which a source told Reuters suggested that 315,000 Russian soldiers had been killed or injured since February 2022 – close to 90 per cent of its initial invasion force.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence simultaneously estimated that the average daily number of Russian casualties rose by almost 300 per day over the course of 2023 compared to the previous year, [*leaving Moscow with half a million dead and wounded*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-rishi-sunak-soviet-afghan-b2471213.html) by the end of 2025 if casualties continue at the current rate.

And an open-soure investigation by BBC Russia and Mediazona has confirmed the deaths of 45,123 Russian troops, including 6,614 since October last year. Furthermore, a month before the Wagner mercenary group’s shortlived mutiny last June, a Wagner-affiliated Telegram channel said 22,000 of its fighters had been killed and 40,000 wounded, following a gruelling effort to seize Bakhmut.

On the Ukrainian side, The Economist reported anonymous US officials as estimating that at least 70,000 Ukrainian soldiers had died, and that up to 120,000 more had been wounded.

Open-source research by Ukrainian historian Yaroslav Tynchenko and volunteer Herman Shapovalenko has confirmed the deaths of 24,500 Ukrainians – at least 70 per cent of whom they believe are soldiers. The real figure is likely far higher, and many of the 15,000 troops listed as missing are likely dead, they believe.

10,000,000: The number of Ukrainians displaced by the war

According to the UN’s high commissioner for refugees, an estimated 3.7 million people have been driven from their homes but remain in Ukraine.

A further 6.3 million Ukrainians are now refugees [*sheltering in other countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-uk-visa-scam-sponsor-warning-b2467534.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainian%20refugees%20falling%20victim%20to%20‘extremely%20sophisticated’%20UK%20visa%20scam,%20charities%20warn). Nearly 60 per cent of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are living in neighbouring Poland, the UNHCR suggests.

18 per cent: The proportion of Ukrainian land currently occupied by Russia

The US-based Institute for the Study of War (ISW) – which is closely monitoring the conflict – calculates that Russia currently occupies 18 per cent of Ukraine’s territory. That percentage [*has not changed in the past year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-ukraine-war-soldiers-killed-b2286081.html) , but is down from nearly 27 per cent a month after Russia’s invasion.

Putin’s troops currently occupy parts of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzia, Kherson, and to a minimal extent, Kharkiv. It illegaly annexed the Ukrainian peninsula of Crimea in 2014.

£119bn: The cost of repairing Ukraine’s damaged infrastructure

Russia has wrought destruction on a vast scale in Ukraine, with long-range attacks not uncommon across the entire country, while razing towns such as Bakhmut and even [*obliterating the city of Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/film-art-ukraine-film-branded-b2501387.html%22%20title=%22Artistic%20expression%20is%20vital%20–%20my%20experience%20making%20a%20film%20with%20a%20Mariupol%20siege%20survivor%20proves%20that).

An estimate by the Kyiv School of Economics in September put the cost of repairing the damage at $151.2bn (£119bn).

Ukraine’s health ministry said in November that Russian troops had damaged 1,468 medical facilities, with another 193 facilities left completely destroyed. Unesco confirms that a total of 343 cultural sites have been damaged, including 127 religious sites and 151 buildings of historical or artistic interest.

£199,000,000,000: The amount of aid Ukraine’s allies have committed

While Ukraine’s allies have been reluctant to be drawn into direct conflict with Russia, Kyiv’s war effort is undeniably dependent upon their financial aid, not least to replenish weaponry and ammunition supplies.

The European Union is Ukraine’s largest backer, according to the ISW, which calculates that Brussels has made available $148.5bn (£116bn) to Kyiv since Russia’s invasion.

The United States has so far directed some $75bn (£59bn) in assistance to Ukraine, according to Germany’s Kiel Institute for the World Economy, with a further $60bn (£47bn) held up in the US Congress.

Not including the US, Kyiv’s allies have committed more than $178bn (£140bn), according to the ISW’s most recent estimates – bringing the overall total to around £253bn (£199bn).

2,000,000: The number of landmines laid in Ukrainian soil

As Russia dug in vast defences last year, cementing the vast frontline and mostly repelling Ukraine’s counteroffensive efforts, Moscow’s army also [*laid mines on an industrial scale*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-minefields-counteroffensive-latest-b2394792.html%22%20title=%22How%20‘industrial-scale’%20Russian%20minefields%20are%20hampering%20Ukraine’s%20counteroffensive) to guard its position.

The Halo Trust, the world’s largest humanitarian mine clearance organisation, estimates that as many as 2 million land mines have been laid in Ukraine over the past two years. The organisation has cleared 19,000 landmines so far over an area the equivalent of 300 full-sized Premier League football pitches.

Nevertheless, the UN has confirmed the deaths of 343 civilians as a result of mines and explosive remnants, with a further 769 injured, with the deadliest regions reported to be Kharkiv and Kherson.

26: The number of Russian warships Ukraine has put out of action

While its land counteroffensive failed to produce the lightning gains previously seen in Kharkiv a year earlier, Ukraine has increasingly used drones to strike deep within Russia and – in a major success – to destabilise Putin’s prized Black Sea fleet.

The Ukrainian military claimed earlier this month to have disabled approximately one third of the Black Sea fleet, having put 24 surface vessels and one submarine out of action. Kyiv [*claimed a sucessful strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-crimea-warship-destroyed-b2495949.html) on the 113m-long Caesar Kunikov Ropucha-class landing ship the following week.

3,000: The number of tanks Russia has lost

Much of Russia’s military doctrine centres around the use of tanks. However a report this month by the International Insitute of Strategic Studies estimated that Russian tank losses now exceed 3,000 – equivalent to its entire active pre-war arsenal.

However, the think-tank estimated that Russia still had about twice as many available for combat as Ukraine, with Moscow roughly “breaking even” in terms of replacements by putting around 1,000 to 1,500 more tanks into service in the past year.

300,000: The number of Russian reservists called up to fight

Entering a new phase of public acceptance about the scale of his war, Putin announced a partial military mobilisation in September 2022, calling up 300,000 reservists – a move which [*prompted a mass exodus of young Russian men*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-border-exile-military-mobilisation-b2177302.html).

As of 2023, the Russian army had about four times more active military personnel than Ukraine, with some 1,330,900 men and 250,000 reservists. Russia had a male population of around 66 million in 2021.

Ukrainian generals, meanwhile, are looking to mobilise up to [*half a million new soldiers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-press-conference-ukraine-zaluzhnyi-b2467000.html) , Zelensky said in December. The Ukrainian army [*counted around 500,000 servicemen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-us-uk-troops-b2467652.html) in 2023, according to the Global Firepower website, 200,000 of which are active military personnel and 250,000 reservists.

19,855: The number of Russians detained at anti-war protests

While dissent in Russia [*has been harshly stifled*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/alexei-navalny-mother-body-death-putin-b2501094.html%22%20title=%22Putin%20critic%20Navalny’s%20mother%20says%20she%20has%20been%20shown%20his%20body%20–%20but%20won’t%20be%20blackmailed%20into%20secret%20burial) , with the Kremlin imposing strict new laws carrying years-long jail sentences for criticising the war in Ukraine, demonstrations have still erupted in cities across Russia at various points in the war.

According to independent monitoring group OVD-Info, a total of 19,855 people [*have been detained at anti-war protests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-protest-journalists-arrested-wives-ukraine-b2490072.html%22%20title=%22Twenty%20journalists%20detained%20in%20Moscow%20crackdown%20on%20protests%20held%20by%20wives%20of%20Russian%20soldiers%20in%20Ukraine) in Russia, while more than a third of the 3,626 of the prosecutions since 2012 judged to be politically motivated have occurred in the past three years, with 728 in 2022, 521 in 2023 and 56 in 2024.

**Load-Date:** February 24, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Deadly missile strike adds to Ukraine war fears in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WF-PT01-DY4H-K300-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 17, 2022 Thursday 7:07 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1151 words

**Byline:** Vasilisa Stepanenko and Monika Scislowska

**Highlight:** Since Russia invaded Ukraine more than eight months ago, Poland has aided its neighbor and millions of its refugees

**Body**

Since the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) more than eight months ago, Poland has aided the neighboring country and millions of its refugees — both to ease their suffering and to help guard against the war spilling into the rest of Europe.

But a missile strike that killed two men Tuesday in a Polish village close to the Ukrainian border brought the conflict home and added to the long-suppressed sense of vulnerability in a country where the ravages of World War II are well remembered.

"The thing that I dread most in life is war. I don't want to ever experience that,” said Anna Grabinska, a [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) woman who has extended help to a Ukrainian mother of two small children.

One of the men killed in Przewodow was actively helping refugees from Ukraine who had found shelter in the area.

NATO and Polish leaders say the missile was most likely fired by Ukraine in defense against a Russian attack.

Now shaken Poles fear for their future, and political commentators warn that the strike should not be allowed to hurt relations with Ukraine, which have recently grown closer through Poland's solidarity.

“There is fear, anxiety for what will happen the next night or the next day,” villager Kinga Kancir said.

When Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, millions of Poles dropped what they were doing to help. They took time off work and rushed to the border to offer strangers rides in their cars and places in their homes. They stood in the cold and served soup. Polish mothers left baby prams at a railway station at the border for fleeing Ukraine mothers they would never meet.

[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) acted on humanitarian impulse, but their generosity was also a conscious contribution to the Ukrainian war effort. By keeping Ukrainian women and children safe, the Poles ensured more men could fight Russian forces.

Poland has a long history of conflict with Moscow.

Russia was one of the three powers that divided Poland in the 18th century and — jointly with Austria and Prussia — erased it from Europe's maps for more than 100 years, brutally suppressing drives for freedom. After World War II, Poland was an unwilling part of the East Bloc and remained under Moscow's domination for over four decades, until the Poles peacefully toppled the communist government.

In their current solidarity with Ukraine, many Poles put aside historical grievances rooted in ethnic conflict, including oppression of Ukrainians by Poles and a brutal massacre by Ukrainians of some 100,000 Poles during World War II in regions not far from Przewodow.

The Polish government offered temporary accommodations and financial aid to refugees and gave money to Poles who housed them. The refugees also receive access to free state medical care, school for their children and help finding jobs.

The war changed a lot for Poland too. It drew the world's attention to Warsaw, where top leaders including U.S. President Joe Biden came to show their support for Ukraine and for Poland's aid efforts.

The conflict has strengthened Poland’s ties with its NATO allies, especially with the U.S., which sent thousands of troops to southeast Poland, close to the Ukraine border, as Poland became a conduit for weapons sent from the West to Ukraine. The world's humanitarian and medical efforts also pass through Poland.

Russia’s aggression has pushed Warsaw to increase the country’s defense budget and spend billions of of dollars on weapons from the U.S. and South Korea. Poland is also actively supporting Ukraine’s aspirations to strengthen its ties with the West and become part of the European Union.

But as the war has dragged on, some Poles have become exhausted. Many are tired of hosting strangers in their homes and paying skyrocketing energy costs. They complain that Ukrainians have taken jobs from Poles and left some families without places in public kindergartens. The huge demand for housing has pushed up rents in big cities.

As winter approaches, there are concerns that the grumbling could grow louder.

The deputy editor of Rzeczpospolita, a major daily newspaper, voiced concerns that bitterness over the missile deaths could become a pretext to weaken the Poland's commitment to Ukraine or to drive a wedge between the two neighbors.

“Unfortunately, there are already voices that would like to use this tragedy to make Poland and Ukraine quarrel. And that would be absolutely against our national interest,” Michal Szuldrzynski wrote in an opinion piece published Thursday.

“By defending their independence, Ukrainians defend the West, including Poland. Therefore, our response to the tragedy in Przewodow should be not sulking at Ukraine, but even stronger support to increase its chances of driving the aggressor out of its country,” Szuldrzynski wrote.

A spokesman for Poland's main ruling party, Radoslaw Fogiel, on Thursday reiterated Poland's support for Ukraine and stressed that responsibility for the war rests entirely with Russia.

Fogiel warned that any discord between Warsaw and Kyiv would be in Moscow's interests.

Polish President Andrzej Duda visited the site of the missile strike and talked to investigators.

“There is a war across our border. Russia fired hundreds of missiles, Ukraine was defending itself. Nobody wanted to hurt anyone in Poland,” Duda said. “This is our common tragedy."

In Przewodow, a farming community of some 500 people about 6 kilometers (4 miles) from the border with Ukraine, villagers were in shock when the missile killed two employees of a grain-drying facility, men they had known, at least by sight.

"Today we have a new situation that is very hard for us, and especially difficult for our children,” said Ewa Byra, the director of the village school.

The children kept asking: "Are we safe here so close to the border?" and "Are our parents safe?” Byra told The Associated Press.

The primary school suspended classes and offered psychological counseling for families.

“There is sadness because two people were killed here, and that is not a regular thing to happen in such a small village,” observed Kancir, 24, a mother of two small children who said one of the men who was killed lived just across the road from her apartment building.

The two men, ages 60 and 62, shared the same first name: Bogdan. One was the husband of a school staff member, and the other the father of a recent pupil. One was a warehouseman at the grain-drying facility; the other was the tractor driver.

One of them helped bring food and clothes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and drive them to local offices to help them with the paperwork, said StanisÅ‚aw Staszczuk, the county secretary.

In the aftermath, villagers are intimidated by the huge police presence in their usually quiet home.

“It is very hard to accept this, what happened, because it has always been quiet, quiet. Nothing was ever going on here, and all of a sudden there is a world sensation,” Kancir said.

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Associated Press Writer Vanessa Gera in Warsaw, Poland, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** November 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian assault on Ukraine plants is 'energy genocide'; Blitz threatens worst humanitarian disaster since WWII*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66PW-MTV1-JCS0-D2SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

October 27, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 21

**Length:** 1273 words

**Byline:** BEL TREW IN KYIV

**Body**

Russia is committing "energy genocide" by bombing nearly half of Ukraine's power infrastructure, the government has said as Ukrainian officials warned the damage could spark Europe's worst humanitarian catastrophe since the Second World War.

Speaking to The Independent, energy minister German Galushchenko said Russia wanted to "sow darkness and despair" with daily "en masse" strikes on the electricity supply chain, which together with the occupation of facilities has left many without power.

He said at least 40 per cent of its total energy infrastructure has been damaged, including massive destruction to green generation facilities. In total, 90 per cent of Ukraine's wind generation and 40 per cent of their solar power capacity has been decommissioned, he added.

Mr Galushchenko spoke as Ukrainian energy officials warned the wave of strikes since 10 October was likely the "largest attack on energy infrastructure in history". They said the situation was so critical that Ukraine has had to stop providing electricity to the European Union, exports which had been helping Europe to replace Russian energy resources.

"Russia cannot win on the battlefield by giving in to our armed forces, so it has decided to go down the path of energy genocide," Mr Galushchenko said. "The Russians are intentionally attacking our energy facilities right now, when the cold has started and energy supply is of particular value to citizens. Their plan is to sow not only darkness but also despair among Ukrainians."

He urged the country's Western partners to provide more air defence systems that could be deployed specifically to protect energy and nuclear facilities. "We fight for Europe too. And we hope that your support will continue because our skies still need protection," he implored.

Ukraine's energy companies also sounded the alarm. Volodymyr Kudrytskyi, chair of Ukrenergo, Ukraine's grid operator, told The Independent the barrage of strikes was the "biggest attack on energy infrastructure in history".

"The scale of these attacks is unseen in the world," he said. "We are speaking about hundreds of missiles launched specifically at electricity transmission infrastructure. I cannot remember any other instance where we have seen such a scale of destruction."

Meanwhile, Antonina Antosha, from DTEK, the largest private energy investor in Ukraine that controls multiple power plants, warned the damage will leave millions of people in the country without light and heat, sparking "the biggest humanitarian disaster since 1945".

"We are convinced that this is only the beginning and that attacks on other objects will continue. The craziest scenario is an attack on a nuclear power plant," she added.

Ukraine has been plunged into darkness by an unprecedented wave of Russian strikes on the energy grid, right as a bitter winter approaches. Moscow has repeatedly acknowledged targeting energy infrastructure but denies targeting civilians or violating international law since President Putin launched his invasion of the country in February.

However, Amnesty International and other rights groups have said the attacks on the facilities could amount to war crimes. "The Russian army clearly intends to undermine industrial production, disrupt transportation, sow fear and despair and deprive civilians in Ukraine of heat, electricity and water as the cold grip of winter approaches," said Marie Struthers, the group's Eastern Europe and Central Asia director.

"The morale of the civilian population is not a lawful target, and carrying out these attacks with the sole purpose of terrorising civilians is a war crime," she added.

President Zelensky has personally appealed to citizens to reduce energy consumption, as scheduled four-hour power cuts have been rolled out across the country to stabilise the embattled grid. The energy ministry said that civilians had responded to the call already, reducing consumption nationally by up to 10 per cent. But that is still not enough to halt needed planned power cuts which are expected to get much longer, with Kyiv officials warning citizens last week to brace for up to a week without power.

The pressure on the system has become so severe deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk urged ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay away. In a TV interview on Tuesday, Ms Vereshchuk told Ukrainians currently sheltering abroad that they should wait until spring before returning home. She said the grid "won't survive" the return of refugees from abroad, and that the situation would "only get worse".

Mr Galushchenko told The Independent a major part of the problem they were facing was that after they carried out repair and restoration work, sites would often be bombed again.

At least 54 workers in the energy industry have been killed, often in double-tap attacks on electricity distribution systems, trunk networks, substations and thermal generation, Mr Galushchenko said. "The enemy's goal is to make it difficult to reconnect the power supply from other sources. Often they fire at the same objects over and over again until they are completely destroyed," he added.

Kudrytskyi said that Ukraine believes Russia is using Soviet-era maps of Ukraine, coupled with open-source information to precisely strike the grid. He said they were hitting Ukrenego's substations sometimes with "six or seven rounds of shelling" at one time. "Often Russians repeat the attack, like a double tap, sometimes a triple-tap attack," he added, saying that five of their personnel have been killed.

Ms Antosha, of DTEK, warned that these blackouts could mean that civilians will die, as temperatures dip well below zero. Of the six thermal power plants under DTEK's control, five of them have already been attacked. Ten employees have been injured and one killed. There are also concerns about Ukraine's renewable energy sector.

Ukraine had sought to diversify the energy sector before the war, with officials boasting of rapid growth of its green energy sector that pre-war provided the country with about 11 per cent of the country's total energy mix. Since the invasion about 90 per cent of wind and about 50 per cent of solar power has been decommissioned. There are also growing fears about the country's nuclear power plants.

Russia has occupied the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP) since March. It is the largest in Europe and can produce more than 6,000 MW of power. Ukraine claims around 500 soldiers and military vehicles are occupying the power plant and that Ukrainian personnel working there have been tortured and coerced into working.

"In an attempt to disconnect the ZNPP from Ukraine's power system, the Russians have already put the plant into blackout mode three times by firing at the power lines that provide its power," Minister Galushchenko said. "At that time, [the plant] was working on diesel generators, which could also be fired upon by the Russian military forces at any moment. And then the Fukushima scenario may await us."

He called on Russian troops and personnel to immediately leave the nuclear plant and for the International Atomic Energy Agency to create a neutral zone where neither Russian nor Ukrainian military are present. The European Commission has urged European Union countries and companies to donate more money and equipment to support the energy sector in Ukraine.

But the energy ministry said it needed air defence systems to halt the strikes, as reconstructing power plants and substations was pointless if they get hit again. "Our skies still need protection. Protection, including for energy and nuclear facilities," he said. "We need air defence systems, we needed them yesterday."

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian assault on Ukraine plants is 'energy genocide'; Blitz threatens worst humanitarian disaster since WWII*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66PW-MTV1-JCS0-D2TT-00000-00&context=1519360)

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October 27, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 22

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**End of Document**



[*'Time stopped': Ukrainians long to go home as war drags on*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:666V-8DJ1-JBNF-W30M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 22, 2022 Monday 7:31 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1142 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As Russia’s war against Ukraine reaches the sixth-month mark, many refugees are coming to the bitter realization that they will not be returning home soon

**Body**

On March 8, nearly two weeks after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded Ukraine, Taisiia Mokrozub took her infant son, parted from her husband and joined an exodus to safety in Poland. She believed the war would end quickly and she would be home by May.

But a half-year later, with shelling near a nuclear power plant in her hometown of Zaporizhzhia, and the front line so close, the 36-year-old's husband is telling her to stay in Poland with their now-11-month-old baby. She now dreams of being home by winter, hoping Ukraine will have prevailed by then against Russia's onslaught.

As the war reaches the sixth-month mark Wednesday, many refugees are facing the sad realization that they will not be going home soon, if they have homes to return to at all. With missiles falling even far from the front line, many wouldn't feel safe yet, even in areas under Ukrainian control.

So they are biding their time, waiting for the end of a war that shows no signs of ending soon, longing for home and refusing to think too far into the future.

With a new academic year starting, some are reluctantly enrolling their children in schools abroad, worried they will fall behind in the Ukrainian system. Others take jobs below their skill levels. With most refugees being women, those with very young children, like Mokrozub, are unable to work.

“It seems to me that not only for me but for all Ukrainians, time has stopped,” Mokrozub said. “We all live in some kind of limbo.”

Russia’s invasion has created the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War II. The UN refugee agency says a third of Ukrainians have fled their homes, with more than 6.6 million displaced within the country and over 6.6 million more across the continent.

European countries have welcomed them without the political backlash that met influxes of refugees from the Middle East and Africa in past years, however.

Poland has taken in the most Ukrainians, with an estimated 1.5 million having registered for national ID numbers that allow them social benefits. [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) , which doesn't require visas for Ukrainians, has registered more than 900,000, though it isn't clear how many of those may have gone home or headed elsewhere.

[*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) now has 180,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** — representing a tenth of the Polish capital's population of 1.8 million — the largest single grouping anywhere.

Though Ukrainian and Russian — which is also commonly spoken back home — are heard on the city's streets and grocery stores now carry some Ukrainian foods, the newcomers have integrated with little trouble and seem almost invisible.

For many of the refugees, Poland's Slavic language and culture offer something familiar and reassuring. The country's proximity to Ukraine makes it possible to travel back for short visits with husbands and fathers who are banned from leaving due to the war effort.

“We didn't want to go farther,” said Galina Inyutina, 42, who arrived in Poland in early March from Dnipro with her 11-year-old son. They long terribly for their forests and fields and food.

“Mom, if we go farther away then it will take us longer to get home,” he told her.

The arrival of so many people has exacerbated a preexisting housing crisis in Warsaw, where rental prices have surged 30% over the last year, as well as other cities that have attracted large numbers of refugees.

In the early days of the war, hundreds of thousands of Polish families took Ukrainians, often total strangers, into their homes. Thanks to that hospitality, there was never a need for refugee camps, said Oksana Pestrykova, who administers a consultation center at the Ukrainian House in Warsaw, a social center for immigrants.

But what were expected to be short stays have turned into long ones, and some Poles are now calling the center's hotline to ask for help from Ukrainian speakers to tell their guests it's time to move on.

“The hospitality is getting weaker,” Pestrykova said. “We understand it and we were expecting it.”

Some corporations are stepping in to help.

The global tech company Siemens transformed office space at its Polish headquarters to create hotel-style accommodations for nearly 160 people, administered by the Warsaw city government. The facility is clean, with food and laundry facilities provided for free.

Among those living there now is Ludmila Fedotova, a 52-year-old shop assistant from Zaporizhzhia. She is terrified about what is happening back home but can at least relax knowing she has housing and food as she looks for work.

While there might not be enough housing for all the newcomers, there are more than enough jobs in an economy that has boomed in the post-communist era. Ukrainian immigrants who came to Poland in recent years are sometimes the ones helping the new arrivals with work and a place to live.

Oleh Yarovyi, from Khmelnytskyi in western Ukraine, arrived six years ago and has built up a coffee shop franchise with his wife. As they expand, he has lost some Ukrainian men helping with construction who returned to fight in the war, but he has been able to hire Ukrainian women who can use their language in a job they hope is temporary.

“Half of them plan to go back, so they don’t even try to learn Polish,” Yarovyi said. “They just look for a simple job without any additional challenges.”

Tetiana Bilous, 46, who ran a short-term apartment rental business in Vinnytsia, Ukraine, is among those working in one of Yarovyi’s kitchens. She fled two days into the war, joining a grown daughter already in Warsaw. She missed her husband and returned home for a two-week visit, but was terrified by the bombardments and air raid sirens.

Bilous remains torn over what her next steps should be, saying, “Everything is uncertain.”

Farther west, in Schwerin, Germany, Marina Galla, a computer science teacher who left Mariupol with her 13-year-old son in late March, has found relief and stability. Last month they moved into a small rooftop apartment after a long escape that took them through Poland and Berlin.

She is free from the horrors and the deprivation from which she fled: the bodies in the streets, drinking melted snow because there was no running water. Yet she feels crushed with sadness thinking of family left behind.

In a black backpack she has carried every day since leaving Mariupol, Galla keeps a handwritten note in a side pocket listing contact information for her mother, father and grandmother. She originally wrote it in case she was killed in the war, and even in the safety of Schwerin, she doesn't leave home without it.

Her son messaged a lot with his friends from back home during their first months in Germany, but he barely talks to them anymore and has stopped asking when they will return to Ukraine.

“He probably understands,” Galla said, “that we will not be able to go back there.”

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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 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Jill Biden carries out new mission in 2nd year as first lady*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6630-9FX1-DY4H-K2SC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 4, 2022 Thursday 5:16 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1161 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Jill Biden barnstormed the country during her debut year as first lady as if on a one-woman mission to help her husband's administration tackle the problem of the moment

**Body**

[*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) barnstormed the country during her debut year as first lady as if on a one-woman mission to help her husband's administration tackle the problem of the moment: getting people vaccinated and boosted against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

New headwinds blowing in year two — President Joe Biden's low standing with the public and November elections that could put [*Republicans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/republicans) back in control of [*Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) — have set her on a fresh mission: working to help elect [*Democrats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/democrats) who can help her husband.

She's making no secret of her frustration with Washington.

“Joe truly believes in working with Congress and getting things done, but obviously the Republicans are pulling together and they're not budging. They are not budging,” the first lady said at one of four fundraisers she headlined in the past month.

“Who would think that AR-15s make any sense for anything? Who doesn't believe in the need to deal with climate change?” she said at a July fundraiser in Nantucket, Massachusetts, referencing Republican opposition to the president's call for an assault weapons ban and more spending on climate change.

With school out for the summer, the teacher-first lady was free to travel again in her role as the president's chief surrogate, highlighting administration accomplishments and showing a more political side while testing possible fall campaign messages before audiences big and small.

She put a voice to the urgency she and the president feel over unfinished aspects of his agenda.

After accompanying him to the scene of deadly mass shootings at a grocery store in Buffalo, New York, and an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, the first lady — a community college professor — urged audiences to demand tougher gun laws from Congress.

“We need to fight, now, for the lives of our children and for the safety of our schools,” she told the National PTA Convention in June, shortly after the Bidens visited Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, where 19 pupils and two teachers were killed by a man firing an AR-15.

Congress represents “the will of the people," she said, "and that’s why we need the people to speak up. Parents and teachers. All of us.”

She raised the gun issue later at the American Federation of Teachers convention in Boston in July, saying that “we believe that AR-15s, the weapon that tore apart 19 children and two teachers in their classroom, have no place on our streets.”

And she turned the Supreme Court’s decision overturning the constitutional right to an abortion into an argument for sending more Democrats to Congress come November. President Biden has promised to sign a bill enshrining the right to an abortion in federal law, but there isn’t enough support for it in Congress, where Democrats have slim majorities.

“All of us have a teacher voice for when things go off the rails and now is the time to use it,” she said in Boston.

In Nantucket, the first lady defended her spouse of 45 years, saying “he's just had so many things thrown his way" that weren't expected, including the abortion ruling and Russia's war against Ukraine.

“He had so many hopes and plans for things he wanted to do, but every time you turned around, he had to address the problems of the moment," she told a group of about two dozen donors.

She said she also had become “first lady of the moment," reacting to problems and not pushing her separate agenda.

Tammy Vigil, a Boston University communications professor, said it is typical for a first lady to defend the president and, for that reason, complaints about Republican opposition sound better coming from her than from President Biden. He would risk undermining his authority and appear “whiny” if he were to sound off about GOP roadblocks more often than he has, she said.

“If it’s going to be said, she’s the better person to say it,” said Vigil, who wrote a book about former first ladies Michelle Obama and Melania Trump.

Jill Biden's summer has been busy — and uncharacteristically bumpy at times.

She went on a pair of solo foreign trips in May, traveling to Romania and Slovakia in eastern Europe to meet ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The trip included an unannounced detour into western Ukraine to meet first lady Olena Zelenska. She also traveled through Ecuador, Panama and Costa Rica.

But by June, she had upset AIDS activists by hosting a White House event to unveil a postage stamp honoring first lady Nancy Reagan. Activists noted the Reagans’ indifference toward gays and lesbians at the start of the AIDS crisis, which exploded during Ronald Reagan's presidency.

Last month, she was forced to apologize, through a spokesperson, for offending Latinos by describing their diversity as “distinct as the bodegas of the Bronx, as beautiful as the blossoms of Miami and as unique as the breakfast tacos here in San Antonio.”

The National Association of Hispanic Journalists tweeted in response: “We are not tacos.”

The first lady was also heckled last month on her way into a Connecticut ice cream parlor. A man in the sidewalk crowd shouted, “Your husband is the worst president we ever had” and “You owe us gas money.” A new CNN poll recorded her favorability rating at a low 34%, though only 29% have an unfavorable opinion of her. An additional 28% said they have no opinion of the first lady and 9% said they hadn’t heard enough of her.

The president's positive COVID-19 tests have forced the couple to remain apart for about two weeks while he isolates at the White House and she stays at their home in Wilmington, Delaware.

She had welcomed Zelenska to the White House just before the president's diagnosis.

Jill Biden, 71, is the first first lady to work outside of the White House. She is expected to resume teaching in September and juggle those demands with campaigning. She signed a new contract with Northern Virginia Community College on the morning of her speech to the AFT, she said.

So far this year, she's done seven fundraisers for the Democratic National Committee, and the party is happy to have her.

“Jill Biden is one of the Democratic Party’s most important surrogates because she drives excitement from grassroots supporters across the country," Democratic Party Chairman Jaime Harrison said in a statement to The Associated Press. "We’re grateful for the first lady’s commitment to electing Democrats up and down the ticket.”

Robert Watson, a history professor at Lynn University, said modern first ladies have become effective fundraisers in their own right, popular with the party faithful, especially women. He said it would be surprising not to see more of Jill Biden in the runup to the Nov. 8 elections.

“She is a strong defender,” said Watson, who studies the presidency. “Nobody's interested in asking about her holiday cookie recipe."

Whatever the outcome, the Bidens still have a happy occasion to look forward to after the election: the first White House wedding in nearly a decade.

Granddaughter Naomi Biden is set to marry Peter Neal on the South Lawn on Nov. 19.

**Load-Date:** August 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Lulu, Mel B and mayors celebrate their cities making Eurovision shortlist*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:664R-CPK1-DY4H-K4NY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

August 12, 2022 Friday 11:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1199 words

**Byline:** Alex Green

**Highlight:** The shortlist of potential host cities was announced on Friday morning.

**Body**

Former Eurovision winner Lulu, Spice Girls star [*Mel B*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mel-b) and mayors from across the UK have celebrated their cities being shortlisted to host the 2023 event.

Twenty cities submitted an “expression of interest” to host, but only seven were selected by the BBC and European Broadcasting Union.

Birmingham, [*Glasgow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/glasgow) , [*Leeds*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leeds) , Liverpool, [*Manchester*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/manchester) , Newcastle and Sheffield have reached the second round of the selection process but must now compete in the final round.

Responding to the city being shortlisted, Manchester city council leader Bev Craig said: “We are thrilled to have made it through to the next stage to become the 2023 Eurovision host city.

Thrilled to be through to the next round of Eurovision. Manchester stands ready to host the most iconic party the UK has ever seen. [*pic.twitter.com/GQzl1wwSCt*](https://t.co/GQzl1wwSCt) — Bev Craig (@bevcraig) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/bevcraig/status/1557995642500386816?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “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.”Sacha Lord, the city’s night-time economy adviser and co-founder of its Parklife festival, added: “I am absolutely thrilled that Manchester has been shortlisted to host Eurovision 2023.“Manchester is famed for its music and music legacy, and has been host to some of the most iconic gigs in history. I have no doubt that if Eurovision comes to the city next year, we will put on a show like no other.”Seven cities shortlisted including……Leeds!!!! ️‍️‍️‍️‍️‍️‍️‍️‍— TracyBrabin (@TracyBrabin) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TracyBrabin/status/1557995614373560321?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tracy Brabin, mayor of West Yorkshire, said she was “delighted” that Leeds had been shortlisted, adding: “It’s an amazing city, bursting at the seams with vibrant creativity and would shine given the chance to host this event,” she said.Spice Girl Mel B, who grew up in the city, 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.”It was a bit of a nervy wait listening to [*@ZoeTheBall*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) this morning. But now we know that Birmingham is on the shortlist to host next year's [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine. Now let's win it for our Ukrainian community [*#BeBoldBeBham*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/BeBoldBeBham?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/itpconTKMg*](https://t.co/itpconTKMg) — LeaderofBirmingham (@BrumLeader) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BrumLeader/status/1558017072495476736?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Birmingham city council leader Ian Ward, who has been an avid watcher of Eurovision since the 1980s, was also celebrating his city being shortlisted.“This is a city of sanctuary, a city which has welcomed people from around the world and made their home here.“We would love the honour of hosting, on behalf of Ukraine, the Eurovision song contest next year,” he said.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) 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 chance to represent them and do right by them.Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield have all been shortlisted to host the next Eurovision Song Contest.[*@lulushouts*](https://twitter.com/lulushouts?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) reveals her hopes for Glasgow before explaining how this will be a chance for us to 'represent and do right by Ukraine.' [*pic.twitter.com/p9qLWogEiA*](https://t.co/p9qLWogEiA) — Good Morning Britain (@GMB) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/GMB/status/1557999326189817858?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) “It is so touching, I think it is going to be an amazing year,” she said.A [*Scottish Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scottish-government) spokesman said: “Whilst it is very disappointing that Ukraine cannot host the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest, the Scottish Government is pleased that the UK has been selected as an alternative host country.“Scottish ministers were delighted to see so many Scottish local authorities submit bids and congratulate Glasgow on being shortlisted to host next year’s contest.“The Scottish Government will engage with Glasgow council as they develop their bid. Like people across the country, we look forward to seeing how plans for the contest unfold.“Scotland stands with the rest of the UK, Europe and the world in condemnation of Russia’s unprovoked, illegal invasion of Ukraine and will do all we can to stand up for democracy, human rights and the rule of law at home and abroad.”However, there was disappointment from representatives of the cities that did not make the shortlist.Jackie Dunbar, MSP for Aberdeen Donside, said the city failing to reach the second stage was a “blow”.She tweeted: “Disappointed that Aberdeen and our brilliant @PandJLive have not been shortlisted as possible hosts of #Eurovision.”Disappointed that Aberdeen and our brilliant [*@PandJLive*](https://twitter.com/PandJLive?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) have not been shortlisted as possible hosts of [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). We have the venue, [*@ABZ\_Airport*](https://twitter.com/ABZ_Airport?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , and enough hotels so to miss out is a blow. The economic benefit to the city and shire would have been immense. [*https://t.co/IWCergzqSP*](https://t.co/IWCergzqSP) — Jackie Dunbar MSP (@JackieDunbarSNP) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/JackieDunbarSNP/status/1558004941385515008?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukrainian entry Kalush Orchestra triumphed at this year’s competition in Turin, Italy, but the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which produces the annual event, decided the event cannot be held in the war-torn country following Russia’s invasion.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.Of the seven UK cities shortlisted, six are from England and one is from Scotland, with Belfast failing to make the cut for Northern Ireland.Cardiff withdrew its bid to host, citing the complexity of staging which meant a significant number of scheduled events in the Principality Stadium during spring 2023 would have had to be cancelled.Scott Mills joined Zoe Ball on her BBC Radio 2 Breakfast show to announce the shortlist of host cities on Friday, alongside Eurovision executive supervisor Martin Osterdahl.We are GOOD TO GO! Here are the 7 UK cities shortlisted to host the 2023 [*#Eurovision*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurovision?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Song Contest on behalf of Ukraine [*@ZoeTheBall*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) | [*@scott\_mills*](https://twitter.com/scott_mills?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) | [*@MartinOsterdahl*](https://twitter.com/MartinOsterdahl?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/xDAoVPhzUo*](https://t.co/xDAoVPhzUo) — BBC Radio 2 (@BBCRadio2) [*August 12, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BBCRadio2/status/1558032455080284160?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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.

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**



[*What is the plan to tackle small boats and will it work?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PV-0D51-JCS0-D01C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 7, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1266 words

**Byline:** SEAN O'GRADY

**Body**

Ministers are publishing much-trailed new legislation on asylum and immigration. It is the latest attempt to deal with an issue that seems intractable and has concerned governments of all parties on and off for the past three decades.

What is in the new legislation?

It effectively abolishes the traditional right to claim asylum, and in fact criminalises it. There will be some "bespoke" asylum schemes, created in conjunction with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and may end up being based on a quota determined through consultation with local authorities. Suella Braverman will use her new law to try to stop lawyers from using the human right to family life, and legislation created to combat modern slavery, to stop clients from being deported. Her restrictions on judicial review are draconian.

Rishi Sunak stated his radical policy in a keynote speech last December: "The only way to come to the UK for asylum will be through safe and legal routes. And as we get a grip of illegal migration, we will create more of those routes. We will work with the UNHCR to identify those most in need so the UK remains a safe haven for the most vulnerable.

"And we will introduce an annual quota on numbers set by parliament in consultation with local authorities to determine our capacity ... in the face of humanitarian emergencies."

Hasn't the government already made such changes in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022?

The previous act eroded the right to claim asylum rather than drastically restricting it. So we already have a two-tier asylum system, meaning those who arrive in the UK via irregular means may receive less protection and support.

When will the new laws come into effect?

Theoretically, they could be passed and gain royal assent before the summer, with a view to the policy being implemented in time to hit the prime minister's target of "stopping the boats" by the end of the year. Although not clearly defined, Sunak has asked to be judged on his record.

However, the House of Lords will undoubtedly slow the passage of the bill, especially as these measures weren't mentioned in the 2019 manifesto and therefore lack a direct mandate. Indeed, the manifesto suggested a very different policy: "We will continue to grant asylum and support to refugees fleeing persecution, with the ultimate aim of helping them to return home if it is safe to do so."

There will also be some judicial challenges, not least because the new law is in conflict with obligations under international treaty law, principally the 1951 European Convention on Human Rights. With appeals, it is quite possible the laws won't be implemented before the next election in 2024.

A more practical problem is that there may be nowhere to deport migrants, whatever their status. Their countries of origin may not want them back or may accept them only to punish them. The Rwanda scheme has nowhere near the necessary capacity and, despite rumours about other states and territories - such as St Helena, Morocco, Moldova and Papua New Guinea - there are no other safe third-country options. Since Brexit, the Dublin III EU returns facility has ended.

Former prime minister Theresa May is likely to lead a rebellion against changes to her Modern Slavery Act 2015, from when she was home secretary, in which she takes great pride.

Will the new laws work?

Recent history suggests laws alone won't solve the crisis, and other solutions lie much further back in the system.

A combination of wars, climate crisis (desertification and loss of water supplies), the rise of authoritarian regimes and terrorist groups such as Isis, as well as easier access to travel, have hugely increased global migration. In Europe, it stands at levels not seen since the end of the Second World War; in central America and the Sahel, it is unprecedented.

The great majority of refugees end up in countries next door: Jordan and Lebanon for Syrians and Iraqis, Bangladesh for the Rohingya, Poland for Ukrainians and so on. If more effort was expended in making life better for them in those countries, they might not feel impelled to move on.

By the time they reach Europe, refugees are confronted with much hostility and a disjointed approach. Britain is still an attractive country, even to those who have got as far as Belgium or France, because many have family links or they speak English and they perceive Britain to be a place where they can find work and make a life for themselves. Britain's present acute labour shortages may be another incentive. There's no evidence they are attracted by indefinite stays in roadhouse hotels, insanitary camps or the measly living allowance provided.

Delays in processing mean those who do merely wish to come to work and then return home can count on a window of opportunity lasting months if not years. Rules preventing them taking paid work drives them into the cash-in-hand informal economy and unregulated overcrowded private lodgings.

Successive governments have promised, tried and failed to limit migration both regular and irregular. The Conservatives' 2010 election target to keep total numbers below 100,000 has never been met and has now been abandoned. Most recent official figures put regular net migration at half a million, including students and special resettlement scheme participants (Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Ukraine) - with illegal migration at a comparatively modest 40,000 to 50,000.

When one channel for irregular migration is closed off, another soon arises. The small boats phenomenon began when stronger security at Calais and a lower freight traffic during Covid forced a change in traffickers' modus operandi.

It seems that if a refugee is willing to risk drowning, laws will be a limited deterrent.

What is Labour's answer?

Yvette Cooper, shadow home secretary, wants more money spent on a dedicated police team tackling people-smugglers; more resources to clear the backlogs; and safe and secure routes to claim asylum, so there's no necessity to try to cross the English channel or even leave a home country. She would also scrap the Rwanda scheme, not least on the grounds of cost.

Labour's political problem is that it won't place a limit on refugees coming or settling in the UK and the Tories will seek to exploit voters' grievances about the use of converted hotels. But after years of broken promises and failures from the government, Labour has a small lead on the issue and many voters don't know which party would be best on migration and asylum.

How have other countries dealt with the challenge?

Some European nations have targeted immigration from Albania by implementing a policy of immediate return, agreed with the Albanian authorities, and similar to Britain's.

Germany and France also have a faster rate of asylum processing, even with a higher volume of claims than the UK. France rejects more applications than the UK. Other countries, such as Hungary, take a militantly anti-immigrant line, even towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, while Italy's new government has expressed its exasperation at the EU's supposed inability to redistribute refugees arriving from north Africa. Italy has sought to stop the boats in the sea and send them back to Libya.

Germany, and to a lesser extent Sweden, made a policy decision to accept large numbers of Syrians - 1 million in the case of Germany - and make their settlement a focus of national policy. Like France, they have also expanded the staff devoted to asylum processing. The UK seems to have had problems retaining immigration officers in what can be emotionally draining work. There is no law that can change that.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*War in Ukraine has shown the virtues of national service*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661P-85H1-JCS0-D07K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

July 29, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 29

**Length:** 1193 words

**Byline:** MARY DEJEVSKY

**Body**

The war in Ukraine has brought the brutality of armed conflict home to generations of Europeans who had lived their whole lives in peace. It has had a particular immediacy because of satellite television, social media and the millions of refugees who have brought their ineradicable memories into exile with them. Amid all the horror, however, it is possible to identify one positive: the huge mobilisation of, especially, young Ukrainians who immediately volunteered to join the war effort, contributing in whatever way they could.

Many - not only young men - took up arms and set off to fight the enemy, wherever that enemy was to be found. By no means everyone took up arms; many others have helped to organise evacuations, ensure medical care or distribute food supplies. A "PR army" (metaphorically) bombards people like me with information.

And however great the death and destruction around them, it is not uncommon to hear Ukrainians sounding, if not actually happy, then (to an outsider) surprisingly upbeat and fulfilled. They see their involvement as a formative experience; they are busy and feel useful, some for the first time in their lives.

The war has given a lot of people a new and very real sense of purpose, and that includes young men who might never have ventured beyond their home areas and found it hard to find jobs. The crime rate, it has been noted, has gone down. Adversity, of course, calls forth its own heroes. Remember the volunteer efforts that sprang up in the early months of the Covid pandemic, in the UK as in many other countries, and the spontaneous help, in Poland and elsewhere, for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

To delve into the past, I and many others will recall female relatives reminiscing with a degree of nostalgia about their "war work", from driving officers to packing parachutes, manufacturing munitions or taking their place on the fire-watching rota.

Anyone could do something, and felt needed. That, as well as stoical solidarity, is what the hackneyed "Blitz spirit" was about. I don't want to underrate the extreme traumas suffered by those who fought, or who experienced conflict - traumas that last to this day, and will surely mark Ukrainians, too, far into the future.

But might there not be something to be learned from a national war effort that mobilises everyone and proceeds from the belief, the necessary belief, that everyone can contribute in some way? And that this effort can work to the individual and common good? This is why I have in the past supported the principle of some sort of national service, and might also be why David Cameron's National Citizen Service - proposed as part of his Big Society initiative in 2010 - was generally favourably received.

That it failed to flourish - to the point where its budget has been slashed and an independent investigation described it as akin to a "holiday camp for middle-class kids" - underlines some of the difficulties in organising such a project in peacetime, but not that it should be entirely written off.

One drawback is that the young people who tend to join organised volunteer efforts are by and large - and I realise this is a generalisation - those who can afford it and whose life prospects are already good. Those who might benefit most from leaving their immediate surroundings and trying something new are often the least likely to have that chance.

Which is why I have supported not only the principle of some sort of national service, but the idea that it should be compulsory. Yes, obligatory for everyone. And this is not only for reasons of social equity - the offspring of the better-off and better-connected should not be able to buy or network their way out, nor should those with lesser means feel that they would not fit in - but also to demonstrate what is currently being demonstrated to such effect in Ukraine: that everyone, whatever their means and their background, can contribute in some way.

But surely, you might object, it is different for Ukraine, which is engaged in a military struggle for its very survival.

Why should the UK and other countries at peace disburse any resources at all, given the improbability of war. Maybe. But it is not necessary to envisage a military conflict on the horizon to believe that there could be an emergency of some kind or other around the corner and that it would be better for citizens who have known only peace to be prepared.

Seen from outside the country, the UK has an enviable degree of public resilience. People tend to keep calm; they are resourceful; they help: the public response to the 7/7 London bombings and other attacks are testament to that. But might it not be an asset if more people, a lot more people, were trained from an early age in a range of emergency skills?

First aid, elementary civil defence, even - I can already hear the qualms - how to handle a firearm? It is routine for journalists, aid workers and others going to conflict zones to take what is known as a hostile environment course. Is that sort of knowledge - about how to avoid or respond to attack, how to tell incoming from outgoing fire, how to defend yourself - not useful for everyone, not just those who expect to find themselves in a war zone?

Keeping fit, knowing how to swim (eight young men drowned in the recent heatwave), reading a map, using GPS, basic navigation? How many of us know how to do this? How many would benefit from such skills? A new national service need not be primarily military or even military at all.

Nor, if it introduced such a programme, would the UK be a particular outlier. More countries than you might imagine either never abolished national service or have reintroduced something of the kind, with civilian and military strands. Sweden reintroduced conscription as recently as 2017, in part as a social solidarity measure, and the subject is a hot topic again in the Netherlands and Germany.

The fiercest opposition tends to come not only from those reluctant to spend a year or so of their lives in this way, but from the top brass, who argue that in this day and age they need committed professionals, not "kids" just parked with them for a few months. With the military starting to be called upon again to supplement services at home, they might need to rethink.

As the Commonwealth Games open in Birmingham and London basks in nostalgia 10 years after the London Olympics, I would add as a footnote the role played by young volunteers, many of whom discovered strengths that might otherwise have lain undiscovered.

In particular, I remember watching two teenage marshals shepherding huge crowds over the complicated crossing at Marble Arch, with a confident charm that would surely stand them in good stead later on. It is a long way from Marble Arch 2012 to the war raging in Ukraine today.

But the hidden link is the opportunity people have to feel needed and to serve a purpose, as the late Senator John McCain used to say, greater than themselves. There is a good argument to be made that everyone could devote a small part of peacetime to acquiring habits and skills that might one day become life-savers - even in emergencies that fall well short of war.

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*What is the plan to tackle migrant small boats and will it work?*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67PP-HS41-DY4H-K0HH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2023 Monday 7:16 PM GMT

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**Section:** POLITICS EXPLAINED,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 1307 words

**Byline:** Sean O'Grady

**Highlight:** POLITICS EXPLAINED: Recent history is not on the side of ministers in tackling dangerous Channel crossings, says Sean O’Grady

**Body**

Ministers are publishing much-trailed new legislation on asylum and immigration. It is the latest attempt to deal with an issue that seems intractable and has concerned governments of all parties on and off for the past three decades.

What is in the new legislation?

It effectively abolishes the traditional right to claim asylum, and in fact criminalises it. There will be some “bespoke” asylum schemes, created in conjunction with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and may end up being based on a quota determined through consultation with local authorities. Suella Braverman will use her new law to try to stop lawyers from using the human right to family life, and legislation created to combat modern slavery, to stop clients from being deported. Her restrictions on judicial review are draconian.

Rishi Sunak stated his radical policy in a keynote speech last December: “The only way to come to the UK for asylum will be through safe and legal routes. And as we get a grip of illegal migration, we will create more of those routes. We will work with the UNHCR to identify those most in need so the UK remains a safe haven for the most vulnerable.

“And we will introduce an annual quota on numbers set by parliament in consultation with local authorities to determine our capacity ... in the face of humanitarian emergencies.”

Hasn’t the government already made such changes in the Nationality and Borders Act 2022?

The previous act eroded the right to claim asylum rather than drastically restricting it. So we already have a two-tier asylum system, meaning those who arrive in the UK via irregular means may receive less protection and support.

When will the new laws come into effect?

Theoretically, they could be passed and gain royal assent before the summer, with a view to the policy being implemented in time to hit the prime minister’s target of “stopping the boats” by the end of the year. Although not clearly defined, Sunak has asked to be judged on his record.

However, the House of Lords will undoubtedly slow the passage of the bill, especially as these measures weren’t mentioned in the 2019 manifesto and therefore lack a direct mandate. Indeed, the manifesto suggested a very different policy: “We will continue to grant asylum and support to refugees fleeing persecution, with the ultimate aim of helping them to return home if it is safe to do so.”

There will also be some judicial challenges, not least because the new law is in conflict with obligations under international treaty law, principally the 1951 European Convention on Human Rights. With appeals, it is quite possible the laws won’t be implemented before the next election in 2024.

A more practical problem is that there may be nowhere to deport migrants, whatever their status. Their countries of origin may not want them back or may accept them only to punish them. The Rwanda scheme has nowhere near the necessary capacity and, despite rumours about other states and territories – such as St Helena, Morocco, Moldova and Papua New Guinea – there are no other safe third-country options. Since Brexit, the Dublin III EU returns facility has ended.

Former prime minister Theresa May is likely to lead a rebellion against changes to her Modern Slavery Act 2015, from when she was home secretary, in which she takes great pride.

Will the new laws work?

Recent history suggests laws alone won’t solve the crisis, and other solutions lie much further back in the system.

A combination of wars, climate crisis (desertification and loss of water supplies), the rise of authoritarian regimes and terrorist groups such as Isis, as well as easier access to travel, have hugely increased global migration. In Europe, it stands at levels not seen since the end of the Second World War; in central America and the Sahel, it is unprecedented.

The great majority of refugees end up in countries next door: Jordan and Lebanon for Syrians and Iraqis, Bangladesh for the Rohingya, Poland for Ukrainians and so on. If more effort was expended in making life better for them in those countries, they might not feel impelled to move on.

By the time they reach Europe, refugees are confronted with much hostility and a disjointed approach. Britain is still an attractive country, even to those who have got as far as Belgium or France, because many have family links or they speak English and they perceive Britain to be a place where they can find work and make a life for themselves. Britain’s present acute labour shortages may be another incentive. There’s no evidence they are attracted by indefinite stays in roadhouse hotels, insanitary camps or the measly living allowance provided.

Delays in processing mean those who do merely wish to come to work and then return home can count on a window of opportunity lasting months if not years. Rules preventing them taking paid work drives them into the cash-in-hand informal economy and unregulated overcrowded private lodgings.

Successive governments have promised, tried and failed to limit migration both regular and irregular. The Conservatives’ 2010 election target to keep total numbers below 100,000 has never been met and has now been abandoned. Most recent official figures put regular net migration at half a million, including students and special resettlement scheme participants (Hong Kong, Afghanistan and Ukraine) – with illegal migration at a comparatively modest 40,000 to 50,000.

When one channel for irregular migration is closed off, another soon arises. The small boats phenomenon began when stronger security at Calais and a lower freight traffic during Covid forced a change in traffickers’ modus operandi.

It seems that if a refugee is willing to risk drowning, laws will be a limited deterrent.

What is Labour’s answer?

Yvette Cooper, shadow home secretary, wants more money spent on a dedicated police team tackling people-smugglers; more resources to clear the backlogs; and safe and secure routes to claim asylum, so there’s no necessity to try and cross the English channel or even leave a home country. She would also scrap the Rwanda scheme, not least on the grounds of cost.

Labour’s political problem is that it won’t place a limit on refugees coming or settling in the UK and the Tories will seek to exploit voters’ grievances about the use of converted hotels. But after years of broken promises and failures from the government, Labour has a small lead on the issue and many voters don’t know which party would be best on migration and asylum.

How have other countries dealt with the challenge?

Some European nations have targeted immigration from Albania by implementing a policy of immediate return, agreed with the Albanian authorities, and similar to Britain’s.

Germany and France also have a faster rate of asylum processing, even with a higher volume of claims than the UK. France rejects more applications than the UK. Other countries, such as Hungary, take a militantly anti-immigrant line, even towards ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, while Italy’s new government has expressed his exasperation at the EU’s supposed inability to redistribute refugees arriving from North Africa. Italy has sought to stop the boats in the sea and send them back to Libya.

Germany, and to a lesser extent Sweden, made a policy decision to accept large numbers of Syrians – one million in the case of Germany – and make their settlement a focus of national policy. Like France, they have also expanded the staff devoted to asylum processing. The UK seems to have had problems retaining immigration officers in what can be emotionally draining work. There is no law that can change that.

**Load-Date:** March 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*US rabbi reviving Jewish roots in her family's Italian town*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65YT-7SD1-DY4H-K4MV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 20, 2022 Wednesday 7:37 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1203 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** From a tiny synagogue she fashioned from her ancestral home in a southern Italian mountain village, an American rabbi is keeping a promise made to her Italian-born father

**Body**

From a rustic, tiny synagogue she fashioned from her family’s ancestral home in this mountain village, an American rabbi is keeping a promise made to her Italian-born father: reconnect people in this southern region of [*Calabria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calabria) to their [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) roots, links nearly severed five centuries ago when the Inquisition forced Jews to convert to Christianity.

In the process, Rabbi Barbara Aiello is also helping to revive Serrastretta, one of many small southern towns struggling with dwindling population, as young people leave in droves to find work and where each year deaths far outnumber births.

Besides the chatter of visitors who come to her synagogue, curious to learn about [*Judaism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/judaism) in predominantly Catholic Italy, the laughter of newly arrived children resounds in the town. This spring, the rabbi helped bring ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, including some with Jewish roots, to live here for now, and — Serrastretta’s mayor hopes — maybe permanently.

On a small wooden table near the synagogue's entrance sits a yellowed family portrait. In the photograph, is the rabbi’s father, Antonio Abramo Aiello, as a child. Born in Serrastretta, he was studying for his bar mitzvah, the rabbi said, but before that religious coming-of-age ritual could take place, the young Aiello left with his family for the United States in 1923.

His daughter, Barbara, would be born in Pittsburgh and ordained a rabbi when she was 51, in a small branch of American Judaism known as Reconstructionist movement.

Before studying to become a rabbi, Aiello taught special needs children for many years, creating a puppet show to help teach kids about tolerance. Ordained at the Rabbinical Seminary International in New York, she served at a synagogue in Florida for a few years before moving to Italy, where she first worked as a rabbi in Milan from 2004-2005. Then she realized her passion in serving as a rabbi in her late father’s native town.

When visitors arrive from abroad for ceremonies at her synagogue, Rabbi Aiello, who is 74, shows them the house in what had been the Jewish quarter in the nearby city of Lamezia Terme, where her father had been learning about his Jewish faith.

She points out a plaque which reads: “In this quarter was active an industrious community” of Jews from the 13th till the 16th centuries.

One recent summer evening, as Aiello, who wears a yarmulke and necklace with a small Star of David, walked by en route to the ancient neighborhood, a local resident, Emilio Fulvo, 73, leaped up from a bench to greet her. When he was 15, Fulvo recounted, genealogical research discovered that his family has Jewish roots.

Learning about his background “made me feel free,” Fulvo said. “I knew something was missing” while raised as a Catholic in southern Italy.

Families like his are known as B’nai Anusim, descendants, of “those who were forced to accept Christian baptism and to publicly renounce their Judaism,’’ the rabbi said.

In her family, “legends were passed along that we were Jews, and we were expelled from Spain in 1492,” as the Inquisition gathered steam, Aiello said. Eventually, the Aiellos made their way to the southern end of the Apennine mountains, where Serrastretta sits, perched atop a road winding through slopes thickly forested with beech, pine and chestnut trees.

The remoteness of many villages in Calabria, coupled with [*Italian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italian) s’ tendencies to live in the same places for generations and the strength of oral traditions, helped keep alive what Roque Pugliese, a Jew in Calabria, calls the “spark of Judaism” even among those who don’t realize they have Jewish heritage.

A physician who emigrated from Argentina, Pugliese recalled once hearing residents of a care home in Calabria sing an ancient song about Passover, softly, as if afraid to be overheard.

On a stone wall along a walkway that leads to Aiello’s home and synagogue is a Star of David

On a recent Friday afternoon, she set out a bowl of cherries and a tray of miniature pastries for those coming for a bat mitzvah sought by the Blum family of Parkland, Florida. They chose Aiello despite the great distance because, before becoming a rabbi, she had worked as a special needs educator, and their daughter, Mia, has autism.

Pushing a child’s stroller up the steep street that leads to the synagogue was Vira, one of five Ukrainian mothers, who, with nine children among them, were brought to Serrastretta thanks to efforts by Aiello and logistical help from a Serrastretta native. Transportation and housing costs have been paid by donors, most of them Jewish, in Britain, the United States, Australia and Canada, the rabbi said.

Two of the women have since returned to Ukraine, including the wife of an Orthodox Christian priest. But Vira, who asked that her surname not be published because her husband, still in Ukraine, works for a government ministry, said she is considering settling in Serrastretta.

“The first thing is my son, my only son, his life, his future, his safety,’’ Vira said of 2½-year-old Platon. “Barbara invited us to a safe place. It was like really a miracle.”

Vira is also grateful for the opportunity to learn about Judaism. Her grandmother, born in Crimea, is Jewish. But her father, a Russian, would take her to church, so she had never gone to a Jewish house of worship, she said. Aiello “invited me to a bar mitzvah. It was a very beautiful experience that she opened her house to me.”

The rabbi said she tells those curious about their past to “embrace those (traditions) that make sense to you — embrace all, embrace some, but understand that you were once Jewish (in your family) and we can connect you, reconnect you, if you so choose.”

Mayor Antonio Muracca hopes at least some Ukrainians stay. “These guests have created in a certain sense more vitality in our town,’’ he said. Serrastretta has seen “a shocking depopulation,″ the mayor said. “There are so many old people, few children.”

The town’s population shrank from 4,000 in 2001 to 2,900 in 2020.

Serrastretta was long called “the city of chairs,’’ because generations of artisans handcrafted furniture from beech wood with seats fashioned from woven reeds. But demand for cheaper, mass-produced furniture decimated the trade.

Serrastretta’s parish pastor, the Rev. Luigi Iuliano, invited Aiello to read a Psalm at Easter vigil services in April. With the rabbi there is no “competition, jealousy.”

“We brought the First Communion kids to show them the Torah, the synagogue, to become aware that our faith in a certain way comes from the Hebrew faith,’’ said Iuliano, a Serrastretta native.

Aiello, who describes herself as the only female rabbi in Italy and who runs Calabria’s only synagogue, relies on destination weddings and bat and bar mitzvahs to boost her synagogue’s finances.

She is cut off from funding that derives from taxpayer donations in Italy. The Italian government only recognizes the Orthodox Jewish communities in Italy, whose official members number about 23,000, nearly half of those living in Rome and barely 200 living in southern Italy.

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP’s collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is solely responsible for this content.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Joe Biden stumbles up steps of Air Force 1 in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67M5-GFJ1-JBNF-W2KK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 22, 2023 Wednesday 10:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 80 words

**Byline:** Mary-Kate Findon

**Body**

[*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stumbled up the steps of Air Force 1 as he made his way onto the aircraft to leave [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

It happened after he delivered a speech to the Polish public in Warsaw, where he thanked them for housing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

This video shows the moment the president lost his footing as he ascended the steps, before composing himself and proceeding.

He can be seen turning around and giving a brief wave before entering the plane.

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**Load-Date:** February 22, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky thanks Ireland for its support as he meets Taoiseach in Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65VW-4W51-DY4H-K3K7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 6, 2022 Wednesday 4:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1222 words

**Byline:** David Young

**Highlight:** Micheal Martin held talks with the Ukrainian president during a visit to the war-torn capital on Wednesday.

**Body**

Ukrainian President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has thanked [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) for its support amid the Russian invasion as he held talks with the [*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

Micheal Martin restated [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) solidarity with the people of Ukraine as he met Mr Zelensky in the war-torn capital on Wednesday.

Earlier, the Irish premier witnessed the devastation inflicted by invading Russian forces as he visited conflict-scarred suburbs of Kyiv that have borne the brunt of the offensive on the city.

The tour included a sombre visit to the site of a mass grave in the grounds of a church in Bucha.

After holding a bilateral meeting with the Taoiseach, Mr Zelensky said he is grateful for Ireland’s support in the war and for the country’s aspirations to join the European Union.

He also expressed his gratitude for providing refuge for people fleeing the war in Ukraine.

“We are very grateful and we will remember this always as matter of principle, and the gesture of solidarity towards our people,” Mr Zelensky said during a joint press conference with Mr Martin.

“Our Irish friends fully appreciate the threats created by this Russia aggression against Ukraine and aggression against the whole democratic world.

“We (Mr Martin) discussed our joint responses to the energy crisis and preparation of the new sanctions package against the Russia.

“Ukraine appreciates everything that Ireland has done and for Russia to feel the real price of their terrorist attacks.”

Mr Martin thanked Mr Zelensky for his “very warm welcome”.

“I want to thank you for your remarkable leadership which is greatly admired in Ireland,” the Taoiseach added.

Today, I met with President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) in Kyiv. Having witnessed the devastation caused by the illegal invasion of Ukraine, I reiterated Ireland’s backing for continuing sanctions against Putin’s regime. We will continue to welcome and support civilians fleeing this war. [*pic.twitter.com/cNds1WAamE*](https://t.co/cNds1WAamE) — Micheál Martin (@MichealMartinTD) [*July 6, 2022*](https://twitter.com/MichealMartinTD/status/1544719963314864136?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“I’m here to express Ireland’s solidarity with the Government and people of Ukraine. We admire you and we are with you.

“Russia’s brutal war against this beautiful democratic country is a gross violation of international law.

“It is an afront to everything that Ireland stands for, it cannot and will not be allowed to stand.”

Mr Martin said he witnessed first hand the “horrific reality of war” on the people of Ukraine.

“The use of terror against and the deliberate targeting of civilian populations are war crimes,” he added.

“Those responsible, those carrying out these actions and those directing them will be held fully accountable and there will be no hiding places.

“I am here to pay tribute to President Zelensky and his government on achieving European Union candidate status.

“I have always made clear from the outset our strong view that Ukraine belongs to the EU, the values that people are fighting and dying for today are European values.

“It was the commitment and hard work of the government in Kyiv that convinced the European Commission to come forward with a positive recommendation so quickly.

“It is a richly deserved outcome.”

He added: “A war intended to crush and fragment a people, has instead made you stronger, more united, more convinced of your identity and place in the world, your language, your culture, your European vocation.

“The world has been humbled by the strength and resilience of the people of Ukraine.”

Ireland has taken in more than 36,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since Russia invaded neighbouring Ukraine at the end of February.

The Irish government 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.

Mr Martin used his visit to restate Ireland’s full backing for continuing sanctions against Russian President Vladimir Putin’s regime and for Ukraine’s path to full EU membership, as well as Ireland’s commitment to work with the EU on the reconstruction of Ukraine.

As well as his bilateral meeting with President Zelensky, the Taoiseach also held talks with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal.

“The people of Ireland stand with Ukraine and its people in the face of Russia’s immoral and unprovoked war of terror,” said Mr Martin.

The Irish leader said the bombardment and attacks on civilians were “nothing short of war crimes” as he insisted Russia must be held 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,” he added.

Mr Martin’s 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.

“(It is) clear how important it is for women and children to get to Ireland to escape trauma and brutality. We stand with Ukraine.”

Prior to the talks with the Ukrainian president, Micheal Martin visited a museum in Kyiv that is exhibiting items from the war, including damaged Russian military vehicles and missile fragments.

He placed a teddy bear at a nearby memorial to the children killed in the conflict so far.

Mr Martin then visited a memorial commemorating the lives lost in the Holodomor famine in Ukraine in the early 1930s.

The Taoiseach placed a wreath at the site and later lit a candle in an underground part of the memorial.

Mr Martin’s trip came two weeks after President Zelensky invited him to visit Ukraine.

It is the first visit by a Taoiseach to the eastern European country.

On Monday, President Putin declared victory in seizing the eastern Ukrainian province of 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.

In April, fellow cabinet minister 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**



[*Edward meets Ukrainians in Scotland after being made Duke of Edinburgh*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67RP-JX51-JBNF-W1XR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 11, 2023 Saturday 8:27 AM GMT

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**Section:** LIFESTYLE,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 87 words

**Byline:** Mary-Kate Findon

**Body**

[*Prince Edward*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-edward) shared a message for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Scotland after King Charles made him Duke of Edinburgh.

He was speaking at a reception marking one year since the Scottish capital welcomed the first Ukrainians to the city.

It was his first royal engagement since he was bestowed the title, which was held by his father, Prince Phillip.

He told those gathered at Edinburgh’s City Chambers on the Royal Mile that they could make Scotland their home as long as they needed.

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**Load-Date:** March 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson news - Nato intervention 'not on the agenda' despite Putin's 'evil' invasion, PM insists*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WR-BVG1-JBNF-W4YT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 7:06 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:11

**Length:** 179 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh,Joe Middleton,Liam James,Matt Mathers,Eleanor Sly and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** PM visits Estonia amid fears Baltic states could be targeted by Putin if Ukraine war successful

**Body**

Nato intervention in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is "not on the agenda" and "is not being contemplated by any member", [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has stressed, despite the "evil" of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's war on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's sovereign neighbour.

Speaking in Poland and Estonia as he visits Nato allies on day six of the war in Ukraine, the prime minister accused Mr Putin of wanting to "overthrow the Cold War order" and destroy the vision of a "free Europe".

He added: "I cannot think of a time in international affairs when the difference between right and wrong, between good and bad, between good and evil, has been so obvious."

Earlier, Dominic Raab, Mr Johnson's deputy and justice secretary, warned that the Russian president could resort to [*"even more barbaric" tactics if his forces continue to meet resistance.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/dominic-raab-ukraine-russia-invasion-b2025474.html%22%20title=%22https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/dominic-raab-ukraine-russia-invasion-b2025474.html)

Meanwhile, Priti Patel faces increasing pressure to do more to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the chaos. The home secretary said the government is "absolutely working on" the possibility of helping ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** come to the UK, despite ruling out a visa waiver for those fleeing the conflict.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war latest: Zelensky warns ‘no time to waste’ as Ukraine’s army chief says frontline situation ‘tense’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BT6-PY31-DY4H-K537-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2024 Monday 5:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 12823 words

**Byline:** Holly Evans and Arpan Rai

**Highlight:** Ukraine’s army chief says situation in industrial east has ‘significantly worsened’

**Body**

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has rallied again for immediate aid assistance from his allies, saying there is no more time left to waste as Russian attacks continue to batter [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The Ukrainian president said [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) used nearly 130 “Shahed” drones against Ukraine, more than 80 Russian missiles and nearly 700 guided aerial bombs last week.

“Rhetoric does not protect the skies. Thoughts do not limit the production of terrorist missiles and drones,” he added.

He pointed out that sanctions against Russia can “still be circumvented” while Ukraine has to wait for months to receive vital assistance packages, in addition to waiting for a vote in the US Congress.

On the war front line, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) ’s military chief said Ukraine’s situation in the industrial east had “significantly worsened in recent days”.

Washington-based think tank Institute for the Study of War also warned that delays in Western military assistance would increasingly hamper their ability to fight back against Russian advances.

“The Russian military command likely assesses that Ukrainian forces will be unable to defend against current and future Russian offensive operations due to delays in or the permanent end of US military assistance,” the think tank said.

Key Points

At least 16 people killed in Ukranian shelling of Russian-held town Putin mocks peace conference Aborted peace deal could be basis for Ukraine talks, says Kremlin Zelensky ‘rules out’ 2022 talks as basis for peace negotiations Russia brands two BBC journalist as ‘foreign agents’

Here are the latest photos from Ukraine

Below are some of the latest photos from Ukraine.

Germany's Scholz arrives in China on a visit marked by trade tensions and Ukraine conflict

German Chancellor [*Olaf Scholz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olaf-scholz) arrived in [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) on Sunday on a visit focused on the increasingly tense economic relationship between the nations and differences over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Scholz’s first destination was Chongqing, where he and his delegation of ministers and business leaders were to visit a partially German-funded company and other sites in the vast city, which is a production base for China’s auto and other industries.

Scholz is also scheduled to visit the financial hub of Shanghai during his three-day visit, before travelling to the capital, [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) , to meet with Chinese leader Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang.

Read the full article here:

[*Germany's Scholz arrives in China on a visit marked by trade tensions and Ukraine conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-germany-beijing-b2528443.html)

Zelensky says ‘no more time to waste’ on aid as Ukraine endures 130 ‘Shahed’ drones

Volodymyr Zelensky has told his allies there is no more time to waste on aid and critical assistance packages for Ukraine as Russian attacks only continue to surge.

“Over the last week, Russian terrorists used nearly 130 "Shahed" drones against Ukraine; fortunately, we were able to intercept the vast majority of them. More than 80 Russian missiles and nearly 700 guided aerial bombs were also used,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address.

“Rhetoric does not protect the skies. Thoughts do not limit the production of terrorist missiles and drones,” he added.

He pointed out that sanctions against Russia can “still be circumvented” while Ukraine has to wait for months to receive vital assistance packages, in addition to waiting for a vote in the US Congress.

This “indicates that terrorists’ self-confidence is also growing by the month”, Mr Zelensky said.

“There is no more time to waste. Wherever life is threatened by terror, it must be protected through real action. Every effort must be made to prevent the evil of war from spreading throughout the world, whether in Europe, the Middle East, or elsewhere,” he said.

Over the last week, Russian terrorists used nearly 130 "Shahed" drones against Ukraine; fortunately, we were able to intercept the vast majority of them. More than 80 Russian missiles and nearly 700 guided aerial bombs were also used. Rhetoric does not protect skies. Thoughts… [*pic.twitter.com/dIgO8ID4NG*](https://t.co/dIgO8ID4NG) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*April 14, 2024*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1779578396839653552?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces 06:00 , Holly Evans More civilians died across Ukraine Sunday as analysts warned that delays in U.S. military assistance would see [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) struggle to fight off Russian offensives.One man was Sunday killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor’s office said.Officials in the [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) region also said Sunday that they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day. Ten Russian Shahed-type drones were shot down over the Kharkiv region overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force said Sunday.Read the full article here: [*More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kyiv-kharkiv-washington-b2528507.html) Ukraine suffering on ground due to delay in western military assistance, analysts say05:37 , Arpan Rai Delays in Western military assistance would increasingly hamper Ukraine’s ability to push back Russian advances, the Institute for the Study of War, a Washington-based think tank, warned.In its report, the ISW said that Russian forces were prioritising grinding, tactical gains with operational-level efforts focusing on the cities of Lyman, Chasiv Yar, and Pokrovsk.“The Russian military command likely assesses that Ukrainian forces will be unable to defend against current and future Russian offensive operations due to delays in or the permanent end of US military assistance,” the think tank said.In an earlier update on Saturday, Ukraine’s military chief General Oleksandr Syrskyi said Ukraine’s battlefield situation in the industrial east had “significantly worsened in recent days,” as warming weather allowed Russian forces to launch a fresh push along several stretches of the more than 1,000km (620-mile) -long front line.He added that Russian forces had been “actively attacking” Ukrainian positions near the cities of Lyman, Bakhmut and Pokrovsk, and beginning to launch tank assaults as drier, warmer spring weather made it easier for heavy vehicles to move across previously muddy terrain.More civilians die in Ukraine in Russian attacks05:12 , Arpan Rai More civilians died across Ukraine yesterday as experts warned that delays in US military assistance would see Kyiv struggle to fight off Russian offensives.A total of four people – all civilians – were killed in parts of Ukraine in separate Russian attacks.One man was killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor’s office said yesterday. Elsewhere, a 67-year-old woman was killed after shelling hit an apartment block in the Donetsk region, said governor Vadym Filashkin.Officials in the Kharkiv region also said yesterday that they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day.Meanwhile, shelling in the Russian-occupied Kherson region killed two civilians on the same day, said Moscow-installed leader Vladimir Saldo. Ukrainian drones were also reported in Russia’s Krasnodar and Belgorod regions and over the Black Sea, the Russian defence ministry said.In the Russian onslaught, Ukrainian Air Force said 10 Russian Shahed-type drones were shot down over the Kharkiv region overnight yesterday.Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters05:00 , Holly Evans ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government’s [*flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) , The Independent can reveal.[*People with suspected links to serious or organised crime*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-fake-sponsors-exploitation-b2257507.html) were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s invasion.In the worst cases, [*Ukrainian families and individuals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/homes-ukraine-refugees-host-anniversary-b2307668.html) “just disappeared”, according to one council worker, while others were forced to work for their hosts or were charged rent. In one stark example, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile.Read the full article here:[*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) War frontline situation ‘tense’, says Ukrainian defence minister04:49 , Arpan Rai Ukrainian defence minister Rustem Umerov said he visited Ukrainian units on the eastern front yesterday and described the situation as “tense”, with Russia trying to make headway in areas west of Bakhmut.“Visited combat units in the eastern direction. The situation is tense. The enemy is trying to advance deep into the positions of the Defence Forces, concentrating on a breakthrough west of Bakhmut,” he said.The defence minister added: “Despite the numerical superiority of the enemy, we effectively disrupt these plans thanks to the courage, training, and professionalism of the defenders, who successfully use modern technological systems in opposition to the enemy, who tries to gain an advantage through manpower.”The war has escalated in recent weeks with Russia staging three massive air strikes on Ukrainian power plants and substations, raising fears over the resilience of an energy system that was hobbled in the war’s first winter.President Volodymyr Zelensky told Ukrainians in his address last night: “The situation at the front during such a hot war is always difficult. But these days – and especially on the Donetsk front – it’s getting harder.”The Ukrainian leader has warned the Kremlin may be preparing to launch a big offensive in late spring or summer.Ukraine’s top commander says Russia wants to capture Chasiv Yar by 9 May04:28 , Arpan Rai Russian forces are eyeing capturing the town of Chasiv Yar in less than a month, a high ground area in eastern Ukraine which is set to become the hottest point of fighting in the war, top Ukrainian commander said.Ukrainian Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi said Russia was focussing its efforts in the west of occupied Bakhmut to try to capture Chasiv Yar before moving towards the Kramatorsk city. The top Ukrainian commander had warned this weekend that the situation in the east – where most of the heavy warfare with military forces is concentrated – had deteriorated."The threat remains relevant, taking into account the fact that the higher Russian military leadership has set its troops the task of capturing Chasiv Yar by 9 May," he said, without elaborating.9 May is also celebrated as the date Moscow marked the Soviet victory in the second World War.Chasiv Yar in the Donetsk region lies 5-10km (3-6 miles) from Bakhmut, the devastated city captured by Russian forces in May last year after months of bloody fighting.Kyiv’s brigades were holding back the assaults near Chasiv Yar for now and had been reinforced with ammunition, drones and electronic warfare devices, he said in a statement on Telegram.Ukraine bishop urges UK and US to keep supporting fight against Russia03:55 , Arpan Rai The bishop for Ukraine in London has urged the UK and the US to “honour their pledges” and not forget that Ukraine is fighting Russia to save the “rule of law and democracy”.In a major intervention, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski said Ukraine was not asking for soldiers on the ground but for funding to [*continue fighting Russian president Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-news-latest-putin-drones-nuclear-b2526352.html). Two years ago, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched a devastating full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , capturing nearly a quarter of the country and displacing more than 10 million people. There are now at least six million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Europe, including around 250,000 in the UK.“This is not just a battle for Ukraine,” the Catholic bishop told The Independent. “It is the battle for rule of law, democracy and freedoms that we have all taken advantage of. That we stand to lose.Bel Trew reports:[*Ukraine bishop urges UK and US to keep supporting fight against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-bishop-uk-us-russia-cameron-b2526534.html) The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run03:30 , Holly Evans One of the good decisions made by Michael Gove, who as housing and communities secretary was responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme when it was set up two years ago, was to allow the project to be driven from the bottom up.The scheme was an [*expression of solidarity*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-putin-b2528144.html) from the British people to the Ukrainian people, and the role of the British government, as Mr Gove saw it, was to enable and support it – but mainly to get out of the way.It was, and remains, an overwhelming success. More than 180,000 visas have been issued to [***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-bishop-uk-us-russia-cameron-b2526534.html) through the sponsorship route. The problems with the scheme, [*exclusively reported by The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) , in no way undermine the policy in principle – on the contrary, they argue for improved safeguards in order to ensure continuing high levels of public support for it.Read the full article here: [*Editorial: The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/homes-ukraine-scheme-organised-crime-gove-b2528263.html) Kremlin says 2022 draft document could serve as starting point for future Ukraine peace talks02:00 , Holly Evans A draft peace agreement that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) negotiated in the early days of the war could serve as a starting point for talks to end the fighting, the Kremlin said Friday, reviving a proposal that Ukraine had rejected.Kremlin spokesperson [*Dmitry Peskov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dmitry-peskov) said that the draft document that was discussed in Istanbul in March 2022 could be “the basis for starting negotiations.” At the same time, he noted that the possible future talks would need to take into account the “new realities.”“There have been many changes since then, new entities have been included in our constitution,” Peskov said in a conference call with reporters.Read the full article here: [*Kremlin says 2022 draft document could serve as starting point for future Ukraine peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kyiv-dmitry-peskov-b2527800.html) Trypilska: Russian attack destroys one of Ukraine’s largest power plantsMonday 15 April 2024 00:00 , Holly Evans A massive missile and drone attack destroyed one of [*Ukraine’s largest power plants and damaged others*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-latest-putin-power-plant-navalny-b2527512.html) , officials have said.The Trypilska plant, which was the biggest energy supplier for the [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , Cherkasy and Zhytomyr regions, was struck numerous times, destroying the transformer, turbines and generators and leaving the plant ablaze. As the first drone approached, workers hid in a shelter, saving their lives, said Andrii Gota, chairman of the supervisory board of the state company that runs the plant, Centrenergo.Read the full article here: [*Trypilska: Russian attack destroys one of Ukraine’s largest power plants*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/trypilska-power-plant-ukraine-kyiv-russia-b2527622.html) US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in UkraineSunday 14 April 2024 23:00 , Holly Evans[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has surged sales to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) in turn is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine, according to a U.S. assessment.Two senior Biden administration officials, who discussed the sensitive findings Friday on the condition of anonymity, said that in 2023 about 90% of Russia’s microelectronics came from China, which Russia has used to make missiles, tanks and aircraft. Nearly 70% of Russia’s approximately $900 million in machine tool imports in the last quarter of 2023 came from China.Read the full article here: [*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html) British military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian dronesSunday 14 April 2024 22:00 , Holly Evans The production of [*laser energy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/laser-weapons-war-raytheon-uk-b2458158.html) and [*radio waves*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/radio-waves) – viewed once as weapons of the future – are being fast-tracked in Britain for [*the battlefields of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-air-strikes-bombs-weapons-b2527178.html) and [*Red Sea passages*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/red-sea-ship-stranded-houthis-b2488111.html) coming under Houthi attacks.[*The DragonFire system, which uses a beam to hit and destroy targets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/laser-weapon-uk-blasts-drones-b2483750.html) at the [*speed of light*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/speed-of-light) , and radio frequency hits taking out an adversary’s power supplies, will be tested by the Royal Navy and the Army next month in preparation for operational deployment.Read the full article here: [*Military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-military-laser-ukraine-b2527367.html) Latest pictures from UkraineSunday 14 April 2024 21:00 , Holly EvansWarmer weather helping Russian forces push forwards on the frontlineSunday 14 April 2024 20:00 , Holly Evans Ukraine’s military chief General Oleksandr Syrskyi said on Saturday that Ukraine’s battlefield situation in the industrial east had “significantly worsened in recent days”, as warming weather allowed Russian forces to launch a fresh push along several stretches of the more than 1,000-kilometre (620-mile)-long front line.In an update on the Telegram messaging app, Gen Syrskyi said Russian forces had been “actively attacking” Ukrainian positions near the cities of Lyman, Bakhmut and Pokrovsk, and beginning to launch tank assaults as drier, warmer spring weather made it easier for heavy vehicles to move across previously muddy terrain.Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangstersSunday 14 April 2024 19:00 , Holly Evans ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government’s [*flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) , The Independent can reveal.[*People with suspected links to serious or organised crime*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-fake-sponsors-exploitation-b2257507.html) were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s invasion.In the worst cases, [*Ukrainian families and individuals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/homes-ukraine-refugees-host-anniversary-b2307668.html) “just disappeared”, according to one council worker, while others were forced to work for their hosts or were charged rent. In one stark example, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile.Read the full article here: [*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) First Ukrainian pilots taught by UK’s Royal Air Force graduateSunday 14 April 2024 17:30 , Holly Evans The first group of Ukrainian pilots being trained by the Royal Air Force have now graduated and are moving on to their second stage of training in France. The first Ukrainian pilots to have undergone intensive training under the guidance of [*@RoyalAirForce*](https://twitter.com/RoyalAirForce?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) instructors have graduated. They will now move onto the next stage of training in France. [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/14AAdPHEV2*](https://t.co/14AAdPHEV2) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 14, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1779464710934409573?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Delays in Western assistance will hamper Kyiv’s ability to fight Russians, says think tankSunday 14 April 2024 16:30 , Holly Evans Washington-based think tank the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) warned that delays in Western military assistance would increasingly hamper Ukraine’s ability to fight back against Russian advances.With the war in Ukraine entering its third year and a vital US aid package for Kyiv stuck in Congress, Russia has used its edge in firepower and personnel to step up attacks across eastern Ukraine.It has increasingly used satellite-guided gliding bombs -dropped from planes from a safe distance -to pummel Ukrainian forces beset by a shortage of troops and ammunition. In its report, the ISW said that Russian forces were prioritising grinding, tactical gains with operational-level efforts focusing on the cities of Lyman, Chasiv Yar, and Pokrovsk.“The Russian military command likely assesses that Ukrainian forces will be unable to defend against current and future Russian offensive operations due to delays in or the permanent end of US military assistance,” the think tank said.Zelensky condemns Iran’s attack on IsraelSunday 14 April 2024 15:15 , Holly Evans Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy on Sunday condemned Iran’s drone and missile attack on Israel, calling for efforts to prevent a further escalation in Middle East conflict.“Iran’s actions threaten the entire region and the world, just as Russia’s actions threaten a larger conflict, and the obvious collaboration between the two regimes in spreading terror must face a resolute and united response from the world,” he wrote on social media platform X.Ukraine condemns Iran’s attack on Israel using “Shahed” drones and missiles. We in Ukraine know very well the horror of similar attacks by Russia, which uses the same “Shahed” drones and Russian missiles, the same tactics of mass air strikes.Every effort must be made to prevent…— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*April 14, 2024*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1779471732274872433?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) More civilians die in Ukraine amid warnings of US aid delaysSunday 14 April 2024 14:08 , Holly Evans More civilians died across Ukraine on Sunday as analysts warned that delays in US military assistance would see Kyiv struggle to fight off Russian offensives.One man was killed when a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor’s office said.Officials in the Kharkiv region also said they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day.Ten Russian Shahed-type drones were shot down over the Kharkiv region overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force said on Sunday.Meanwhile, shelling in the Russian-occupied Kherson region killed two civilians on Sunday, said Moscow-installed leader Vladimir Saldo.Kherson official says two people killed in Ukrainian strikesSunday 14 April 2024 12:14 Two people were killed by Ukrainian strikes in a Russian-held area of Ukraine’s Kherson, the region’s top official said on Sunday.One person was wounded, Vladimir Saldo wrote on the Telegram messaging app.Germany to send new Patriot air defence system to Kyiv at ‘critical time’, Zelensky saysSunday 14 April 2024 08:30 , Namita Singh Germany will supply a US-made Patriot air defence system and air defence missiles to Ukraine at a “critical time” as Kyiv struggles to defend its energy system from Russian bombardment, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.More than two years into its full-scale invasion, Russia has staged three massive airstrikes on power stations and substations in recent weeks, prompting Kyiv to issue desperate appeals for supplies of high-end air defences.“Germany will deliver an additional Patriot air defence system to Ukraine,” Germany’s chancellor Olaf Scholz said on X, a reminder that Germany is now a key backer of Ukraine with US assistance stuck in Congress.“We stand steadfast on the side of Ukraine,” Mr Scholz said, adding that Mr Zelensky had informed him in a telephone call on Saturday about “massive Russian air attacks on civilian energy infrastructure”. Germany’s ambassador to Ukraine, Martin Jaeger, said on X: “Other international partners must follow quickly now.”Mr Zelensky said on the Telegram messaging app that he was grateful to Mr Scholz for the decision to supply another, additional Patriot system, and missiles for existing air defence systems.Later in his nightly video address, Mr Zelensky indicated talks were underway about expanding German transfers of another air defence system, though German officials did not reference this in their remarks.“We are also working with Germany on an additional IRIS-T system, which is also a strong air defence system, and on missiles for our existing air defence systems,” Mr Zelensky said in his video address.Ukraine says it downed 10 Russian dronesSunday 14 April 2024 07:54 Ukraine’s air force today said its air defence systems destroyed all 10 attack drones that Russia had launched at the country.The air force said on Telegram that Russia also attacked Ukraine with four missiles but did not say what happened to them.Russia claims to have destroyed 15 Ukrainian drones over Krasnodar, Black SeaSunday 14 April 2024 07:43 , Namita Singh Russia’s defence ministry today said its air defense systems destroyed 10 Ukrainian drones over the Krasnodar region in southern Russia and five drones over the Black Sea.The ministry, in a statement on the Telegram messaging app, did not say whether there was any damage from the attacks.Ukrainian attack on town held by Russia kills 16Sunday 14 April 2024 07:28 , Namita Singh A local official in Ukraine’s southern Zaporizhzhia region today said that the death toll from the Ukrainian military’s shelling of the town of Tokmak had risen to 16.Yevgeny Balitsky, the top official in the region appointed by Moscow, said on Telegram that 20 people had been wounded in the shelling on Friday night, with 12 in serious condition.There has been no comment from Ukraine on the alleged attack.Zaporizhzhia is one of four Ukrainian regions that have been partially occupied by Russian forces and which Moscow moved to annex after launching its invasion on Ukraine in February 2022.Marjorie Taylor Greene defends Putin as she lays into Johnson ahead of Trump meetingSunday 14 April 2024 07:00 , Holly Evans Georgia Representative Marjorie Taylor Greene laid into Speaker of the House [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-johnson) on Friday, criticising his support for a legislative package that includes [*funding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/funding) for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and accusing him of bothering [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) by meeting with him.Speaking with Steve Bannon on his show [*War Room,*](https://americasvoice.news/video/WpQ08as4Wdf0o8U/?related=playlist) Ms Greene said that Mr Johnson supporting a US [*spending bill that would send funding to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/mike-johnson-ukraine-speaker-congress-zelensky-b2520333.html) made her “stomach flip over”.“The American people are the ones writing the cheque and I absolutely hate everybody here doing this,” Ms Greene said. “I mean I seriously hate them for doing this for the American people and paying for the murder and slaughter of the people in Ukraine.”Read the full article here: [*Marjorie Taylor Greene defends Putin as she lays into Johnson ahead of Trump meeting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-ukraine-putin-b2527961.html) Editorial: Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at allSunday 14 April 2024 06:00 , Holly Evans It cannot have been a great surprise to the foreign secretary, [*David Cameron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-cameron) , that [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) showed such little interest in supporting [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s war of resistance. Had Mr Trump wanted to see Ukraine receive the military assistance that Kyiv has been begging for, and which remains stalled in the House of Representatives, he’d have given it the nod months ago, and the Republican caucus would have responded with alacrity.The fact that Trump’s puppet, speaker of the House [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-johnson) , couldn’t find time in his diary to speak to [*His Britannic Majesty’s Secretary of State for the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/david-cameron-donald-trump-appease-putin-b2526468.html) speaks volumes for the indifference America feels for its allies and the weakness of the now almost satirically-styled “special relationship”.Read the full editorial here: [*Editorial: Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at all*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/donald-trump-david-cameron-ukraine-peace-plan-putin-b2526630.html) Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangstersSunday 14 April 2024 14:23 , Holly Evans ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government’s [*flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) , The Independent can reveal.[*People with suspected links to serious or organised crime*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-fake-sponsors-exploitation-b2257507.html) were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s invasion.In the worst cases, [*Ukrainian families and individuals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/homes-ukraine-refugees-host-anniversary-b2307668.html) “just disappeared”, according to one council worker, while others were forced to work for their hosts or were charged rent. In one stark example, a couple with a young child were sent to live with a convicted paedophile.Read the full article here: [*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) Ukraine's army chief says eastern front under intense Russian assaultSunday 14 April 2024 04:00 , Holly Evans Ukraine’s army chief said on Saturday the situation on the eastern front had worsened in recent days as Russia has intensified its armoured assaults and battles rage for control of a village west of the devastated city of Bakhmut.The statement by Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi more than two years since Russia’s invasion reflected the grim mood in Kyiv as vital US military aid that Kyiv expected to receive months ago remains stuck in Congress.“The situation on the eastern front in recent days has grown considerably more tense. This is linked primarily to the significant activisation of offensive action by the enemy after the presidential elections in Russia,” he wrote on the Telegram app.Since President Vladimir Putin won a new term in a stage-managed mid-March election, Russia has stepped up its attacks on Ukraine and unleashed three massive aerial strikes on its energy system, pounding power plants and substations.The slowdown in military assistance from the West has left Ukraine more exposed to aerial attacks and heavily outgunned on the battlefield. Kyiv has made increasingly desperate appeals for supplies of air defence missiles in recent weeks.US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in UkraineSunday 14 April 2024 03:00 , Holly Evans[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has surged sales to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) in turn is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry for use in its war against Ukraine, according to a U.S. assessment.Two senior Biden administration officials, who discussed the sensitive findings Friday on the condition of anonymity, said that in 2023 about 90% of Russia’s microelectronics came from China, which Russia has used to make missiles, tanks and aircraft. Nearly 70% of Russia’s approximately $900 million in machine tool imports in the last quarter of 2023 came from China.Read the full article here: [*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html) Thousands of Russian soldiers are fleeing Putin’s war in Ukraine – they have nowhere to goSunday 14 April 2024 02:00 , Holly Evans If the choice was death or a bullet to the leg, Yevgeny would take the bullet. A decorated hero of Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Yevgeny told his friend and fellow soldier to please aim carefully and avoid bone. The tourniquets were ready.The pain that followed was the price Yevgeny paid for a new chance at life. Like thousands of other Russian soldiers, he deserted.“I joke that I gave birth to myself,” he said, declining to give his full name for fear of retribution. “When a woman gives birth to a child, she experiences very intense pain and gives new life. I gave myself life after going through very intense pain.”Read the full article here: [*Thousands of Russian soldiers are fleeing Putin’s war but with nowhere to go next*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-soldiers-deserted-ukraine-war-b2527571.html) UK should consider sending troops to Ukraine, ex-defence minister saysSunday 14 April 2024 00:00 , Holly Evans The UK should consider sending troops to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) a former defence minister has said days after [*President Zelensky warned his country was at risk of losing its war with Russi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-avdiivka-b2524394.html) a.British forces could give support and training to Ukrainians in their battle against [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) ’s invasion, [*James Heappey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-heappey) suggested.But personnel would have to be kept away from the frontline, to prevent sparking a conflict between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato). Read the full article here: [*UK should consider sending troops to Ukraine, ex-defence minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/uk-troops-ukraine-minister-james-heappey-b2527767.html) Kremlin says 2022 draft document could serve as starting point for future Ukraine peace talksSaturday 13 April 2024 23:00 , Holly Evans A draft peace agreement that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) negotiated in the early days of the war could serve as a starting point for talks to end the fighting, the Kremlin said Friday, reviving a proposal that Ukraine had rejected.Kremlin spokesperson [*Dmitry Peskov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dmitry-peskov) said that the draft document that was discussed in Istanbul in March 2022 could be “the basis for starting negotiations.” At the same time, he noted that the possible future talks would need to take into account the “new realities.”“There have been many changes since then, new entities have been included in our constitution,” Peskov said in a conference call with reporters.Read the full article here: [*Kremlin says 2022 draft document could serve as starting point for future Ukraine peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kyiv-dmitry-peskov-b2527800.html) London Metal Exchange releases notice after UK and US take action targeting Russian metalsSaturday 13 April 2024 22:00 , Holly Evans The London Metal Exchange on Saturday set out measures it is taking to comply with new U.S. and UK sanctions that prohibit exchanges from accepting new aluminum, copper and nickel produced by Russia and bar the import of the metals into the two countries.The LME said it recognized that a consequence of the amended sanctions package announced on Friday may be a degree of market uncertainty. Russia is a major producer of aluminum, copper and nickel.The metal exchange said it will impose an immediate suspension on the warranting of Russian metal produced on or after April 13.“LME and LME Clear are taking appropriate steps to enable continued participation in the daily settlement process by members and clients,” it said in a notice.Germany to send new Patriot air defence system to Kyiv at ‘critical time’, Zelensky saysSaturday 13 April 2024 21:00 , Holly Evans Germany will supply a U.S.-made Patriot air defence system and air defence missiles to Ukraine at a “critical time” as Kyiv struggles to defend its energy system from Russian bombardment, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday.More than two years into its full-scale invasion, Russia has staged three massive airstrikes on power stations and substations in recent weeks, prompting Kyiv to issue desperate appeals for supplies of high-end air defences.“I am grateful to the chancellor for the decision to supply another, additional Patriot system to Ukraine, as well as missiles for the existing air defence systems,” Zelensky said after speaking by telephone with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz.I had an important and productive call with [*@Bundeskanzler*](https://twitter.com/Bundeskanzler?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Olaf Scholz. I am grateful to the Chancellor for the decision to deliver an additional Patriot air defense system to Ukraine, as well as air defense missiles for existing systems.Thank you, Olaf, for your leadership.…— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*April 13, 2024*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1779141290988282258?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) He described their conversation as “important, productive” and said: “I call on all other leaders of partner states to follow this example.”Germany will hand over the Patriot system immediately and it will be in addition to air defence systems that were already delivered and planned, the defence ministry said in a post on X.Ten dead in Ukrainian shelling of Russia-controlled town, Russia-installed official saysSaturday 13 April 2024 20:00 , Holly Evans A Russia-installed official in Ukraine’s southern Zaporizhzhia region said on Saturday that shelling by Ukraine’s military had killed 10 people, including three children, in the town of Tokmak.Yevgeny Balitsky, the top Moscow-installed official in the Zaporizhzhia region, said that 18 people had been wounded in the shelling on Friday night.“Two people are reported missing. Debris removal and search continues,” he said on the Telegram messaging app.Another Russian-installed local official, Vladimir Rogov, writing on his Telegram channel, said that five houses had been partially destroyed.Russia claims to have captured village in the Donetsk regionSaturday 13 April 2024 19:00 , Holly Evans Russia’s defence ministry said on Saturday its forces had captured Pervomaiske, a village to the south also located in Ukraine’s Donetsk region where Moscow has focused its offensive operations for months.Moscow said its troops had improved their tactical position on the front line there after capturing the village 8 kilometres (4.97 miles) southwest of occupied Avdiivka. Kyiv did not immediately comment on the status of Pervomaiske.Syrskyi said Russian armoured assault groups were attacking on the fronts of Lyman as well as Bakhmut and using dozens of tanks and armoured personnel carriers to try to break through lines on the Pokrovsk front.President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, who has warned Russia may be preparing a big offensive push in late May or in June, inspected domestically-produced weapons at an event outside Kyiv where he presented state awards to Ukrainian arms producers.Ukraine and Russia were close to peace agreement in 2022. What went wrong?Saturday 13 April 2024 17:00 , Athena Stavrou A senior Ukrainian official has acknowledged that the two sides were close to an agreement in Turkey in 2022 but said Kyiv took the proposal no further because it did not trust the Russian side to carry out any agreement.Dmitry Peskov, Putin’s spokesperson, said a lot had changed since 2022, including what he said was the addition to Russian territory of four new regions, a reference to the parts of Ukraine which Moscow has claimed as its own.But Mr Peskov said the aborted Istanbul deal could still be the basis for new talks and that Russia was ready for that. When asked if Moscow sensed any readiness from the Ukrainian side for talks, however, Mr Peskov said: “No, we don’t sense that.”Ukraine says it wants all of its territory back, including Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014, and for every Russian soldier to leave its territory. It is trying to drive international talks on its stance which exclude Russia.Editorial: Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at allSaturday 13 April 2024 16:00 , Athena Stavrou[*Editorial: Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at all*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/donald-trump-david-cameron-ukraine-peace-plan-putin-b2526630.html) China boosting Russia’s war machine in Ukraine, says USSaturday 13 April 2024 14:30 , Athena Stavrou China is backing Russia’s war effort in Ukraine by helping Moscow in its biggest military build-up since the Soviet era, providing drone and missile technology, satellite imagery and machine tools, senior US officials say.The officials said US president Joe Biden raised the issue with Chinese president Xi Jinping in their recent phone call and that it is a topic of discussion with allies in Europe and around the world.One official said Chinese materials were filling critical gaps in Russia’s defence production cycle and helping Moscow undertake its “most ambitious defence expansion since the Soviet era and on a faster timeline than we believed possible early on in this conflict”.“Our view is that one of the most game-changing moves available to us at this time to support Ukraine is to persuade the PRC (China) to stop helping Russia reconstitute its military industrial base,” the official said.[*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html) Latest pictures from UkraineSaturday 13 April 2024 13:00 , Athena StavrouRussian armoured assaults ramp up pressure on Ukraine's east, army chief saysSaturday 13 April 2024 12:09 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine’s army chief said on Saturday the situation on the eastern front had deteriorated in recent days with Russia intensifying its armoured assaults.The statement by Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi more than two years since Russia’s invasion evoked the increasingly grim mood in Kyiv.It comes as vital US military aid that Kyiv expected to receive months ago remains stuck in Congress.“The situation on the eastern front in recent days has grown considerably more tense. This is linked primarily to the significant activisation of offensive action by the enemy after the presidential elections in Russia,” he wrote on the Telegram app.Since President Vladimir Putin won a new term in a mid-March election, Russia has stepped up its attacks and unleashed three massive aerial strikes on its energy system, pounding power stations and substations.The slowdown in military assistance from the West has left Ukraine more exposed to aerial attacks and more outgunned on the battlefield. Russia says it has taken village in Ukraine's Donetsk regionSaturday 13 April 2024 12:06 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s defence ministry on Saturday said its forces had taken control of the village of Pervomaiske in Ukraine‘s Donetsk region and improved its tactical position on the front line there.Reuters was not able to independently verify the situation at the front.Russia claims eight dead in shelling of Russia-controlled townSaturday 13 April 2024 12:06 , Athena Stavrou A Russian-installed official that shelling by Ukraine’s military had killed eight people, including two children, in the town of Tokmak.The attack is said to have happened in Ukraine’s southern Zaporizhzhia region said on Saturday.Reuters could not independently verify the account of events.Moscow-installed official Yevgeny Balitsky, said that 18 people had been wounded in the shelling on Friday night.Another Russian-installed local official, Vladimir Rogov, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said that five houses had been partially destroyed.Zaporizhzhia is one of four Ukrainian regions that have been partially occupied by Russian forces and formally annexed by Moscow since the February 2022 invasion.Zelensky ‘rules out’ 2022 talks as basis for peace negotiationsSaturday 13 April 2024 10:00 , Athena Stavrou President Vladimir Zelensky, meeting with students in western Ukraine yesterday, appeared to rule out using the 2022 talks as a basis for further discussions, saying the meetings at the time were not talks in a true sense.The Ukrainian president said “no” when asked whether the 2022 talks in Belarus and Turkey had the potential to stop the war.“Negotiations are when two sides want to come to an agreement. There are different aspects, but when there are two sides,” he said in a video posted on his website.“But when one side in any case, regardless of the country or the city, gives you an ultimatum, that is not negotiations.”Saturday 13 April 2024 09:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine and Russia were close to peace agreement in 2022. What went wrong?A senior Ukrainian official has acknowledged that the two sides were close to an agreement in Turkey in 2022 but said Kyiv took the proposal no further because it did not trust the Russian side to carry out any agreement.Dmitry Peskov, Putin’s spokesperson, said a lot had changed since 2022, including what he said was the addition to Russian territory of four new regions, a reference to the parts of Ukraine which Moscow has claimed as its own.But Mr Peskov said the aborted Istanbul deal could still be the basis for new talks and that Russia was ready for that. When asked if Moscow sensed any readiness from the Ukrainian side for talks, however, Mr Peskov said: “No, we don’t sense that.”Ukraine says it wants all of its territory back, including Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014, and for every Russian soldier to leave its territory. It is trying to drive international talks on its stance which exclude Russia.Six killed in Ukranian shelling of occupied town, local official saysSaturday 13 April 2024 07:30 , Namita Singh A Russia-installed official in Ukraine’s southern Zaporizhzhia region said yesterday that shelling by Ukraine’s military had killed six people, including a child, in the town of Tokmak.Vladimir Rogov, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said at least 20 people had been injured. Mr Rogov posted pictures of damaged houses, one of which was all but reduced to rubble.The account of events could not be independently verified.Zaporizhzhia is one of four Ukrainian regions that have been partially occupied by Russian forces and formally annexed by Moscow since the February 2022 invasion.ICYMI: Russia’s glide bombs are devastating Ukraine’s border townsSaturday 13 April 2024 07:08 , Namita Singh[*Askold Krushelnycky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/askold-krushelnycky-0) travels between the cities of Sumy and Kharkiv, dodging craters left by Moscow’s onslaught. He speaks to residents who say the Kremlin will never drive them out, despite trying to bomb the area into an uninhabitable ‘grey zone’.Read the ground report here: [*Kyiv’s troops dig in as hundreds of Putin’s bombs hit northeastern border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-air-strikes-bombs-weapons-b2527178.html) China boosting Russia’s war machine in Ukraine, says USSaturday 13 April 2024 07:01 , Jane Dalton China is backing Russia’s war effort in Ukraine by helping Moscow in its biggest military build-up since the Soviet era, providing drone and missile technology, satellite imagery and machine tools, senior US officials say.The officials said US president Joe Biden raised the issue with Chinese president Xi Jinping in their recent phone call and that it is a topic of discussion with allies in Europe and around the world.One official said Chinese materials were filling critical gaps in Russia’s defence production cycle and helping Moscow undertake its “most ambitious defence expansion since the Soviet era and on a faster timeline than we believed possible early on in this conflict”.“Our view is that one of the most game-changing moves available to us at this time to support Ukraine is to persuade the PRC (China) to stop helping Russia reconstitute its military industrial base,” the official said.[*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html) China increasing equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine, US intelligence claimsSaturday 13 April 2024 06:48 , Namita Singh[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has increased sales to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) is using to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry to wage its war in Ukraine, according to a US intelligence assessment.Two senior Biden administration officials, who discussed the sensitive findings yesterday on the condition of anonymity, said that in 2023 about 90 per cent of Russia’s microelectronics came from China, which Russia has used to make missiles, tanks and aircraft. Nearly 70 per cent of Russia’s approximately $900m in machine tool imports in the last quarter of 2023 came from China.Report: [*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html) Editorial: Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at allSaturday 13 April 2024 06:01 , Jane Dalton In case you missed it: [*Editorial: Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at all*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/donald-trump-david-cameron-ukraine-peace-plan-putin-b2526630.html) Russia brands two BBC journalists as ‘foreign agent’Saturday 13 April 2024 05:30 , Namita Singh Russia’s justice ministry has labelled two BBC journalists – Ilya Barabanov and Asya Kazantseva -as “foreign agents”.Barabanov is Russian correspondent for the British broadcaster and Kazantseva is a science reporter who signed an open letter from Russian scientists and science journalists demanding the withdrawal of the country’s troops from Ukraine.The reporters are now living abroad.Condemning the decision against Barabanov, BBC said it “strongly rejects the decision”.“The BBC has a global reputation as trusted and independent source of news,” the broadcaster added. “BBC News Russian has been a vital source of accurate and impartial news to Russian-speakers for 80 years. We are incredibly proud of all our journalists and our priority right now is to support Ilya and all his colleagues to ensure that all are able to continue their jobs reporting on Russia at such an important time.”US, UK ban import of Russian aluminum, copper and nickelSaturday 13 April 2024 05:08 , Namita Singh Washington and London yesterday prohibited metal-trading exchanges from accepting new aluminium, copper and nickel produced by Russia and barred the import of the metals into the US and Britain.The action is aimed at disrupting Russian export revenue amid Moscow’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which has killed or wounded tens of thousands of people and reduced cities to rubble. Russia is a major producer of aluminium, copper and nickel. The US Treasury Department said the action would prohibit the London Metal Exchange and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange from accepting new Russian production of aluminium, copper and nickel.“Our new prohibitions on key metals, in coordination with our partners in the United Kingdom, will continue to target the revenue Russia can earn to continue its brutal war against Ukraine,” US treasury secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.“By taking this action in a targeted and responsible manner, we will reduce Russia’s earnings while protecting our partners and allies from unwanted spillover effects.”US politician defends Putin, playing down effect of warSaturday 13 April 2024 05:01 , Jane Dalton US far-right representative Marjorie Taylor Greene laid into Speaker of the House [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-johnson) on Friday, criticising his support for a legislative package that includes [*funding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/funding) for [*Ukraine:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) [*Marjorie Taylor Greene defends Putin as she lays into Johnson ahead of Trump meeting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/marjorie-taylor-greene-mike-johnson-ukraine-putin-b2527961.html) US, UK ban import of Russian aluminum, copper and nickelSaturday 13 April 2024 04:53 , Namita Singh Washington and London yesterday prohibited metal-trading exchanges from accepting new aluminum, copper and nickel produced by Russia and barred the import of the metals into the US and Britain.The action is aimed at disrupting Russian export revenue amid Moscow’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine, which has killed or wounded tens of thousands of people and reduced cities to rubble. Russia is a major producer of aluminum, copper and nickel.The US Treasury Department said the action would prohibit the London Metal Exchange and the Chicago Mercantile Exchange from accepting new Russian production of aluminum, copper and nickel.“Our new prohibitions on key metals, in coordination with our partners in the United Kingdom, will continue to target the revenue Russia can earn to continue its brutal war against Ukraine,” US treasury secretary Janet Yellen said in a statement.“By taking this action in a targeted and responsible manner, we will reduce Russia’s earnings while protecting our partners and allies from unwanted spillover effects.”Ukraine and Russia were close to peace agreement in 2022. What went wrong?Saturday 13 April 2024 04:35 , Namita Singh A senior Ukrainian official has acknowledged that the two sides were close to an agreement in Turkey in 2022 but said Kyiv took the proposal no further because it did not trust the Russian side to carry out any agreement.Dmitry Peskov, Putin’s spokesperson, said a lot had changed since 2022, including what he said was the addition to Russian territory of four new regions, a reference to the parts of Ukraine which Moscow has claimed as its own. But Mr Peskov said the aborted Istanbul deal could still be the basis for new talks and that Russia was ready for that. When asked if Moscow sensed any readiness from the Ukrainian side for talks, however, Mr Peskov said: “No, we don’t sense that.”Ukraine says it wants all of its territory back, including Crimea, which Moscow annexed in 2014, and for every Russian soldier to leave its territory. It is trying to drive international talks on its stance which exclude Russia.Zelensky ‘rules out’ 2022 talks as basis for peace negotiationsSaturday 13 April 2024 04:31 , Namita Singh President Vladimir Zelensky, meeting with students in western Ukraine yesterday, appeared to rule out using the 2022 talks as a basis for further discussions, saying the meetings at the time were not talks in a true sense.The Ukrainian president said “no” when asked whether the 2022 talks in Belarus and Turkey had the potential to stop the war. “Negotiations are when two sides want to come to an agreement. There are different aspects, but when there are two sides,” he said in a video posted on his website.“But when one side in any case, regardless of the country or the city, gives you an ultimatum, that is not negotiations.”Why is Putin opposed to Switzerland peace talks?Saturday 13 April 2024 04:11 , Namita Singh Vladimir Putin brought up the subject of potential peace talks and said he was open to what he called realistic negotiations.But he is opposed to the two-day conference to be hosted by Switzerland in June at Ukraine’s request that seeks to achieve peace, saying it is pointless if Russia does not take part. In his view, the meeting does not take new realities into account, including Moscow’s annexation of territory in eastern Ukraine.Aborted peace deal could be basis for Ukraine talks, says KremlinSaturday 13 April 2024 04:08 , Namita Singh An aborted 2022 peace deal between Russia and Ukraine could be the basis for new negotiations but there is no sign that Kyiv is ready for talks, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said yesterday.President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said that Russia and Ukraine were on the verge of agreeing a deal to end hostilities during negotiations in Istanbul in April 2022, but that Ukraine backed away from it once Russian troops fell back from near Kyiv.The deal reportedly demanded that Ukraine adopt neutrality and not join Nato, limit the size of its armed forces and grant special status to Russian-speaking eastern Ukraine -all things which Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has made clear he opposes.Russia meddling in European elections, says EU chiefSaturday 13 April 2024 04:01 , Jane Dalton The Belgian Prime Minister has announced an investigation into suspected Russian interference in June’s [*Europe-wide elections*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu-elections) , saying his country’s intelligence service has confirmed the existence of a network trying to undermine support for Ukraine.“Belgian intelligence services have confirmed the existence of pro-Russian interference networks with activities in several European countries and also here in Belgium,” said Alexander De Croo, whose country currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.Mr De Croo said Belgian agencies were working closely with the Czech authorities after a pro-Russian influence operation was uncovered there. He said that probe showed that members of the European Parliament were approached and offered money to promote Russian propaganda.“According to our intelligence service, the objectives of Moscow are very clear. The objective is to help elect more pro-Russian candidates to the European Parliament and to reinforce a certain pro-Russian narrative in that institution,” he told reporters.Europe-wide polls are being held on 6-9 June to elect a new EU parliament.Mr De Croo said: “The goal is very clear: A weakened European support for Ukraine serves Russia on the battlefield and that is the real aim of what has been uncovered in the last weeks.”Puppies saved from under burning buildingSaturday 13 April 2024 03:01 , Jane Dalton Rescue workers in Ukraine have pulled five puppies from under the rubble of a destroyed building.Officials said the animals were rescued from a non-residential building on fire in the northeastern city of Sumy, close to the border with Russia.A video showed the puppies squealing as the firefighters cuddled them and rinsed them off with water.“Fortunately, everything is fine with the little one(s), they were not injured. The furries were returned by their mothers,” officials said in a post on the emergency services’ Telegram channel.“This rescue story reminds us of the importance of human compassion and the willingness to help everyone, regardless of the circumstances,” they added.Rescuers in Sumy saved five tiny puppies while fighting with fire in a building. Look at their mom all worried.Thankfully, the pups are fine. They were given back to their mom. [*pic.twitter.com/kDtZ8wnS3N*](https://t.co/kDtZ8wnS3N) — In Ukraine (@InUKRofficial) [*April 12, 2024*](https://twitter.com/InUKRofficial/status/1778841763329024283?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Kremlin says 2022 document could form peace talks basis

A draft peace agreement that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) negotiated in the early days of the war could serve as a starting point for talks to end the fighting, the Kremlin said Friday, reviving a proposal that Ukraine has rejected:

[*Kremlin says 2022 draft document could serve as starting point for future Ukraine peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kyiv-dmitry-peskov-b2527800.html)

China sends surge of weapons parts to Russia to help war, US says

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has sent a wave of machine tools, microelectronics and other technology that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) to produce missiles, tanks, aircraft and other weaponry for use in its war on Ukraine, according to a US assessment:

[*US intelligence finding shows China surging equipment sales to Russia to help war effort in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-china-joe-biden-b2527980.html)

Pictured: Workers repair damaged power plant

The Russian glide bombs changing the face of the war in Ukraine

[*The Russian glide bombs changing the face of the war in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/glide-bomb-russia-ukraine-air-strikes-weapons-b2526347.html)

‘I live in constant fear that he will die’: Mother of jailed Putin critic says time running out to save him

[*Mother of jailed Putin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza says time running out to save him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-prison-kara-murza-cameron-navalny-b2526343.html)

Barrage of Russian missiles on Ukrainian cities leaves 200,000 people without power

[*Barrage of Russian missiles on Ukrainian cities leaves 200,000 without power*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-latest-kharkiv-attacks-b2526889.html)

Trump’s plan for peace? America under Putin’s thumb

[*Letters: Trump’s plan for peace? America under Putin’s thumb*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/letters/doanld-trump-ukraine-russia-vladmir-putin-david-cameron-b2527148.html)

Ukraine desperately needs more soldiers. War amputees are returning to the frontline

[*Ukraine desperately needs more soldiers. War amputees are returning to the frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-amputees-war-injured-russia-b2527576.html)

‘World-leading’ laser beam that travels at speed of light to be fitted on Royal Navy ships by 2027

[*Laser beam that travels at speed of light to be fitted on Royal Navy ships by 2027*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/royal-navy-laser-dragonfire-drone-mod-video-b2527605.html)

Russia’s glide bombs are devastating Ukraine’s border towns – but residents are digging in

[*Kyiv’s troops dig in as hundreds of Putin’s bombs hit northeastern border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-air-strikes-bombs-weapons-b2527178.html)

British military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian drones

[*Military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-military-laser-ukraine-b2527367.html)

Two people injured in Ukrainian drone attack on Russian city

Two people were injured and buildings damaged in a Ukrainian drone attack on a Russian city as Putin mocked peace talks between the two countries.

Six drones struck Russia’s Belgorod oblast, which is located on Ukraine’s border, on Friday morning, according to the region’s governor.

Russian air defence shot down four of the drones, said governor Vyacheslav Gladkov. One caused a grass fire on the outskirts of Belgorod city, while the other struck the administrative building.

US-China competition to field military drone swarms could fuel global arms race

[*US-China competition to field military drone swarms could fuel global arms race*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/china-ap-pentagon-taiwan-washington-b2527684.html)

Pro-Russian US national missing in eastern Ukraine, say police

A pro-Kremlin US national described as a “war correspondent” by Russian media is missing in eastern Ukraine.

Russell Bentley, born in 1960 and a supporter of Russian forces in Ukraine, went missing on 8 April in Donetsk, Ukraine.

The authorities did not provide details on his last known whereabouts or the circumstances surrounding his disappearance.

Thousands of Russian soldiers are fleeing Putin’s war in Ukraine – they have nowhere to go

[*Thousands of Russian soldiers are fleeing Putin’s war but with nowhere to go next*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-soldiers-deserted-ukraine-war-b2527571.html)

Trypilska: Russian attack destroys one of Ukraine’s largest power plants

[*Trypilska: Russian attack destroys one of Ukraine’s largest power plants*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/trypilska-power-plant-ukraine-kyiv-russia-b2527622.html)

US House speaker in talks with White House on advancing Ukraine aid

House Speaker Mike Johnson is negotiating with the White House as he prepares for the treacherous task of advancing wartime funding for Ukraine and Israel through the House, a top House Republican said.House Republican Leader Steve Scalise told reporters that Johnson had been talking with White House officials about a package that would deviate from the Senate’s $95 billion foreign security package and include several Republican demands.

It comes after Johnson has delayed for months on advancing aid that would provide desperately needed ammunition and weaponry for Kyiv, trying to find the right time to advance a package that will be a painful political lift.“There’s been no agreement reached,” Scalise said. “Obviously there would have to an agreement reached not just with the White House, but with our own members.”

Russia’s glide bombs are devastating Ukraine’s border towns – but residents are digging in

[*Kyiv’s troops dig in as hundreds of Putin’s bombs hit northeastern border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-air-strikes-bombs-weapons-b2527178.html)

Support from ‘indispensable’ US is vital for Ukraine’s survival, Japan PM says

Ukraine risks collapsing under Russia’s onslaught without American support and Washington should overcome its “self-doubt”, Japan’s prime minister told US lawmakers.

Fumio Kishida urged Americans not to doubt the country’s “indispensable” role in world affairs, and said Tokyo was undertaking historic military upgrades to support its ally.

Mr Kishida also warned a Russian victory in Ukraine could embolden China and spark a new crisis in East Asia.

‘I live in constant fear that he will die’: Mother of jailed Putin critic says time running out to save him

[*Mother of jailed Putin critic Vladimir Kara-Murza says time running out to save him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-prison-kara-murza-cameron-navalny-b2526343.html)

Pictured: Fire crews rush to extinguish power plant fire

Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at all

[*Editorial: Donald Trump’s plan for peace in Ukraine means no peace at all*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/donald-trump-david-cameron-ukraine-peace-plan-putin-b2526630.html)

Putin mocks peace conference

Vladimir Putin has mocked planned Ukraine peace talks and claimed Russia would never accept “any schemes that have nothing to do with reality”.

Switzerland said it would host a peace conference in June to help chart a path toward peace in Ukraine after more than two years of fighting.

But Putin claimed Moscow hadn’t been invited to join the talks, while pointing at Swiss recognition that a peace process can’t happen without Russia.

“They aren’t inviting us there. Moreover, they think there is nothing for us to do there, but at the same time they say that’s it’s impossible to decide anything without us. It would have been funny if it weren’t so sad,” Putin said.

Barrage of Russian missiles on Ukrainian cities leaves 200,000 people without power

[*Barrage of Russian missiles on Ukrainian cities leaves 200,000 without power*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-latest-kharkiv-attacks-b2526889.html)

Major power plant near Kyiv completely destroyed

A major power plant near Kyiv has been completely destroyed by Russian strikes in a “terrifying” attack, an energy company said.

Centrenergo chairman Andriy Hota said Trypillya power plant was hit by multiple drones -as part of an attack which saw 80 missiles and drones hit various sites across Ukraine.

Mr Hota said Thursday morning’s strikes destroyed “the transformer, the turbines, the generators. They destroyed 100 per cent”.

British military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian drones

The production of [*laser energy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/laser-weapons-war-raytheon-uk-b2458158.html) and [*radio waves*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/radio-waves) – viewed once as weapons of the future – are being fast-tracked in Britain for the battlefields of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and [*Red Sea passages*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/red-sea-ship-stranded-houthis-b2488111.html) coming under Houthi attacks.

[*The DragonFire system, which uses a beam to hit and destroy targets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/laser-weapon-uk-blasts-drones-b2483750.html) at the [*speed of light*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/speed-of-light) , and radio frequency hits taking out an adversary’s power supplies, will be tested by the Royal Navy and the Army next month in preparation for operational deployment.

The system, which the [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-war-defence-failure-b2524560.html) holds is world-leading, is due to be operational in three years time. But defence secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) holds that one could not wait to get a system absolutely perfect in such dangerous times, and getting them ready for combat in the fastest time possible is the priority.

Kim Sengupta reports:

[*Military laser could appear on front line in Ukraine to take down Russian drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-military-laser-ukraine-b2527367.html)

US cyber agency says Russian hackers used Microsoft access to steal government emails

The U.S. Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency said Russian government-backed hackers have used their access to Microsoft’s email system to steal correspondence between officials and the tech giant, an emergency directive by the U.S. watchdog released on Thursday showed.

In the directive dated April 2, the agency warned that hackers were exploiting authentication details shared by email to try to break into Microsoft’s customer systems, including those of an unspecified number of government agencies.

The warning that government agencies are being targeted using stolen Microsoft emails follows the company’s announcement in March that it was still wrestling with the intruders, which it nicknames “Midnight Blizzard.”

That disclosure, which set alarm bells ringing across the cybersecurity industry, was followed just last week by a report from the U.S. Cyber Safety Review Board which said that a separate hack -blamed on China -had been preventable, faulting the company for cybersecurity lapses and a deliberate lack of transparency.

CISA declined to name agencies that might have been affected.

FBI worried about terror attack after Russian concert massacre

The FBI is concerned about the possibility of an organised attack in the United States similar to the one that killed scores of people at a Russian concert hall last month, the bureau’s director plans to tell a House of Representatives panel on Thursday.

“Looking back over my career in law enforcement, I’d be hard-pressed to think of a time where so many threats to our public safety and national security were so elevated all at once,” Christopher Wray is set to tell lawmakers at budget hearing on Thursday.

“But that is the case as I sit here today.”

The March 22 attack on a concert hall in a Moscow suburb killed at least 144 people, the deadliest in Russia in 20 years. A branch of the Islamic State militant group claimed responsibility, but Russian President Vladimir Putin, without citing evidence, has sought to blame Ukraine.

Russia’s glide bombs are devastating Ukraine’s border towns – but residents are digging in

Driving from the northwestern [*Ukrainian city of Sumy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-news-latest-putin-drones-b2526946.html) to [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , around 177km south (110 miles), along a road that roughly parallels the border with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , the damage from [*Moscow’s relentless bombardment is stark*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/glide-bomb-russia-ukraine-air-strikes-weapons-b2526347.html).

The [*road is scarred by potholes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-latest-kharkiv-attacks-b2526889.html) and craters from shells, rockets and bombs – with mud everywhere, churned up by heavy military vehicles.

This is agricultural country. In some fields Ukrainian soldiers are building bunkers and defences of razor wire and concrete “dragon’s teeth” – to ensnare tanks. In others, tractors drive on freshly-ploughed soil for planting with wheat, sunflowers, rape seed and other crops.

Near the community of Krasnopillya, about 40km (25 miles) from Sumy, a soldier said a glide bomb dropped by a Russian plane had killed a civilian a few days earlier. He advised: “Don’t listen to music in your car. Pay attention to any sounds because there’s everything flying around in the air here – Russian drones, planes, artillery. Yesterday a [glide] bomb landed close by and left a crater two metres deep.”

[*Kyiv’s troops dig in as hundreds of Putin’s bombs hit northeastern border with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-air-strikes-bombs-weapons-b2527178.html)

‘A battle for democracy’: Ukraine bishop urges UK and US to keep supporting fight against Russia

The bishop for Ukraine in London has urged the UK and the US to “honour their pledges” and not forget that Ukraine is fighting Russia to save the “rule of law and democracy”.

In a major intervention, Bishop Kenneth Nowakowski said Ukraine was not asking for soldiers on the ground but for funding to [*continue fighting Russian president Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-news-latest-putin-drones-nuclear-b2526352.html).

Two years ago, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched a devastating full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , capturing nearly a quarter of the country and displacing more than 10 million people. There are now at least six million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Europe, including around 250,000 in the UK.

“This is not just a battle for Ukraine,” the Catholic bishop told The Independent. “It is the battle for rule of law, democracy and freedoms that we have all taken advantage of. That we stand to lose.

Bel Trew reports:

[*Ukraine bishop urges UK and US to keep supporting fight against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-bishop-uk-us-russia-cameron-b2526534.html)

Ukraine passes controversial mobilisation bill to boost troop numbers

Ukraine’s parliament has passed a controversial mobilisation bill as it seeks more troops to fight against Vladimir Putin’s invading forces – after a general said that Russian soldiers outnumbered Kyiv’s by up to ten times on the battlefield in the east.

The legislation, which must be signed by president Volodymyr Zelensky before it becomes law, is seen as crucial for Ukraine to address what military analysts say are major manpower problems.

Tom Watling reports:

[*Ukraine passes controversial mobilisation bill to boost troop numbers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-mobilisation-law-military-losses-b2527076.html)

IAEA chief says Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant attacks risk dangerous shift in war

Drone attacks on the Russian-held Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine must stop as they could pose “a new and gravely dangerous” stage in the war, the chief of the UN nuclear watchdog said.

Drones attacked Zaporizhzhia, Europe’s biggest nuclear power plant, on Sunday, in the worst such incident since November 2022. Nuclear safety was not compromised, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said.

“The most recent attacks... have shifted us into an acutely consequential juncture in this war,” IAEA director general Rafael Grossi told his agency’s 35-nation board of governors.

He called on the board to “unanimously to support the role of the IAEA in monitoring” principles aimed at preventing an accident at the plant, including that it not be attacked.

Since no draft resolutions have been submitted to the Board meeting, it is likely to boil down to an exchange of statements by the countries convening behind closed doors in Vienna.

“We are meeting today, and I will meet with the UN Security Council next week, because it is of paramount importance to ensure these reckless attacks do not mark the beginning of a new and gravely dangerous front of the war,” Mr Grossi said, adding: “Strikes must cease.”

Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused one another of targeting the plant since Russia seized it weeks after it invaded Ukraine. Both countries requested an emergency meeting of the IAEA’s Board soon after Sunday’s attack.

Putin mocks planned Ukraine conference

Vladimir Putin mocked a scheduled round of Ukraine peace talks in Switzerland, warning that Moscow will not accept any enforced plans that ignore its interests.Switzerland’s government is hosting a high-level international conference in June to help chart a path toward peace in Ukraine after more than two years of fighting, and expressed hope that Russia might join in the peace process someday.Mr Putin charged that Russia hadn’t been invited to join June’s talks, while pointing at Swiss recognition that a peace process can’t happen without Russia.“They aren’t inviting us there,” Mr Putin said. “Moreover, they think there is nothing for us to do there, but at the same time they say that’s it’s impossible to decide anything without us. It would have been funny if it weren’t so sad.”Russia has dismissed Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky’s peace formula requiring Moscow to pull back its troops, pay compensation to Ukraine and face an international tribunal for its action.Speaking during Thursday’s meeting with Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko in Moscow, Mr Putin said that Russia is open for negotiations, but will never accept “any schemes that have nothing to do with reality.”

Kremlin says any talks on Ukraine without Russia are meaningless

Kremlin Spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Thursday that any negotiations on Ukraine without Russia were meaningless.

“We have repeatedly said that negotiations without Russia were meaningless... President Putin has repeatedly emphasized that we remain open to the negotiation process,” Peskov said.

The Swiss government will host a two-day high-level conference in June aimed at achieving peace in Ukraine, it said on Wednesday, although Russia has made clear it will not take part in the initiative.

Ukraine's parliament passes a controversial law to boost much-needed conscripts as war drags on

Ukraine’s parliament on Thursday passed a controversial law on how the country will call up new soldiers at a time when it needs to replenish depleted forces that are increasingly struggling to fend off Russia’s advance.The law was passed against a backdrop of an escalating Russian campaign that has devastated Ukraine’s energy infrastructure in recent weeks. Authorities said overnight missile and drone attacks completely destroyed the Trypilska thermal power plant, the largest power-generating facility in the region of the country’s capital.Two years after Russia’s full-scale invasion captured nearly a quarter of Ukraine, the stakes could not be higher for Kyiv. After a string of victories in the first year of the war, fortunes have turned for the Ukrainian military, which is dug in, outgunned and outnumbered.The country desperately needs more troops — and more ammunition — at a time when doubts about the supply of Western aid are increasing.The mobilization law was first envisioned after Ukraine’s summer counteroffensive failed to gain significant ground last year — and authorities realized the country was in for a longer fight.In December, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine’s military wanted to mobilize up to 500,000 more troops. Army chief Oleksandr Syrskyi has since revised that figure down because soldiers can be rotated from the rear. But officials have not said how many are needed.The law — which was watered down from its original draft — will make it easier to identify every draft-eligible man in the country, where many have dodged conscription by avoiding contact with authorities.

Four injured in strike on Kharviv village

The Kharkiv Regional Prosecutor’s Office has said four civilians were injured as a result of an airstrike on the village of Velyki Prokhody.

“According to the investigation, on April 11, at about 4pm the Russian Armed Forces conducted an airstrike on the village of Velyki Prokhody, Kharkiv district. A 75-year-old man received shrapnel wounds and was hospitalized.

“Two women suffered acute stress reactions. Another resident sustained minor injuries, medics treated her on the spot,” the statement said on Telegram.

Earlier three people were killed in the shelling of Lyptsi in the Kharkiv district.

Zelensky thanks President of Poland for consistent support

President Zelensky is said to have asked for more Patriot air defences in a meeting with EU leaders.

Kyiv relies heavily on Western Patriot systems as it does not have sophisticated air defences of its own. It needs 26 units of the system in total to cover the country -and at least seven urgently. Ukraine has already warned of [*dwindling*](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/ukraine-may-run-out-air-defence-missiles-if-russia-keeps-up-bombardment-2024-04-06/) air defence missiles.

He said on Facebook: “During our meeting, I briefed President of Poland [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.facebook.com/andrzejduda?__tn__=-%5DK) on Russia’s latest missile attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities and the dire situation in Kharkiv.

“Ukraine urgently requires increased support from partners. First and foremost, in air defence.

“We also discussed preparations for the Global Peace Summit in Switzerland, cooperation on Ukraine’s EU and NATO accession, and the drafting of a bilateral security agreement.

“I thank Poland for its consistent support for Ukraine and continued defence assistance.”

President Andrzej Duda said that Poland had no Patriots to offer Ukraine but that they had discussed supplying Soviet-era missiles.“We talked with Zelenskiy about a certain stock of Soviet-era missiles which we have in our warehouses and we have talked about handing them over,” Duda said.

Click [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-putin-b2528526.html) to read the full blog on The Independent's website

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2024

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[*Budget a ‘fundamental reform’ of public finances, Irish finance minister says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69C6-BV71-DY4H-K21J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1613 words

**Byline:** Cillian Sherlock

**Highlight:** The Government insists the 14 billion euro budget package revealed on Tuesday balances current needs with the future wellbeing of the economy.

**Body**

[*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Minister for Finance Michael McGrath has said the creation of major multi-billion euro long-term investment funds in [*Budget*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budget) 2024 represents a “fundamental reform in how we plan the management of public finances”.

Mr McGrath 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 Future Ireland Fund is designed to meet the costs of running the State in future as age-related spending is projected to surpass seven billion euro by the end of the decade.

A total of 0.8% of Ireland’s [*GDP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gdp) will be invested into the fund every year between 2024 and 2035, for an expected total of 100 billion euro.

A separate Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund will grow by two billion euro for seven years.

It is designed to provide resources for capital investment in times of fiscal and economic stress.

Mr McGrath said: This government has taken action to manage the transition to a climate neutral and climate resilient society in the knowledge that it will have macroeconomic and fiscal implications.”

"I believe there is so much in our country we can be proud of.Full employment, a growing economy, budget surpluses, a national debt that is falling, a population that is rising, and a plan to secure the future."Minister [*@mmcgrathtd*](https://twitter.com/mmcgrathtd?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) commends his first Budget to the House [*pic.twitter.com/dcLy9IERgQ*](https://t.co/dcLy9IERgQ) — Fianna Fáil (@fiannafailparty) [*October 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/fiannafailparty/status/1711758856462766411?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Overall, the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) insists the 14-billion-euro Budget package revealed on Tuesday balances current needs with the future wellbeing of the economy.Mr McGrath said Budget 2024 was framed against a backdrop of “global uncertainty”.The package agreed by the Fianna Fail, Fine Gael and 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 said: “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.”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 slowsPaschal Donohoe, Public Expenditure MinisterThe 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.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 relief on rental income of 3,000 euro for 2024, 4,000 euro for 2025, and 5,000 euro for 2026 and 2027 at the standard rate – as long as landlords stay in the market for that full, four-year period. This could see landlords saving 600 euro in the first year, ultimately rising to 1,000 euro per year.That measure has prompted opposition criticism that the Budget is favouring landlords over renters.Elsewhere in housing, the Help-to-Buy scheme is being extended to the end of 2025.In pay packets, the national minimum wage will increase by 1.40 euro per hour to 12.70 from January 1.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.The National Childcare Scheme will see a further 25% reduction in childcare costs from September next year.The 9% reduced VAT rate for gas and electricity has been extended for another 12 months.A revised bank levy is planned for 2024, with the aim of raising 200 million euro.The Budget will see the temporary 1,000 euro reduction to the 3,000 euro student contribution to fees extended for a further year.Students whose households have a joint income below 100,000 euro can apply for a grant through Susi (Student Universal Support Ireland) to secure a further 500 euro fee reduction.Mr McGrath also deferred a planned fuel excise increase which was due to happen on October 31. This will be somewhat tempered by an already-agreed rise in carbon tax rates set to impact motorists at the pumps.There was a 75-cent increase in excise duty and VAT on a pack of 20 cigarettes.We needed a Budget for renters, instead we got a Budget for landlordsPearse Doherty, Sinn FeinIn further expenditure measures, 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 three 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.We recognise ongoing concerns about the Cost of Living & the impact of inflation. This Budget helps w/ this, w/ better public services, w/additional social welfare payments & w/giving more children a better start in life. We will do this while keeping our finances & country safe [*https://t.co/fcU6UnDtzP*](https://t.co/fcU6UnDtzP) [*pic.twitter.com/pQWOf6mVZk*](https://t.co/pQWOf6mVZk) — Paschal Donohoe (@Paschald) [*October 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Paschald/status/1711753181456208154?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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.

Minister Donohoe said an increase in core funding for health “needs to be fully realised with a focus on productivity, better financial governance and consolidating funded capacity”, following criticism over a projected one billion euro overrun in the department for 2023.

No urgency, no vision, no compassion... You’ve just decided to forget about health

Pearse Doherty

Opposition politicians immediately criticised the Government’s planning around housing, healthcare and tax policy.

Sinn Fein finance spokesman Pearse Doherty said the Budget was a “squandered opportunity” to deal with inequality.

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*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/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

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[*Senior Tory suggests 'war cabinet' could be established if PM is deposed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6580-Y491-JBNF-W512-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 18, 2022 Monday 1:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1087 words

**Byline:** Amy Gibbons

**Highlight:** Sir Roger Gale said the 'interim administration' could be led by the deputy prime minister.

**Body**

A "war cabinet" could be established in place of a leadership contest to avoid detracting attention from the crisis in Ukraine if [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) steps down or is deposed, a senior Tory has suggested.

Sir [*Roger Gale*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roger-gale) said the "interim administration" could be led by the deputy prime minister, [*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) , who briefly took the reins in 2020 when Mr Johnson was hospitalised with Covid-19.

The veteran Conservative MP previously submitted a letter of no confidence in the [*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) , which remains "on the table", but has since said it is not the right time for a leadership election, given the situation in Ukraine.

He is now keen to establish if it may be possible to put a contest on hold if Mr Johnson resigns or is forced out of his job.

It comes as the PM enters another week primed to defend his premiership as he prepares to insist to [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) there are bigger issues to focus on than the partygate saga.

But he will also need to win over the public, with new polling suggesting he is largely perceived in a negative light.

In the survey carried out for The Times, JL Partners asked nearly 2,000 people to sum up their view of the Prime Minister in a few words.

Comments from 72% of respondents were negative, the newspaper said, while the most commonly used word was "liar".

While he acknowledged the UK is not currently at war, Sir Roger told the PA news agency "we're pretty damn close to it". He said an alternative name for the arrangement could be a "crisis cabinet".

"I don't actually know whether what I'm proposing is possible legally," he said.

"But if Johnson were to resign - he probably won't - but if he were to resign, then ... if the deputy prime minister led a 'war cabinet' to deal with the crisis and get us through to the point when we could then have a proper leadership election, that is a possible way forward.

"What I don't know is what the situation is if the Prime Minister refused - suppose it was necessary for the Prime Minister to go but he won't resign, then insofar as I'm aware the only way of doing that is by getting the 50 letters ... and then hope that you can win a no-confidence motion, which is not certain."

He added: "What I don't know under the rules is if you have a no-confidence motion and the Prime Minister goes, do you then have to have a leadership contest?

"Or could you have what I'm suggesting, which would be an interim administration - a Conservative administration, but an interim administration - to see us through?"

Despite being fined by the Metropolitan Police for his birthday bash held in the Cabinet room in June 2020, while coronavirus restrictions were in place, the Prime Minister is expected to tell MPs on Tuesday that this should not be the focus of politicians.

If the deputy prime minister led a 'war cabinet' to deal with the crisis ... that is a possible way forward

Sir Roger Gale, Tory MP

Sir Roger said if "another three or four fines" were to follow, and the anticipated Sue Gray report into the saga is "damning", then the point could be reached where "all credibility is now gone - he has got to go".

Meanwhile, former archbishop of Canterbury Dr Rowan Williams said that, without asking for repentance and forgiveness, the Prime Minister's position is not sustainable.

He told Times Radio: "Because I don't believe that we should rule out the possibility of, to put it in religious terms, repentance and forgiveness, then it's perfectly possible for somebody to say, 'Yes, I got that badly wrong. I accept the consequence. I accept that this has damaged trust. I'm asking for another chance.' But otherwise, I don't see it's a sustainable position, myself."

Asked if he would recommend the Prime Minister confess in church over the issue, he said: "Yes, of course. Yes. A breach of the law, which has damaging consequences for society, which damages trust, which damages the integrity and credibility not only of an individual but of the Government, yes, it seems to be perfectly appropriate for the confessional."

Sir Roger told PA he has not changed his mind on the PM's position since submitting his letter to the backbench 1922 Committee, but there has been a shift in circumstances which means a leadership contest is not currently appropriate in his view.

"When I was last speaking there wasn't a war in Ukraine," he said.

"Now there is. And that war is potentially nuclear - it really is that serious."

He added: "If there's a leadership contest, there's no coronation this time: there's no one person who is going to obviously take over as leader of the Conservative Party.

If there's a leadership contest, there's no coronation this time: there's no one person who is going to obviously take over as leader of the Conservative Party

Sir Roger Gale, Tory MP

"You can put the deputy prime minister in as interim prime minister, as happened when Johnson was ill. That's perfectly achievable because you don't have to have an election to do that.

"But if you have a leadership contest, then what are we talking about? Liz Truss, Foreign Secretary; Ben Wallace, Defence Secretary; Michael Gove, supposed to be in charge of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and levelling up; very possibly Sajid Javid, Health Secretary; and others from the Cabinet ... possibly still even Rishi Sunak.

"Are we seriously saying that in the middle of this crisis we're going to take all those eyes off the ball?"

He said: "If the Prime Minister's credibility is shot to hell and there has to be something done, then my suggestion for a way forward would be an interim administration led by the deputy prime minister, and what effectively I have called, in shorthand, a 'war cabinet'.

"Now, at the moment we are not technically, of course, at war, but we're pretty damn close to it. And I think that might be a viable way forward.

"But I haven't put this to anybody - I haven't tried to fly it within the 1922 Committee or anything."

Mr Johnson is said to be preparing to make a statement in the Commons once MPs return to Westminster following the Easter recess.

The Times reported that the PM was set to focus on Ukraine, the cost-of-living crisis and a trip to India which will focus on defence and trade.

As well as addressing MPs in the Chamber, the newspaper said Mr Johnson would speak to a meeting of the entire Conservative parliamentary party on Tuesday evening.

Sir Lindsay Hoyle, the Commons Speaker, is also expected to decide if to allow a vote on whether to refer Mr Johnson to the Privileges Committee - which would decide whether he had misled the House over his partygate explanations.

**Load-Date:** April 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*A chilling Russian cyber aim in Ukraine: Digital dossiers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65B3-5CH1-DY4H-K4B2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 28, 2022 Thursday 5:09 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1343 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russia's relentless digital assaults on Ukraine have caused considerably less disruption than many anticipated

**Body**

Russia's relentless digital assaults on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) may have caused less damage than many anticipated. But most of its hacking is focused on a different goal that gets less attention but has chilling potential consequences: data collection.

Ukrainian agencies breached on the eve of the Feb. 24 invasion include the Ministry of Internal Affairs, which oversees the police, national guard and border patrol. A month earlier, a national database of automobile insurance policies was raided during a diversionary cyberattack that defaced Ukrainian websites.

The hacks, paired with prewar data theft, likely armed Russia with extensive details on much of Ukraine's population, cybersecurity and military intelligence analysts say. It's information Russia can use to identify and locate Ukrainians most likely to resist an occupation, and potentially target them for internment or worse.

"Fantastically useful information if you're planning an occupation," Jack Watling, a military analyst at the U.K. think tank Royal United Services Institute, said of the auto insurance data, "knowing exactly which car everyone drives and where they live and all that."

As the digital age evolves, information dominance is increasingly wielded for social control, as [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) has shown in its repression of the Uyghur minority. It was no surprise to Ukrainian officials that a prewar priority for Russia would be compiling information on the citizenry.

"The idea was to kill or imprison these people at the early stages of occupation," Victor Zhora, a senior Ukrainian cyber defense official, alleged.

Aggressive data collection accelerated just ahead of the invasion, with hackers serving Russia's military increasingly targeting individual Ukrainians, according to Zhora's agency, the State Service for Special Communications and Information Protection.

Serhii Demediuk, deputy secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, said via email that personal data continues to be a priority for Russian hackers as they attempt more government network breaches: "Cyberwarfare is really in the hot phase nowadays."

There is little doubt political targeting is a goal. Ukraine says Russian forces have killed and kidnapped local leaders where they grab territory.

Demediuk was stingy with specifics but said Russian cyberattacks in mid-January and as the invasion commenced sought primarily to "destroy the information systems of government agencies and critical infrastructure" and included data theft.

The Ukrainian government says the Jan. 14 auto insurance hack resulted in the pilfering of up to 80% of Ukrainian policies registered with the Motor Transport Bureau.

Demediuk acknowledged that the Ministry of Internal Affairs was among government agencies breached Feb. 23. He said data was stolen but would not say from which agencies, only that it "has not led to significant consequences, especially when it comes to data on servicemen or volunteers." Security researchers from ESET and other cybersecurity firms that work with Ukraine said the networks were compromised months earlier, allowing ample time for stealthy theft.

The data collection by hacking is a work long in progress.

A unit of Russia's FSB intelligence agency that researchers have dubbed Armageddon has been doing it for years out of [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) , which Russia seized in 2014. Ukraine says it sought to infect more than 1,500 Ukrainian government computer systems.

Since October it has tried to breach and maintain access to government, military, judiciary and law enforcement agencies as well as nonprofits, with a primary goal of "exfiltrating sensitive information," [*Microsoft*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/microsoft) said in a Feb. 4 blog post. That included unnamed organizations "critical to emergency response and ensuring the security of Ukrainian territory," plus humanitarian aid distribution.

Post-invasion, hackers have targeted European organizations that aid ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, according to Zhora and the cybersecurity firm Proofpoint. Authorities have not specified which organizations or what may have been stolen.

Yet another attack, on April 1, crippled Ukraine's National Call Center, which runs a hotline for complaints and inquiries on a wide array of matters: corruption, domestic abuse, people displaced by the invasion, war veteran benefits. Used by hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, it issues COVID-19 vaccine certificates and collects callers' personal data including emails, addresses and phone numbers.

Adam Meyers, senior vice president of intelligence at the cybersecurity firm CrowdStrike, believes the attack may, like many others, have a greater psychological than intelligence-gathering impact - aiming to degrade Ukrainians' trust in their institutions.

"Make them scared that when the Russians take over, if they don't cooperate, the Russians are going to know who they are, where they are and come after them," Meyers said.

The attack knocked the center offline for at least three days, center director Marianna Vilshinska said: "We couldn`t work. Neither phones nor chatbots worked. They broke down all the system."

Hackers calling themselves the Cyber Army of Russia claimed to steal personal data on 7 million people in the attack. However, Vilshinska denied they breached the database with users' personal information, while confirming that a contact list the hackers posted online of more than 300 center employees was genuine.

Spear-phishing attacks in recent weeks have focused on military, national and local officials, aimed at stealing credentials to open government data troves. Such activity relies heavily on Ukraine's cellular networks, which Meyers of CrowdStrike said have been far too rich in intelligence for Russia to want to shut down.

On March 31, Ukraine's SBU intelligence agency said it had seized a "bot farm" in the eastern region of Dnipropretrovsk that was controlled remotely from Russia and sent text messages to 5,000 Ukrainian soldiers, police and SBU members urging them to surrender or sabotage their units. Agency spokesman Artem Dekhtiarenko said authorities were investigating how the phone numbers were obtained.

Gene Yoo, CEO of the cybersecurity firm ReSecurity, said it likely was not difficult: Subscriber databases of major Ukrainian wireless companies have been available for sale by cybercriminals on the dark web for some time - as they are for many countries.

If Russia is successful at taking control of more of eastern Ukraine, stolen personal data will be an asset. Russian occupiers have already collected passport information, a top Ukrainian presidential adviser tweeted recently, that could help organize separatist referendums.

Ukraine, for its part, appears to have done significant data collection - quietly assisted by the U.S., the U.K., and other partners - targeting Russian soldiers, spies and police, including rich geolocation data.

Demediuk, the top security official, said the country knows "exactly where and when a particular serviceman crossed the border with Ukraine, in which occupied settlement he stopped, in which building he spent the night, stole and committed crimes on our land."

"We know their cell phone numbers, the names of their parents, wives, children, their home addresses," who their neighbors are, where they went to school and the names of their teachers, he said.

Analysts caution that some claims about data collection from both sides of the conflict may be exaggerated.

But in recordings posted online by Ukrainian Digital Transformation Minister Mikhailo Fedorov, callers are heard phoning the far-flung wives of Russian soldiers and posing as Russian state security officials to say parcels shipped to them from Belarus were looted from Ukrainian homes.

In one, a nervous-sounding woman acknowledges receiving what she calls souvenirs - a woman's bag, a keychain.

The caller tells her she shares criminal liability, that her husband "killed people in Ukraine and stole their stuff."

She hangs up.

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[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) data journalist Larry Fenn in New York and Inna Verenytsia in Kyiv, Ukraine, contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** April 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 3 am*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6550-BPY1-JBNF-W4VH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 4, 2022 Monday 6:35 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1281 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR - As foreign outrage mounts over evidence of possible executions and other atrocities by Russian forces in Ukraine, Germany's defense minister says [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) must consider stepping up penalties for Moscow by boycotting its gas exports, an economically painful step European leaders previously avoided. Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said Monday that "we strongly condemn attacks on civilians" following reports of bodies found with signs of torture in areas abandoned by Russian forces. New Zealand Prime Minister [*Jacinda Ardern*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jacinda-ardern) called reports of rape and other atrocities by Russian soldiers "beyond reprehensible." By Oleksandr Stashevskyi and Nebi Qena. SENT: 1,130 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST.

UKRAINE WAR REFUGEES INTEGRATION - Having escaped from Russian shelling, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are now focused on building new lives - temporarily or permanently. Countries neighboring their homeland, like Poland and Romania, are sparing no effort to help them integrate and feel needed in the new environment. By Monika Scislowska and Stephen McGrath. SENT: 940 words, photos. Also see MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR below. For full coverage.

HONG KONG - Hong Kong leader [*Carrie Lam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/carrie-lam) said she wouldn't seek a second term after a rocky five years marked by huge protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed dissent and most recently a COVID-19 wave that overwhelmed the health system. Her successor will be picked in May and the city's security chief during the 2019 protests is among the possible choices. By Zen Soo and Vincent Yu. SENT: 620 words, photos.

SACRAMENTO MASS SHOOTING - The usual crowds filled the streets as bars and nightclubs closed in the downtown section of California's capital city of Sacramento when the sound of rapid-fire gunshots sent people running in terror. In a matter of seconds, the latest U.S. mass shooting had left six people dead and 12 wounded. Police were searching for at least two shooters and trying to determine a motive. By Adam Beam. SENT: 750 words, photos, video.

CONGRESS-SPENDING-HOME DISTRICT PROJECTS - Home-district projects for members of Congress are back, sprinkled across the government-wide $1.5 trillion bill that President Joe Biden signed recently. An analysis by The Associated Press finds there were 4,975 of them worth $9.7 billion in the measure. By Alan Fram and Aaron M. Kessler. SENT: 1,830 words, photos. An abridged version of 950 words is also available. This is the Tuesday [*Spotlight*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spotlight).

MUSIC-GRAMMYS - Jon Batiste won album of the year honors for "We Are" at the Grammy Awards, giving him five trophies on a night that saw the '70s funk of Silk Sonic take record of the year and song of the year and newcomer Olivia Rodrigo take three awards. By Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. SENT: 1,220 words, photos, videos. With MUSIC-GRAMMYS-FASHION - Saweetie, Haddish lead Grammys red carpet in pink, sparkle; GRAMMYS-LIST.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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GRAMMYS-UKRAINE - Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy appeared in a video message at the Grammy Awards to ask for support in telling the story of Ukraine's invasion by Russia. SENT: 260 words, photo.

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MORE ON THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

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VIRUS OUTBREAK-CHINA - China has sent more than 10,000 health workers from across the country to Shanghai, including 2,000 military medical staff, as it struggles to stamp out a rapidly spreading COVID-19 outbreak in China's largest city. SENT: 400 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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PARK BODY-LOYAL DOG - Missing hiker's body found in LA park with dog by his side. SENT: 130 words, photos.

VIRUS-OUTBREAK-GERMANY-VACCINATION-FRAUD - Man in Germany gets 90 COVID-19 shots to sell forged passes. SENT: 440 words, photo.

BIDEN-OBAMA - Barack Obama to return to White House for health care event. SENT: 150 words, photo.

NASCAR-RICHMOND - Hamlin finally finds the Next Gen formula, wins at Richmond. SENT: 740 words, photos.

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WASHINGTON

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SUPREME COURT-NOMINATION - Democrats are launching a whirlwind week of votes and procedural maneuvers with the goal of confirming Ketanji Brown Jackson as the first Black woman on the Supreme Court by Friday. SENT: 620 words, photo. UPCOMING: 900 words after 10 a.m. committee meeting.

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NATIONAL

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SCHOOLS-MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID - A small but growing number of California teachers are learning how to spot warning signs of mental health risks and substance abuse in children, and how to prevent a tragedy. SENT: 1,820 words, photos. An abridged version of 840 words is also available.

[*CAPITOL*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) RIOT-POLICE OFFICER - A trial starts this week for a former Virginia police officer charged with storming the U.S. Capitol with a fellow officer who has agreed to cooperate with federal prosecutors. SENT: 880 words, photo.

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR-KIDNAPPING PLOT - Jurors will begin deliberations in the trial of four men accused of a brazen conspiracy to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer. SENT: 480 words, photos. UPCOMING: Deliberations begin at 8:30 a.m.

SCHOOL SHOOTING-FLORIDA - Jury selection in the deadliest mass shooting ever to go to trial will begin with preliminary screening for the panel that will determine whether Nikolas Cruz will be put to death for murdering 17 students and staff members at a Parkland, Florida, high school. SENT: 540 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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HUNGARY-ELECTION - Hungary's nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban declared victory in national elections, claiming a mandate for a fourth term as a still incomplete vote count showed a strong lead for his right-wing party. SENT: 1,020 words, photos.

COSTA RICA-ELECTION - A former finance minister who surprised many by making it into Costa Rica's presidential runoff vote has easily won that ballot and is to become the Central American country's new leader next month, while still fending off accusations of sexual harassment when he worked at the World Bank. SENT: 750 words, photos.

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HEALTH/SCIENCE

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SWEDEN-GREEN STEEL - Swedish steel giant SSAB has built a pilot plant to produce steel with hydrogen instead of coal. It's part of shift in the industry that's begun in Europe, as manufacturers try to reduce carbon dioxide from the metal in their supply chains. SENT: 850 words, photos.

CLIMATE-BIRD EGGS - Many species of birds are nesting and laying eggs nearly a month earlier than they did 100 years ago in the Chicago area and researchers believe climate change is behind it. UPCOMING: 300 words, photos, video by 6 a.m.

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BUSINESS/ECONOMY

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FINANCIAL MARKETS - Shares in Asia were mostly higher as gains carried over from an upbeat finish last week on Wall Street. By Business Writer Elaine Kurtenbach. SENT: 660 words, photos.

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SPORTS

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NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP - Dawn Staley and South Carolina buttoned up on defense and won their second national championship, stifling UConn for a 64-49 victory that ended the Huskies' undefeated streak in title games. By Basketball Writer Doug Feinberg. SENT: 880 words, photos.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Jerome Minerva can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, Wally Santana (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** April 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*In Pictures: Big Lunch celebrations across UK as coronation festivities continue*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-RHH1-JBNF-W4D6-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2023 Sunday 12:57 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 115 words

**Byline:** Pa Reporters

**Highlight:** The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh are attending a big lunch in Cranleigh.

**Body**

Thousands of people across the country are taking part in the Coronation Big Lunch to celebrate the crowning of the King and Queen.

A [*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) spokeswoman said that big lunches will take place from Saturday to Monday “in a nationwide act of celebration and friendship”.

The Duke and Duchess of [*Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/edinburgh) are attending a big lunch in [*Cranleigh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cranleigh) while the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence are visiting a community street party in Swindon. Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie are joining a big lunch in Windsor.

[*Prime Minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prime-minister) [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and his wife Akshata Murty hosted a Big Lunch in Downing Street for volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK and youth groups.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2023

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 3:20 am*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655M-8CM1-JBNF-W1H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 7, 2022 Thursday 7:10 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1265 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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ONLY ON AP

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MYANMAR-LIVING IN LIMBO - The young woman from Myanmar and her family now live amid the tall grasses of a riverbank on the Thai border, trapped in a physical no man's land between a country that does not want them and a country whose military could kill them. Like other Myanmar refugees fleeing mounting violence after a military takeover last February, she and her family left for neighboring Thailand. But Thailand has sent thousands of people from Myanmar back home, despite international refugee laws that forbid the forced return of people to countries where their lives may be in danger. By Victoria Milko and Kristen Gelineau. SENT: 1,610 words, photos. An abridged version of 1,000 words is also available.

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR - [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) was bracing to battle for control of its industrial east and appealing for more help from the West after [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) forces withdrew from the shattered outskirts of Kyiv to regroup. Authorities were urging people to immediately evacuate from the Donbas region before Russia intensifies its offensive. In Brussels, Ukraine's foreign minister urged NATO to provide more weapons for his war-torn country to help prevent further atrocities like those reported in the city of Bucha. By Adam Schreck. SENT: 1,110 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE-LATEST.

SUPREME COURT-NOMINATION - The [*Senate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/senate) is expected to vote as early as Thursday to confirm Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson to the Supreme Court. Three Republicans say they'll vote with Democrats to confirm the first Black woman on the nation's high court. By Mary Clare Jalonick. SENT: 500 words, photo. UPCOMING: 800 words after expected afternoon vote.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-MEDIA - Veteran journalists who have covered wars and terrorism and seen violence and death up close before said this week's horrific images from Bucha, Ukraine, stood out as particularly disturbing. They say sharing graphic photos and videos help deepen the public's understanding of what is going on, making it personal in a way that drone footage of burned-out buildings cannot. By Media Writer David Bauder. SENT: 1,060 words, photos. For full coverage.

SACRAMENTO-MASS SHOOTING - The mass killing that left six people dead and 12 wounded outside bars just blocks from California's Capitol last weekend was a gunfight involving at least five shooters from rival gangs, Sacramento police said. By Adam Beam and Brian Melley. SENT: 940 words, photos, videos.

DOLPHIN-DISEASE-DETECTIVES - To track a virus outbreak among East Coast dolphins, scientists are tracing the social networks of these playful animals in the Potomac River and Chesapeake Bay. By Science Writer Christina Larson. SENT: 1,110 words, photos, video.

MASTERS-TIGER'S LONG WALK - Five-time Masters champion [*Tiger Woods*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tiger-woods) will put his surgically repaired right leg to the test as he begins his pursuit of a sixth green jacket. By Sports Writer Will Graves. SENT: 930 words, photos. UPCOMING: Play begins at 8 a.m. Also see MASTERS-JAILED CHAMPION below.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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UKRAINE-REFUGEES-UNITED STATES - Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving daily have a message for family and friends in Europe: the fastest route to settle in the United States is booking a flight to Mexico. SENT: 960 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-FOCUS-ON-THE EAST-EXPLAINER - With Russian hopes for storming Kyiv and other major cities in northern Ukraine dashed by stiff resistance, Moscow has refocused its efforts on the country's east, seeking to make gains there and use them to dictate its terms in talks on ending the conflict. SENT: 1,140 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-NATO - Ukraine appealed to NATO for more weapons in its fight against Russia to help prevent further atrocities like those reported in the city of Bucha, and urged Germany to slash red tape so that more supplies can get in. SENT: 450 words, photos.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL - The U.N. General Assembly is voting on a U.S.-initiated resolution to suspend Russia from the world organization's leading human rights body over allegations that Russian soldiers killed civilians while retreating from the region around Ukraine's capital. SENT: 710 words, photos. UPCOMING: Session begins at 10 a.m.

CONGRESS-RUSSIA TRADE - The Senate takes up legislation to end normal trade relations with Russia and to ban the importation of its oil. SENT: 720 words, photo. UPCOMING: 900 words after vote, timing uncertain.

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MORE ON THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

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VIRUS OUTBREAK-CONGRESS-SPENDING - A bipartisan $10 billion measure funding the government's COVID-19 defenses stalls in the Senate and seems all but certain to be sidetracked until at least late this month. SENT: 750 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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FAKE FEDERAL AGENTS - U.S.: Two posed as agents, gave gifts to Secret Service officers. SENT: 360 words, photo.

[*RAPPER*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) ARRESTED-CONVICTION - Rapper Kidd Creole convicted of manslaughter in 2017 stabbing. SENT: 170 words, photo.

COLLEGE STUDENTS-EXPLOITED - Father who lived in college dorm convicted of abusing daughter's pals. SENT: 710 words, photos.

MISSING INDIANA COUPLE-NEVADA - Missing Indiana couple found after man dies in Nevada desert. SENT: 790 words, photo.

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WASHINGTON

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CAPITOL RIOT-CONTEMPT - The House votes to hold former Trump advisers Peter Navarro and Dan Scavino in contempt of Congress over their monthslong refusal to comply with subpoenas from the committee investigating the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. SENT: 1,010 words, photos. With CAPITOL RIOT-CONTEMPT-GLANCE.

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NATIONAL

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TEXAS-EXECUTION - A group of bipartisan Texas lawmakers visited a death row inmate whose execution they are trying to stop amid doubts about whether she fatally beat her 2-year-old daughter. SENT: 620 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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SOLOMON ISLANDS-CHINA - A security alliance between China and the Solomon Islands has sent shudders throughout the South Pacific, with many worried it could set off a large-scale military buildup or that Western animosity to the deal could play into China's hands. SENT: 1,250 words, photos. With PHILIPPINES-CHINA-TAIWAN-DISPUTED WATERS - China ship shadows research vessel, Filipino scientists wary.

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BUSINESS/ECONOMY

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FINANCIAL MARKETS - Asian shares tracked a retreat on Wall Street after details from last month's Federal Reserve meeting showed the central bank plans to be aggressive in fighting inflation. By Business Writer Elaine Kurtenbach. SENT: 690 words, photos.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS - The Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. By Business Writer Matt Ott. UPCOMING: 130 words after release of report at 8:30 a.m., photo.

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SPORTS

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MASTERS-JAILED CHAMPION - Angel Cabrera, winner of the 2009 Masters, is now sitting in an Argentine prison, serving two years for domestic abuse. By Sports Writer Tim Dahlberg. SENT: 790 words, photos.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Jerome Minerva can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, Shuji Kajiyama (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** April 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*For Jews fleeing Ukraine, Passover takes on new meaning*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:656P-YTN1-DY4H-K11M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 12, 2022 Tuesday 12:55 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1219 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Jews in war-torn Ukraine as well as those fleeing the country are getting ready to celebrate Passover on Friday

**Body**

"Good morning! Happy morning!" Rabbi Avraham Wolff exclaimed, with a big smile, as he walked into the Chabad synagogue in Odesa on a recent morning.

Russian missiles had just struck an oil refinery in the Ukrainian city, turning the sky charcoal gray. Hundreds were lining up outside his synagogue hoping to receive a kilo of matzah each for their Passover dinner tables. The unleavened flatbread, imperative at the ritual meal known as a Seder, is now hard to find in war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) amid the war and a crippling food shortage.

But the rabbi wanted no challenge to get him down - be it the lack of matzah or that he was missing his wife and children who had fled the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) port for [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) days ago.

"I need to smile for my community," Wolff said. "We need humor. We need hope."

Tens of thousands of Ukrainian [*Jews*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jews) have fled while about 80% remain in Ukraine, according to estimates from Chabad, one of the largest Hasidic Jewish organizations in the world. Inside and outside Ukraine, a nation steeped in Jewish history and heritage, people are preparing to celebrate Passover, which begins sundown on April 15. It's been a challenge, to say the least.

The holiday marks the liberation of Jewish people from slavery in ancient Egypt, and their exodus under the leadership of Moses. The story is taking on special meaning for thousands of Jewish ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who are living a dramatic story in real time.

Chabad, which has deep roots and a wide network in Ukraine, and other groups such as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) and the Jewish Federations of North America, have mobilized to help Ukrainian Jews celebrate Passover wherever they have sought refuge. In Ukraine, Chabad plans 52 public Seders welcoming about 9,000 people.

In Odesa, Wolff is preparing to host two large Seders - one in early evening at the Chabad synagogue for families with young children and a later Seder at a hotel where participants can stay the night, obeying a 9 p.m. curfew.

He's been waving in trucks loaded with Passover supplies - matzah from Israel, milk from France, meat from Britain.

"We may not all be together, but it's going to be an unforgettable Passover," Wolff said. "This year, we celebrate as one big Jewish family around the world."

JDC, which has evacuated more than 11,600 Jews from Ukraine, has shipped more than 2 tons of matzah, over 400 bottles of grape juice and over 700 pounds of kosher Passover food for refugees in Poland, Moldova, Hungary and Romania, said Chen Tzuk, the organization's director of operations in Europe, Asia and Africa. In Ukraine, their social service centers and corps of volunteers are distributing nearly 16 tons of matzah to elderly Jews and families in need, she said.

"Passover is something familiar and basic for Jewish people," Tzuk said. "For refugees who have left everything behind, it's important to be able celebrate this holiday with honor and dignity."

JDC is organizing in-person Seders in countries bordering Ukraine and elsewhere in Europe, she said, and is facilitating online Seders where it's too dangerous to gather in person.

The Jewish Federations of North America has set up a volunteer hub in support of refugees fleeing Ukraine; it's a partnership with the Jewish Agency for Israel, the JDC and IsrAID. Russian-speaking volunteers, such as Alina Spaulding, will help organize a Seder for 100 refugees at a hotel in Budapest.

Spaulding, a resident of Greensboro, North Carolina, fled Kharkiv, Ukraine, as a 5-year-old in the 1970s with her parents. She said the war has rekindled strong connections to Ukraine.

"My mom showed me a photo of me with my grandpa on a street that was recently bombed," Spaulding said. "We talked about the university in Kharkiv where my mom and dad went, which was also hit. Suddenly, it all felt so personal."

Spaulding believes spending Passover with refugees will be "an experience to remember."

"Part of the magic of Passover is finding your own story," she said. "We're in the middle of a modern-day exodus. I can't even imagine the stories I will hear."

Celebrating a holiday can give people a rush of hope and happiness even in grim situations, said Rabbi Jacob Biderman, who leads Chabad activities throughout Austria, including a center in Vienna that is sheltering about 800 Ukrainian Jews. Days after refugees reached his center, Biderman led a joyous celebration of Purim, a festival commemorating the deliverance of Jews from a planned massacre in ancient Persia.

"The look on their faces changed from sorrow to joy... Their eyes lit up," Biderman said. "It gave them a sense of normalcy, dignity and the belief that their spiritual life is something no one can take away from them."

That fueled Biderman's determination to provide a memorable Passover Seder for the refugees.

Dr. Yaacov Gaissinovitch, his wife, Elizabeth, and their three children - ages 11, 8 and 4 - will be part of that celebration. They fled the Ukrainian city of Dnipro by car on Friday, March 4. Gaissinovitch, a urologist and mohel who performs the Jewish rite of circumcision, said it pained him, as an observant Jew, to drive on Shabbat - a forbidden act on the day of rest and prayer except when lives are at stake.

"I drove nonstop for 12 hours to Moldova to save us all," he said. "We sang all the Shabbat songs in the car. It was very, very hard."

In Dnipro, Gaissinovitch had his offices in the sprawling Menorah Center, which serves as a center of Jewish life, housing a synagogue, shops, restaurants, museums and the office of the city's chief rabbi.

After a month of being severed from everything familiar, the Chabad center in Vienna has been a blessing, Gaissinovitch said.

"We've been accepted here very warmly," he said. "After being disconnected for days, the children have been able to see that our life hasn't stopped."

A similar community at the Chabad center in Berlin is housing about 1,000 refugees, including Rabbi Avraham Wolff's wife and children from Odesa. The center plans to host eight Seders citywide and has distributed matzah and other food to community members. Refugees, including 120 children from an Odesa orphanage who arrived in Berlin along with Wolff's family, distributed the items to locals, said Yehuda Teichtal, the chief rabbi of Berlin.

"To me, this is extremely touching," he said. "That people on the receiving end are able to give and not be viewed as victims. It's empowering and energizing."

As they prepare for Passover, Teichtal, Biderman and Wolff said they have been inspired by Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, known as the Lubavitcher Rebbe, who was among the most influential global leaders in Judaism in modern times. April 5 marked the Rebbe's 120th birth anniversary, a special number in Jewish tradition.

"The Rebbe built a strong foundation (in Ukraine) so we're able to do what we're doing now," Wolff said.

Schneerson grew up in Ukraine during a challenging time in the former Soviet Union, Teichtal said.

"In spite of all the darkness, his focus was selflessness, dedication, love for all humanity and the unwavering faith that we are going to overcome," Teichtal said.

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Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is solely responsible for this content.

**Load-Date:** April 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The descendants of Jewish refugees opening their doors to Ukrainians in the UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-7V11-JBNF-W123-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 7:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:6

**Length:** 1118 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** 'I felt like I couldn't not host. I wouldn't be alive if my parents were not given sanctuary here,' says Lesley Schatzberger, whose mother and father fled the Nazi regime as children and later met in Britain, tells May Bulman

**Body**

As millions of Ukrainians flee from the devastation caused by [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's troops, many people in the UK have come forward to offer their homes. More than 150,000 Brits have signed up to the government's Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) hosting scheme.

The scheme itself has got off to a slow start, which has [*prompted some criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-russia-refugees-uk-homes-b2040771.html). But the outpouring of compassion and willingness to help has been immense, and prospective hosts are hoping they will soon be able to offer traumatised [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) a roof over their head and some comfort.

Some have registered directly to the government's portal, while others are signing up via charities well-versed in facilitating refugee hosting in the UK, such as Positive Action in Housing's Rooms for Refugees programme and Refugees at Home's hosting scheme.

Among those keenest to host are people for whom this refugee crisis feels particularly close to home, because it wasn't long ago that their own parents and grandparents were forced to make a similar escape, fleeing antisemitism in Europe and finding sanctuary in the UK.

The Independent has spoken to Britons whose [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) ancestors fled either the pogroms in the late 19th and early 20th century or the Nazi regime during the Second World War, and have now signed up to become hosts.

Louise Kaye, 64, from Chiswick, London

Both of my grandfathers fled from anti-Jewish violence in Ukraine in the 1890s. They came to England as an unknown country and they did not know what sort of welcome they'd receive, but they made good lives for themselves eventually.

My late husband and I signed up to host in 2019 to take a Syrian refugee, but he fell ill later that year so it didn't happen. When the Ukraine war started, I suddenly thought of my grandfathers, and thought if I can help − a mother and child or a couple of children - I have the space to do that.

I live alone now but I often have someone else living here. I have a big house and to justify staying here I have to have other people here. I love it. They can have the top floor: a bedroom, a kitchen with a little sitting room, a loo and there's a bathroom on the floor below which they can use too.

I could just imagine my great-grandparents being in exactly that situation and being absolutely terrified of having their houses burnt down and just knowing they had to flee to save their lives and protect their children.

Lesley Schatzberger, 69, from York

I am the daughter of child refugees from Nazi Vienna. My father came on Kindertransport aged 12 in May 1939. His parents were due to travel on 9 September but war broke out on the 1st. They were taken to Auschwitz and died there.

My mum came with her family. Both my parents came here with very little. My dad had a small suitcase, a typewriter and his piano accordion. He had to build his life from that. They both grew up in the Manchester area and met at a youth club.

I felt like I couldn't not host. I wouldn't be alive if my parents were not given sanctuary here. They lost everything, and it's just unbelievable that this is happening again now. The lessons haven't been learnt.

We have a basement flat with a kitchen and its own bathroom, so we could host a family. We've had students there and have offered to host Syrian refugees before. We have enough space.

The government should be looking at this as an opportunity for people to come to our society and for us to get to know them, to help them - and maybe they'll help us.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

Jimmy Strauss, 62, from Belsize Park, London

My parents were born in Germany and they were Jewish refugees from the Nazi system. My father left relatively young in 1933. He came and made a life over here. My mother came here with her family in 1939.

I'm steeped in a refugee background. The community where I worship − at Belsize Square Synagogue − was founded by refugees and continues to use a number of their melodies.

Britain was very good to my family. I've got room in this house and I feel, and my whole family feels, it is our duty to help these people. I cannot begin to imagine what they're going through.

We have a spare room with an ensuite bathroom - it could fit an adult and at least two children, possibly more, depending on what is needed.

If we can provide a roof over their head, a bit of security, warmth and some food to begin to alleviate the pain they're going through, it's the very, very least we can do.

Katherine Richards, 61, from Hove

My mother was a Jewish refugee and fled Austria at the age of five with my grandmother in 1938. They escaped to Holland on foot at night-time. I know it would have been terrifying. At one point they were caught by the Nazis, but they got away and managed to catch the last boat to the UK.

They wound up in Hertfordshire with no English skills. My mother was the only female refugee in the village. She learnt to speak English from the get-go and taught my grandmother how to speak the language. Then grandfather got here and said: "Now we are here, we're going to stay here."

I think about my grandmother every day now. She'd be absolutely appalled. I think the very least we can do is open our border to those fleeing Ukraine. All this nonsense about visas and passports is so preposterous.

I have space for a single person. I'll make sure they're warm, comfy, loved and cared for. My mum will be involved too. She wants to help and she of all people will understand their plight.

My family history is not usually at the forefront of my mind, but seeing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on TV has really resonated with me. My mother and grandmother had to make a terrifying escape. Ukrainians are going to have similar stories to tell.

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 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How Ukrainian pets bring solace for some refugees but heartbreak for others*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6545-9KD1-JBNF-W088-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 12:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1101 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL : David Cohen has witnessed first hand the devastating impact of pets having to be abandoned as well as the joy they bring to those Ukrainians who have been able to flee the Russian invasions with their pets in tow

**Body**

The abandoned dog at the Hungarian border was in a bad way, shaking and shivering and barely able to walk.

The Golden Retriever had pitched up seemingly out of nowhere that morning, passing through no-man's land to lay his weary head on a piece of covered tarmac just past the Csengersima checkpoint on the Hungarian-Rumanian border.

A woman from the Hungarian Red Cross bent down to offer him food, water and a kind word, but he was too weak to respond, so they called a local animal shelter to pick him up. Six hours later, he was still there.

It was a pitiful sight but also one that flew in the face of the extraordinary care we had seen the [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugees*** show for the pets they had brought with them to escape the[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) bombs.

We had witnessed this during the second week of the invasion at several crossings on the Polish-Ukrainian border and again, in the last week at the Hungarian border - and many told us of the pain they felt about larger pets, mostly dogs, they had been forced to leave behind.

We watched as refugees who had queued for hours on foot carrying young children and their worldly possessions still found the wherewithal to physically carry their pet, often lugging them in pet carriers along with weighty supplies of pet food.

Frequently the ones carrying the pets were young children. Nobody knows exactly how many of the 4 million refugees who fled the country have taken pets, but pet travel specialists PBS Pet Travel estimate that more than 1.25 million pets have crossed the border.

One of the untold stories of this war is surely that of how taking care of a beloved pet at a time of personal and collective trauma can be a helpful, even healing, thing to do.

At Kroscienko on the Polish-Ukrainian border, where refugees endured sub-zero temperatures, we saw Olena Boiko, 39, emerge from her 20-hour journey from Kyiv with her Chihuahua, Dolores, peeking out of her coat.

At the same crossing we saw Vatazhok, 87, on crutches and her friend, Zhanna Zabrodska, 85, in a wheelchair, muster the energy to carry their respective cats, Syoma and Masha.

"Come feel Masha shivering with cold through my rucksack," said Zhanna, tears streaming down her face for her struggling feline companion. The gritty octogenarians had travelled two days from embattled Kharkiv in the north after hiding in a freezing basement for 11 days and in fleeing to save themselves had thought to save their cats too.

There was also sadness for pets left behind. When Sasha Bubnovska, 28, crossed into Poland with her daughters Sofia, 6, and Mia, 2, and pug, Bella, after a four-day journey fleeing Irpin and leaving her husband at the border, her relief to be safe was palpable, but her thoughts were for her black Labrador, Clode, too big to fit in their car.

She showed me photos of Clode looking mournful as they left him lying on his own in front of the sofa. Sasha said: "It is hard to look at these photos."

They left house keys with a neighbour and asked him to put out food and water for Clode, but Sasha did not know the neighbour well and with Kharkiv under bombardment, she couldn't be sure if Clode was still alive. "I am not sure I will see him again," she said. "We brought Bella but Clode was part of our family. I feel I betrayed him."

At a nearby refugee reception centre in Lodyna just over the Polish border, a young girl arrived with her mother after a long journey from eastern Ukraine and the first thing she did after being given a camp-bed was to feed and cuddle the rats in her pet carrier.

They immediately became a focal point and a way of connecting to other refugee children in the shelter. Elsewhere we saw several hamsters and even mice.

At the cavernous Bok Stadium in Budapest, a national sports centre being used as a filtration point for thousands of refugees arriving at Budapest train station, one of the charities was Animal Aid.

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) .

They had set up a stand offering free pet food, professional advice and veterinary information.

A spokesman said: "Ninety-nine per cent of the pets people have brought are dogs and cats, but we are seeing the odd rat."

He held up a pet carrier with a very busy white rat that somebody had found abandoned and handed in just minutes before.

"It's in good shape," he said. "The cage is clean and well looked after. We don't know if it was left behind on purpose or accidentally."

Other refugees were letting their canine pets stretch their legs and as they strutted across the blue floor of the sports centre alongside their owners, they looked as happy and well looked after as contestants for a Crufts international dog show at Alexandra Palace.

Initially the EU had imposed no limits on the number of pets refugees could take with them, and border officers allowed them to cross without papers, but according to anecdotal reports from aid volunteers, limits have now been imposed, not just at the Ukrainian border but in some onward countries, and this had led to a rise in pets being abandoned at the border.

Hester Berg, a volunteer who since the war began has driven four times from her home in Vienna to various points on the Ukrainian border to deliver a car full of pet food, said: "Refugees have told us that they have changed the laws regarding pets. Initially you could have five animals per car but now they've cut down so some refugees are having to make a choice at the border between which pets to take and which to leave behind. In other cases, they get their pets through the Ukrainian border only to face a limit at the second EU country they enter. We have rescued 25 dogs at various border crossings. It's heart-breaking."

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**



[*African refugees see racial bias as US welcomes Ukrainians*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654B-4B81-DY4H-K021-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 1, 2022 Friday 6:08 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1259 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** 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

**Body**

Wilfred Tebah doesn't begrudge the U.S. for swiftly granting humanitarian protections to Ukrainians escaping Russia's devastating invasion of their homeland.

But the 27-year-old, who fled [*Cameroon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cameroon) during its ongoing conflict, can't help but wonder what would happen if the millions fleeing that Eastern Europe nation were a different hue.

As the U.S. prepares to welcome tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing war, the country continues to deport scores of [*African*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/african) and Caribbean refugees back to unstable and violent homelands where they've faced rape, torture, arbitrary arrest and other abuses.

"They do not care about a Black man," the Columbus, [*Ohio*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ohio) , resident said, referring to U.S. politicians. "The difference is really clear. They know what is happening over there, and they have decided to close their eyes and ears."

Tebah's concerns echo protests against the swift expulsions of Haitian refugees crossing the border this summer without a chance to seek asylum, not to mention the frosty reception African and Middle Eastern refugees have faced in western Europe compared with how those nations have enthusiastically embraced displaced Ukrainians.

In March, when President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) made a series of announcements welcoming 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, granting Temporary Protected Status to another 30,000 already in the U.S. and halting Ukrainian deportations, two Democratic lawmakers seized on the moment to call for similar humanitarian considerations for Haitians.

"There is every reason to extend the same level of compassion," U.S. Reps. Ayanna Pressley, of Massachusetts, and Mondaire Jones, of New York, wrote to the administration, noting more than 20,000 Haitians have been deported despite continued instability after the assassination of Haiti's president and a powerful earthquake this summer.

Cameroonian advocates have similarly ratcheted up their calls for humanitarian relief, protesting in front of the Washington residence of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas and the offices of leading members of Congress this month.

Their calls come as hundreds of thousands in Cameroon have been displaced in recent years by the country's civil war between its French-speaking government and English-speaking separatists, attacks by the terrorist group Boko Haram and other regional conflicts.

The advocacy group Human Rights Watch, in a February report, found many Cameroonians deported from the U.S. suffered persecution and human rights violations upon returning there.

Tebah, who is a leading member of the Cameroon American Council, an advocacy group organizing protests this month, said that's a fate he hopes to avoid.

Hailing from the country's English-speaking northwest, he said he was branded a separatist and apprehended by the government because of his activism as a college student. Tebah said he managed to escape, as many Cameroonians have, by flying to Latin America, trekking overland to the U.S.-Mexico border and petitioning for asylum in 2019.

"I will be held in prison, tortured and even killed if I am deported," he said. "I'm very scared. As a human, my life matters too."

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees TPS and other humanitarian programs, declined to respond to the complaints of racism in American immigration policy. It also declined to say whether it was weighing granting TPS to Cameroonians or other African nationals, saying in a written statement only that it will "continue to monitor conditions in various countries."

The agency noted, however, that it has recently issued TPS designations for Haiti, Somalia, Sudan and South Sudan - all African or Caribbean nations - as well as to more than 75,000 Afghans living in the U.S. after the Taliban takeover of that Central Asian nation. Haitians are among the largest and longest-tenured beneficiaries of TPS, with more than 40,000 currently on the status.

Other TPS countries include Burma, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Syria, Venezuela and Yemen, and the majority of the nearly 320,000 immigrants with Temporary Protected Status hail from El Salvador.

Lisa Parisio, who helped launch Catholics Against Racism in Immigration, argues the program could easily help protect millions more refugees fleeing danger but has historically been underused and over-politicized.

TPS, which provides a work permit and staves off deportation for up to 18 months, doesn't have limits for how many countries or people can be placed on it, said Parisio, who is the advocacy director for the Catholic Legal Immigration Network.

Yet former President Donald Trump, in his broader efforts to restrict immigration, pared down TPS, allowing designations for Liberia, Sierra Leone and Guinea in West Africa to expire.

Although programs like TPS provide critical protections for vulnerable refugees, they can also leave many in legal limbo for years without providing a pathway to citizenship, said Karla Morales, a 24-year-old from El Salvador who has been on TPS nearly her whole life.

"It's absurd to consider 20 years in this country temporary," the University of Massachusetts Boston nursing student said. "We need validation that the work we've put in is appreciated and that our lives have value."

At least in the case of Ukraine, Biden appears motivated by broader foreign policy goals in Europe, rather than racial bias, suggests María Cristina García, a history professor at Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, focused on refugees and immigrants.

But Tom Wong, founding director of the U.S. Immigration Policy Center at the University of California, San Diego, said the racial disparities couldn't be clearer.

"The U.S. has responded without hesitation by extending humanitarian protections to predominately white and European refugees," he said. "All the while, predominately people of color from Africa, the Middle East, and Asia continue to languish."

Besides Cameroon, immigrant advocates also argue that Congo and Ethiopia should qualify for humanitarian relief because of their ongoing conflicts, as should Mauritania, since slavery is still practiced there.

And they complain Ukrainian asylum seekers are being exempted from asylum limits meant to prevent the spread of COVID-19 while those from other nations are being turned away.

"Black pain and Black suffering do not get the same attention," says Sylvie Bello, founder of the D.C.-based Cameroon American Council. "The same anti-Blackness that permeates American life also permeates American immigration policy."

Vera Arnot, a Ukrainian in Boston who is considering seeking TPS, says she didn't know much about the special status until the war started and wasn't aware of the concerns from immigrants of color. But the Berklee College of Music sophomore hopes the relief can be extended to other deserving nations.

Arnot says TPS could help her seek an off-campus job with better pay so she doesn't have to rely on her family's support, as most in Ukraine have lost their jobs due to the war.

"Ukrainians as a people aren't used to relying on others," she said. "We want to work. We don't want welfare."

For Tebah, who is staying with relatives in Ohio, TPS would make it easier for him to open a bank account, get a driver's license and seek better employment while he awaits a decision on his asylum case.

"We'll continue to beg, to plead," Tebah said. "We are in danger. I want to emphasize it. And only TPS for Cameroon will help us be taken out of that danger. It is very necessary."

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Associated Press video journalist Patrick Orsagos in Columbus, Ohio contributed to this story.

**Load-Date:** April 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Stranded in purgatory'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-2Y81-JCS0-D46P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 26, 2022 Saturday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1148 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

The UK government has been accused of leaving ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** "stranded in purgatory" as large numbers are still waiting for the Home Office's permission to join their loved ones in Britain weeks after applying.

The family visa scheme set up in response to the Ukraine war has been described as a shambles, as lawyers warn that refugees who have relatives ready to support them in the UK are being given inaccurate information, asked for unnecessary documents and told to send their passports across the continent.

Nearly half of the 35,500 Ukrainians who have applied to the scheme, which was launched on 4 March, are still waiting for a decision - amounting to more than 15,400 individuals.

The Independent has spoken to refugees who have been forced to pay for accommodation for weeks as they wait for their visas to be processed.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper the situation was appalling and called on the Home Office to simplify the process, adding: "The government has had months to prepare for this, and yet delays across the system are still causing chaos and confusion.

"They should also set up emergency centres along the main travel routes to provide assistance for Ukrainians wanting to reach the UK. The Home Office's response has completely failed to meet the scale and urgency of this crisis, and it is Ukrainian families who are paying the price."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Alistair Carmichael said: "As if the anxiety and uncertainty of fleeing their homes isn't awful enough, Ukrainians are being left stranded in purgatory by a visa scheme in shambles. It is simply unforgivable.

"Ministers need to drop the red tape and let refugees fleeing Putin's bombs come here without having to apply for a visa - some compassion would not go amiss, either."

Nataliia Tsvyakh, who fled from Ukraine on 24 February with her two sons, Mark, three and Denys, five - leaving her husband and parents, who did not want to leave, behind - said she was struggling to keep her children calm after waiting for weeks to join her uncle and his family in the UK.

Ms Tsyakh had to wait until 17 March to attend a visa appointment to submit photographs and fingerprints. Her eldest son's passport is expired, but she was told she could attach his application with her passport, and that she would receive a decision within two days.

But Ms Tsyakh has since been informed by the Home Office that she needs to submit a separate application for her son, which is delaying the case further.

Her uncle, Oleksandr Khanyhin, travelled to Romania on 5 March to help her to make the application. They had been staying in a hotel in Bucharest for about Euro 70 (£58) a night, and have now moved to a cheaper hostel - the four of them staying in one room - which costs them Euro 30 per night.

"It's hard, it's like a constant pressure. Are they going to give you the visas, are they not, what are we going to do if they don't? That's at the back of our minds every day," Ms Tsyakh told The Independent.

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**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians 'stranded in purgatory' as they wait weeks to join family in UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-N5S1-JBNF-W0HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 7:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1223 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Ministers accused of 'completely failing to meet the scale and urgency of crisis' as refugees forced to shell out money on hotels while faced with 'chaotic' visa system

**Body**

The UK government has been accused of leaving [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) "stranded in purgatory" as large numbers are still waiting for the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) 's permission to join their loved ones in Britain weeks after applying.

The family visa scheme set up in response to the Ukraine war has been described as a shambles, as lawyers warn that refugees who have relatives ready to support them in the UK are being given inaccurate information, asked for unnecessary documents and told to send their [*passports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/passports) across the continent.

Nearly half of the 35,500 Ukrainians who have applied to the scheme, which was launched on 4 March, are still waiting for a decision - amounting to more than 15,400 individuals.

The Independent has spoken to refugees who have been forced to pay for accommodation for weeks as they wait for their visas to be processed.

Shadow home secretary Yvette Cooper the situation was appalling and called on the Home Office to simplify the process, adding: "The government has had months to prepare for this, and yet delays across the system are still causing chaos and confusion.

"They should also set up emergency centres along the main travel routes to provide assistance for Ukrainians wanting to reach the UK. The Home Office's response has completely failed to meet the scale and urgency of this crisis, and it is Ukrainian families who are paying the price."

Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson Alistair Carmichael said: "As if the anxiety and uncertainty of fleeing their homes isn't awful enough, Ukrainians are being left stranded in purgatory by a visa scheme in shambles. It is simply unforgivable.

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.

"Ministers need to drop the red tape and let refugees fleeing Putin's bombs come here without having to apply for a visa - some compassion would not go amiss, either."

Nataliia Tsvyakh, who fled from Ukraine on 24 February with her two sons, Mark, three and Denis, five - leaving her husband and parents, who did not want to leave, behind - said she was struggling to keep her children calm after waiting for weeks to join her uncle and his family in the UK.

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**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652N-5RB1-JBNF-W1N0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 24, 2022 Thursday 10:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1195 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukraine's cities are standing under relentless Russian fire as NATO leaders huddle in Brussels and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urges them to provide "effective and unrestricted" support to his country

**Body**

Ukraine's cities stood under relentless [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) fire as NATO leaders huddled in [*Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brussels) Thursday and President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged them to provide "effective and unrestricted" support to his country.

Four weeks into the deadly Russian onslaught, its forces appear to have stalled in many places in the face of fiercer-than-expected Ukrainian resistance. That's provided the West's NATO allies time to meet in Brussels on how to make Russia's offensive as painful as possible for President Vladimir Putin - without triggering a nuclear war.

On that, Russia issued an unsubtle warning. Senior Russian official Dmitry Rogozin said in televised remarks that "within minutes at any distance," the country's nuclear arsenal would help deter the West from intervening in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). He then named several types of nuclear weapons Moscow is considering using in the conflict.

Meanwhile, Russia's stock market reopened for limited trading Thursday.

Here are some key things to know about the Russia-Ukraine war:

WHAT'S [*HAPPENING*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) AS THE WAR GRINDS INTO A SECOND MONTH?

Zelenskyy is calling on people worldwide to gather in public Thursday to show support for his embattled country as he prepared to address Biden and other NATO leaders gathered in Brussels.

"Come to your squares, your streets. Make yourselves visible and heard," Zelenskyy said in English during an emotional video address recorded in the dark near the presidential offices in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv). "Say that people matter. Freedom matters. Peace matters. Ukraine matters."

WHAT ARE UKRAINE AND RUSSIA SAYING ABOUT CASUALTIES?

When Russia unleashed its invasion - Europe's biggest offensive since World War II - on Feb. 24, it seemed likely to swiftly topple Ukraine's government. But a month into the fighting, the massive country that sprawls across 11 time zones is bogged down in a grinding military campaign of attrition.

Despite evidence to the contrary, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov insisted the military operation is going "strictly in accordance" with plans.

In its last update, Russia said March 2 that nearly 500 soldiers had been killed and almost 1,600 wounded. NATO estimates, however, that between 7,000 to 15,000 Russian troops have been killed -the latter figure about what Russia lost in a decade of fighting in Afghanistan.

A senior NATO military official said the alliance's estimate was based on information from Ukrainian authorities, what Russia has released - intentionally or not - and intelligence gathered from open sources. The official spoke on condition of anonymity under ground rules set by NATO.

Ukraine, which has released little information about its military losses, also claims to have killed six Russian generals. Russia acknowledges just one dead general.

Wednesday's shelling of Kyiv claimed the life of another journalist. Oksana Baulina, a Russian reporter for the independent Russian news outlet The Insider, was killed in a Kyiv neighborhood.

WHAT HAS THE AP DIRECTLY WITNESSED OR CONFIRMED?

Russian troops who occupy the southern city of Kherson seized one of the most prominent theater directors in Ukraine "in a fascist manner" and took him to an unknown location, Ukraine's Culture Minister Oleksandr Tkachenko said.

Witnesses said nine Russian military vehicles pulled up to the home of Oleksandr Kniga early Wednesday and led him out. The Russians warned neighbors that if they came out of their homes they would be killed, the witnesses said.

"The whole world should know about this!" Tkachenko said on Facebook.

Kniga, 62, director of the Kherson Regional Academic Theater, is one of the most important and respected theater directors in Ukraine.

Kyiv was shaken by a constant barrage of shelling Wednesday and plumes of black smoke rose from the western outskirts of the city. Mayor Vitali Klitschko said the Russian bombardment has killed 264 civilians in the capital, including four children. As he spoke to reporters in Kyiv park, explosions and loud gunfire echoed in the background. At dusk, air raid sirens wailed over the capital as attacks continued.

In the seaside city of Odesa, fondly known as the Pearl of the Black Sea, street musicians played under cloudless skies as people fled.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE NATO SUMMIT?

Biden and Western allies are gathering in Brussels to chart a path to more pressure on Putin while tending to the economic and security fallout that's spreading across Europe and the world.

Over the course of a half-day Thursday, the European diplomatic capital will host an emergency NATO summit as well as a gathering of the Group of Seven industrialized nations and a summit of the 27 members of the European Union. Biden is attending all three meetings.

The American president arrived in Brussels late Wednesday with the hopes of nudging allies to enact new sanctions on Russia, which has already seen its economy crippled by a steady stream of bans, boycotts and penalties over the last four weeks.

The West has been largely unified in confronting Russia, but there's wide acknowledgement that unity will be tested as the costs of war chip at the global economy.

WHAT ABOUT WAR CRIMES?

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the U.S. has made the formal determination that Russia has committed war crimes in Ukraine.

Blinken said there have been numerous credible reports of indiscriminate attacks and attacks deliberately targeting civilians. He said Russian forces have destroyed apartment buildings, schools, hospitals, shopping centers, and ambulances "leaving thousands of innocent civilians killed or wounded."

Blinken said the U.S. would work with others to prosecute offenders. The International Criminal Court at The Hague is already investigating.

Biden has described the possibility that Russia could use chemical weapons in Ukraine as a "real threat" and said it's an issue that world leaders will discuss at the NATO summit.

WHAT ARE ***UKRAINIAN*** ***REFUGEES*** SAYING?

Some of the more than 3.5 million people who have fled Ukraine have shared nightmarish stories of death, destruction and the painful separation from loved ones.

Natalia Savchenko, 37, arrived in Medyka, Poland, on Wednesday and said the situation in the eastern city of Kharkiv is "terrible." She said there is no electricity or water, and children are not being given medicine or food.

"People are being killed day and night. They are shooting with everything they have," she said.

At the train station in Przemysl, Poland, Kateryna Mytkevich said her family was trapped in Chernihiv for three weeks and hoped the war would pass them by - but then "bombs began to fall."

"Our children are dying. My son had to stay in Chernihiv, I could only take my daughter with me. It hurts a lot," said Mytkevich, 39.

Volodymr Fedorovych, 77, also fled Chernihiv, saying: "There was nothing, there wasn't even bread." He said bread was brought in every three days, and on one day, he walked away from the bread line to get some tea when a bomb fell without warning.

"Sixteen people died and 47 were taken by ambulance, some of them without arms and legs. Horrible. There were one hundred people in that queue," he said.

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

**Load-Date:** March 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Stranded in purgatory'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-2Y81-JCS0-D45Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 26, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1148 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

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[*AP News Digest 4 a.m.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6532-SSH1-DY4H-K24J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 8:59 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1279 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - About 300 people were killed by the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) airstrike last week that blasted open a Mariupol theater that was being used as a shelter, Ukrainian authorities said, marking what could be the war's deadliest known attack on civilians yet. The death toll fueled allegations that Moscow is committing war crimes by killing civilians, whether deliberately or by indiscriminate fire. By Nebi Qena and Andrea Rosa. SENT: 1,130 words, photos, video. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THINGS TO KNOW and RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE LATEST.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-BIDEN - President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) speaks in Warsaw, Poland, as European security faces its most precarious test since World War II. Biden also plans to visit with Polish President [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) and meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the aid workers who have been helping them. By Chris Megerian. SENT: 500 words, photos, video. UPCOMING: 990 words after 7 a.m. meeting with Duda; speech at 1 p.m.

MADELEINE ALBRIGHT-WOMEN - Former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's death this week has sparked American women to reflect on her sweeping influence on their lives. Admirers say Albright's identities as a child refugee, wife, mother and world-famous diplomat gave women a new script and vision for their lives. By Kathleen Foody. SENT: 730 words, photos.

KOREA-TENSIONS - The United States called Friday for tougher U.N. sanctions after North Korea said it test-fired its biggest intercontinental ballistic missile to date, with Kim Jong Un vowing to expand his country's "nuclear war deterrent" while preparing for a "long-standing confrontation" with the United States. By Kim Tong-Hyung. SENT: 1,310 words, photos.

OBIT-TAYLOR-HAWKINS - [*Taylor Hawkins*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taylor-hawkins) , for 25 years the drummer for Foo Fighters and best friend of frontman Dave Grohl, has died during a South American tour with the rock band. He was 50. There were no immediate details on how Hawkins died, although the band has said in a statement that his death was a "tragic and untimely loss." Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton. SENT: 960 words, photos.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-FASHION-FLEES - Just days ago, Artem Gorelov was trying to survive in one of the most brutal parts of Ukraine, the Russian-occupied Kyiv suburb of Bucha. Now he stands in a quiet room in the late afternoon sunlight, hand-making hats for a local fashion brand worn by Madonna and Ukraine's first lady. Gorelov has joined Ukrainians' massive migration west to the city of Lviv near Poland, and unusually, the 100-employee company he works for arrived with him. Searching for safety but determined not to leave Ukraine, the brand Ruslan Baginskiy is among the businesses that are uprooting amid war. SENT: 600 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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TAINTED-BEER-VERDICT-$8-MILLION - A jury in Las Vegas has awarded $8 million to a middle school special education teacher who sued after being permanently injured when he was served cleaning solvents instead of tap beer at a casino bar. SENT: 210 words.

MIAMI-BEACH-SPRING-BREAK-CURFEW - Miami Beach officials have spent recent years trying to control the raucous crowds, public drinking and growing violence associated with the city's world-famous South Beach neighborhood during spring break. Now, the city's mayor, a Democrat, insists the crackdown is about bad behavior, not race. SENT: 930 words, photos.

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WASHINGTON/ POLITICS

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ELECTION 2022-TRUMP-GEORGIA - Enraged that Georgia's Republican Gov. Brian Kemp didn't advance lies that the presidential election was stolen, Trump recruited former Sen. David Perdue to run against him in the May 24 primary. But as Trump holds a Georgia rally Saturday night, Perdue and some of his other choices in key races across the country are struggling. SENT: 1,150 words, photo. UPCOMING: 1,200 words after 7 p.m. speech.

SUPREME COURT-RECUSAL PROTOCOLS - Reports that the wife of Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas implored Donald Trump's chief of staff to act to overturn the 2020 election results have put a spotlight on how justices decide whether to step aside from a case. SENT: 990 words, photos. With SUPREME COURT-VIRGINIA THOMAS PROFILE - Virginia Thomas is a longtime conservative political activist. SENT: 800 words, photos.

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NATIONAL

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GOVERNOR-CANDIDATE-CHILD-PORN - Two-time Maine gubernatorial candidate Eliot Cutler has been arrested for possession of child pornography, two days after search warrants were executed on his two homes in the state. SENT: 430 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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PHILIPPINES-VOLCANO - A small volcano in a scenic lake near the Philippine capital blew a white plume of steam and ash one mile into the sky in a brief but powerful explosion Saturday, prompting authorities to raise the alert level and evacuate hundreds of residents from high-risk villages. SENT: 490 words, photos.

CHINA-AUSTRALIA-JOURNALIST TRIAL - A Chinese Australian journalist who has been held in China since August 2020 will be tried next week, the Australian government says. SENT: 260 words, photos,

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HEALTH & SCIENCE

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SCI-VAMPIRE-BATS - Scientists have figured out why vampire bats are the only mammals that can survive on a diet of only blood. They compared vampire bats to 26 other bat species and identified 13 genes that are missing or no longer work in vampire bats. Over the years, those gene tweaks helped them adapt to a blood diet rich in iron and protein but with minimal fats or carbohydrates. The bats live in South and Central America and steal blood from livestock and other animals. SENT: 370 words, photos.

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ENTERTAINMENT

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OSCAR-GOVERNOR-AWARDS - Elaine May was the last to arrive and the first to leave at the Governors Awards in Los Angeles. Her fellow honorees, Samuel L. Jackson, Liv Ullmann and Danny Glover, all arrived hours earlier, each holding court at the Ray Dolby Ballroom, posing for photos and enjoying their moment amid the lead-up to the 94th Academy Awards. SENT: 890 words,

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SPORTS

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BKC--NCAA-SAINT PETER'S-PURDUE - Saint Peter's became the first No. 15 seed to reach the Elite Eight of the NCAA Tournament, beating Purdue 67-64. By Dan Gelston. SENT: 750 words, photos. With BKC--NCAA-South Preview; BKC-NCAA-West Preview (sent).

FBN--BROWNS WATSON - New Browns quarterback Deshaun Watson maintained his innocence and strongly denied committing any sexual misconduct despite allegations made by 22 women against him. At his introductory news conference, Watson showed little emotion while saying he's done nothing illegal. By Tom Withers. SENT: 920 words, photos.

BKC--NCAA-PROVIDENCE-KANSAS - Remy Martin scored a season-high 23 points and Kansas did its part as the only No. 1 seed left in the NCAA Tournament, holding Providence to 17 first-half points and hanging on for a 66-61 victory to reach the Elite Eight. By Andrew Seligman. SENT: 810 words, photos. With BKC-NCAA-UCLA-North Carolina; BKC-NCAA-Iowa State-Miami (sent).

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Vincent K. Willis can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden praises Irish efforts over Ukraine war during St Patrick's Day meeting*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-J441-DY4H-K4P8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 5:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1066 words

**Byline:** Jonathan McCambridge

**Highlight:** The meeting was held virtually after Micheal Martin contracted Covid.

**Body**

US President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has hailed [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) leadership for its handling of the Ukrainian crisis.

During a virtual St Patrick's Day meeting with Taoiseach Micheal Martin, Mr Biden also reaffirmed the US administration's "unequivocal support" for the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr Biden, who identifies deeply with his own Irish heritage, was seated beside a traditional bowl of shamrock during the bilateral meeting.

He quoted Irish poet [*WB Yeats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wb-yeats) as he described the impact the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has had on the world.

"All changed, changed utterly - a terrible beauty has been born," he said.

Mr Biden said Irish leadership on the issue has been "noticeable and impressive".

Both leaders condemned the invasion, with the Irish leader speaking about the need for a "unity of purpose".

The leaders' bilateral meeting lasted just over an hour.

The pair discussed the economy, Brexit and the Good Friday Agreement, the ongoing war in Ukraine and the undocumented Irish in the US.

Mr Martin reiterated the invitation for the President to come to Ireland, with Mr Biden saying he would love to visit Ireland again.

Mr Biden praised Ireland's willingness to take in refugees, adding: "What Ireland is doing now, what you are doing, taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, speak so loudly about your principles.

"And it's amazing and I want to publicly compliment you for it.

I think you've already brought in over 7,000 or so refugees from Ukraine, and you're prepared to do more, so thank you

Joe Biden

"I think you've already brought in over 7,000 or so refugees from Ukraine, and you're prepared to do more, so thank you."

The Irish premier, who appeared virtually from Blair House where he is currently staying, also thanked Mr Biden for the US' backing of the Good Friday Agreement.

He praised the "steadfast support", referencing how "important the Good Friday Agreement is in respect of stability and peace on the island of Ireland".

He said: "Over the last number of days, as I've been here, we've also witnessed - once again - that two way, very robust economic relationship between the United States and Ireland."

Mr Martin, appearing virtually for the second year in a row due to a positive Covid-19 test, said it was unfortunate he and Mr Biden could not meet face to face.

"This year, we're meeting virtually across the road, so we're getting closer," he joked.

Mr Biden is profoundly proud of his Irish ancestry and has never been shy about his passion for the country, its history and its literature.

References to Irish poets pepper many of his speeches, with Mr Biden choosing to namecheck the late Eavan Boland during a speech at the Ireland Funds Gala dinner in Washington on Wednesday evening.

It was at the same event that the Taoiseach was notified of the positive Covid-19 result just as he was due to speak.

Mr Martin appeared in good spirits during his appearance on-screen.

An Irish Government spokesperson said earlier on Thursday that the Taoiseach was "feeling well".

He said Mr Martin received a negative [*Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/covid) test result on Wednesday afternoon, but a further test was carried out when one of his delegation tested positive.

This resulted in a positive test for the Taoiseach.

Speaking later on Thursday Mr Martin confirmed he will remain in Washington and continue working while he recovers from Covid.

A source said he will follow US Covid-19 guidelines which could result in no international travel for 10 days.

This means he would be unable to attend a Covid commemoration event in Dublin on Sunday.

The Taoiseach said he was disappointed not to meet Mr Biden face to face but added "it was not the end of the world".

We had our cabinet meeting which I chaired from the embassy at the commencement of the week. Little did I think that I would have another cabinet meeting from here next week, but that is the way it is

Micheal Martin

He said: "I have to keep things in perspective, that is important in the context of what is happening across the world today.

"I don't believe the meeting was in any way impaired as a result of this. It was a very warm meeting and it went on longer than anticipated by officials on both sides.

"We had our cabinet meeting which I chaired from the embassy at the commencement of the week. Little did I think that I would have another cabinet meeting from here next week, but that is the way it is.

"I will continue to work, we will manage this and I will be in daily contact with my colleagues and officials, particularly in respect of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

"I will keep working, I feel good and we will take it day by day and step by step."

Earlier on Thursday, the speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi said Mr Martin was not wearing a mask during part of their interaction at the Ireland Funds Gala event.

She sat next to the Taoiseach moments before he was told he had tested positive for Covid-19.

Ms Pelosi was about to make an award to Mr Martin, but Irish ambassador Dan Mulhall accepted the award instead, and confirmed to guests that Mr Martin had tested positive.

"The Taoiseach had a mask on when he sat down but then when he started to eat, he took off the mask and then they called him aside," Ms Pelosi said on Thursday.

"I didn't know why. But the some time later when it was my turn to speak, they told me how we would proceed and that he would not be speaking.

"I wasn't measuring it in minutes, but part of it was masked, some of it while he was eating but it was during the appetiser that they took him away."

She said she is tested for Covid "almost every day" and before any time she sees President Biden.

Meanwhile, Irish President Michael D Higgins sent his "good wishes" to Mr Martin after he tested positive for Covid.

"I was so very sorry to learn of this news breaking while the Taoiseach was busy representing Ireland in the United States leading up to our National Day," Mr Higgins said in a statement.

The Taoiseach has had a gruelling schedule working for our country over recent weeks

Michael D Higgins

"I know that this work is continuing as he takes the necessary steps following his positive test.

"I wish the Taoiseach a speedy recovery and also wish him further success with the continuation of his programme in Washington, and in overcoming the necessary constraints involved.

"Sabina joins me in sending our good wishes to the Taoiseach and to his wife, Mary.

"Go raibh biseach air go luath." (Get well soon).

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Taoiseach disappointed to miss White House visit after contracting Covid*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6517-CS11-JBNF-W156-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 10:25 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1117 words

**Byline:** Jonathan McCambridge

**Highlight:** Michael Martin contracted Covid during his visit to Washington for St Patrick's Day

**Body**

[*Taoiseach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/taoiseach) [*Michael Martin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-martin) has told of his disappointment at being unable to meet face-to-face with US President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) on St Patrick's Day after contracting [*Covid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/covid).

Mr Martin was speaking as it emerged he may have to stay in the US for up to 10 days, although he insisted he will keep working while in Washington.

Speaking to the media virtually from self-isolation, Mr Martin said: "I feel good. Of course, I'm disappointed personally but it's not the end of the world.

"I have to keep things in perspective - that is important in the context of what is happening across the world today.

"I don't believe the meeting was in any way impaired as a result of this. It was a very warm meeting and it went on longer than anticipated by officials on both sides.

During the virtual meeting earlier in the day, Mr Biden hailed [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) leadership for its handling of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr Biden also reaffirmed the US administration's "unequivocal support" for the Good Friday Agreement.

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**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine says Russia seized relief workers in Mariupol convoy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-CJK1-DY4H-K3HP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 5:06 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1255 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukrainian leaders have accused Russia of seizing 15 rescue workers and drivers from a humanitarian convoy trying to get desperately needed aid into the bloodied city of Mariupol

**Body**

Ukrainian leaders accused [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of seizing 15 rescue workers and drivers from a humanitarian convoy trying to get desperately needed food and other supplies into the bloodied port city of Mariupol, which also came under naval attack after weeks of air and land strikes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy estimated that 100,000 civilians remained in Mariupol, scene of some of the war's worst devastation, as Russia presses a nearly month-old offensive by bombarding cities and towns. Those made it out described a shattered city.

"They bombed us for the past 20 days," said 39-year-old Viktoria Totsen, who fled into Poland. "During the last five days, the planes were flying over us every five seconds and dropped bombs everywhere - on residential buildings, kindergartens, art schools, everywhere."

Zelenskyy, speaking late Tuesday in his nightly video address to his nation, accused Russian forces of blocking the aid convoy despite agreeing to the route ahead of time.

"We are trying to organize stable humanitarian corridors for Mariupol residents, but almost all of our attempts, unfortunately, are foiled by the Russian occupiers, by shelling or deliberate terror," Zelenskyy said.

The Red Cross confirmed a humanitarian aid convoy trying to reach the city had not been able to enter.

The convoy's attempt to deliver assistance came as Russian navy vessels joined in what have been weeks of Russian air and land strikes into Mariupol, U.S. officials said.

A senior U.S. defense official, speaking on condition of anonymity to give the Pentagon's assessment, said Russian ships in the Sea of Azov added to the shelling of Mariupol. The official said there were about seven Russian ships in that area, including a minesweeper and a couple of landing vessels.

The hands of one exhausted Mariupol survivor shook as she arrived by train in the western city of Lviv.

"There's no connection with the world. We couldn't ask for help," said Julia Krytska, who was helped by volunteers to make it out with her husband and son. "People don't even have water there."

U.S. President Joe Biden is due to head to Europe for an emergency NATO summit Thursday on Russia's invasion and increasingly hostile stance toward the West, where NATO members and other European allies are strengthening their defenses.

Biden is traveling to Brussels and Poland, which has received more than 2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the Feb. 24 invasion. He is expected to seek continued unity among Western allies and to announce more sanctions in a punishing series of economic and financial penalties on Russia.

Asked on CNN what Russian President Vladimir Putin had achieved in Ukraine, Kremlin spokesman [*Dmitry Peskov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dmitry-peskov) said: "Well, first of all, not yet. He hasn't achieved yet." But he insisted that the military operation was going "strictly in accordance with the plans and purposes that were established beforehand."

Putin's aims remain to "get rid of the military potential of Ukraine" and to "ensure that Ukraine changes from an anti-Russian center to a neutral country," Peskov said.

In Ukraine's capital, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , explosions and bursts of gunfire shook the city, and heavy artillery fire could be heard from the northwest, where Russia has sought to encircle and capture several of the capital's suburbs.

Ukrainian forces this week recaptured one suburban city, Makariv, but partially lost three other northwest suburbs, Ukraine's defense ministry said.

A video posted by Ukrainian police showed them surveying damage in Makariv, including to the town's police station, which an officer said took a direct hit to its roof. The police drove by destroyed residential buildings and along a road pocked by shelling. The town appeared all but deserted.

A Western official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military assessments, said Ukrainian resistance has brought much of Russia's advance to a halt but has not sent Moscow's forces into retreat.

"We have seen indications that the Ukrainians are going a bit more on the offensive now," Pentagon spokesman John Kirby told reporters separately in Washington. He said that was particularly true in southern Ukraine, including near Kherson, where "they have tried to regain territory."

Russia's far stronger, bigger military has many Western military experts warning against overconfidence in Ukraine's long-term odds. Russia's practice in past wars in Chechnya and Syria has been to grind down resistance with strikes that flattened cities, killed countless civilians and sent millions fleeing.

But Russian forces appeared unprepared and have often performed badly against Ukrainian resistance.

The U.S. estimates Russia has lost a bit more than 10 percent of the overall combat capability it had at the start of the fight, including troops, tanks and other materiel.

Western officials say Russian forces are facing serious shortages of food, fuel and cold weather gear, leaving some soldiers suffering from frostbite.

The invasion has driven more than 10 million people from their homes, almost a quarter of Ukraine's population, according to the United Nations.

Thousands of civilians are believed to have died. Estimates of Russian military casualties vary widely, but even conservative figures by Western officials are in the low thousands.

Putin's troops are facing unexpectedly tough resistance that has left the bulk of Moscow's ground forces miles from the center of Kyiv, and they are making slow progress on apparent efforts to cut off fighters in eastern Ukraine. The Russians increasingly are concentrating their air power and artillery on Ukraine's cities and civilians.

Talks to end the fighting have continued by video. Zelenskyy said negotiations with Russia are going "step by step, but they are going forward."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he saw progress in negotiations.

"From my outreach with various actors, elements of diplomatic progress are coming into view on several key issues," and the gains are enough to end hostilities now, he said. He gave no details.

The Western official, though, said that there were no signs Moscow was ready to compromise.

In the last update from Mariupol officials, they said March 15 that at least 2,300 people had died in the siege. Accounts from the city suggest the true toll is much higher, with bodies lying uncollected. Airstrikes over the past week destroyed a theater and an art school where many civilians were taking shelter.

Zelenskyy, in his address, said more than 7,000 people were evacuated from Mariupol on Tuesday. Those who remain suffer "in inhuman conditions, under a full blockade, without food, without water, without medicine and under constant shelling, under constant bombardment," he said.

Before the war, 430,000 people lived in Mariupol.

Perched on the Sea of Azov, Mariupol is a crucial port for Ukraine and lies along a stretch of territory between Russia and Crimea. The siege has cut the city off from the sea and allowed Russia to establish a land corridor to Crimea.

It's not clear how much of the city Russia holds, with fleeing residents saying fighting continues street by street.

Beyond the terrible human toll, the war has shaken the post-Cold War global security consensus, imperiled the world supply of key crops and raised worries it could set off a nuclear accident.

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Anna reported from Lviv, Ukraine. Associated Press writer Yuras Karmanau in Lviv, and other [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) journalists around the world contributed to this report.

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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

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[*Biden's China 'pivot' complicated by Russia's war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6514-J4C1-DY4H-K16D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 5:08 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1172 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Joe Biden set out to be the U.S. president who finally completed the "Asia pivot," Washington lingo for a long sought adjustment of U.S. foreign policy to better reflect the rise of China

**Body**

President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) set out to finally complete the "pivot to Asia," a long sought adjustment of U.S. foreign policy to better reflect the rise of America's most significant military and economic competitor: [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china).

But [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's brutal invasion of Ukraine has made that vexing move even more complicated. China's government has vacillated between full embrace and more measured responses as Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) prosecutes his war, making the decisions for Biden far more layered.

"It's difficult. It's expensive," Kurt Campbell, the coordinator for Indo-Pacific Affairs on the White House National Security Council, said during a recent forum of maintaining a high-level U.S. focus in two regions. "But it's also essential, and I believe we're entering a period where that's what will be required of the United States and of this generation of Americans."

That leaves the Biden administration needing to focus East and West at the same time, balancing not simply economic imperatives but military ones as well.

The president has been deeply invested in rallying NATO and Western allies to respond to Russia with crippling sanctions, supplying an overmatched Ukraine military with $2 billion in military assistance - including $800 million in new aid announced Wednesday - and addressing a growing humanitarian crisis.

Eastern flank NATO allies, including Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Romania, have made clear to the Biden administration that they want the U.S. to increase its military presence in the region and do more to address the worst humanitarian crisis in Europe since World War II. More than 3 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have fled their country in recent weeks.

Though the war in Ukraine has dominated Biden's focus of late, White House officials insist they haven't lost sight of China - and are watching intently to see how Xi Jinping decides to play his hand.

In recent months, Biden has announced the sale of nuclear submarines to Australia and raised the profile of the Indo-Pacific security dialogue known as the Quad (Australia, India, Japan and the United States). He's also called out China for military provocations against Taiwan, human rights abuses against ethnic minorities and efforts to squelch pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong.

Biden's national security team was somewhat surprised that Pacific partners - Australia, Japan, New Zealand, Singapore and South Korea - moved so quickly to hit Russia with sanctions following the invasion, according to a U.S. official familiar with the administration's thinking.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity to talk about private discussions, said there was a recognition among the Pacific allies that Beijing is watching how the world responds to Russia as China calculates how aggressive it can be with its smaller neighbors in the region. In backing sanctions, the Pacific nations were trying to send a message to Xi as well as Putin, the official added.

From the first days of his presidency, Biden has said the aims of his China policy are to find ways to cooperate with Beijing on issues of mutual interest - such as stopping North Korea from developing nuclear weapons and coaxing Tehran to return to the Iran nuclear deal with the U.S., China, Russia and other world powers - and to avoid confrontation.

To that end, when White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi met earlier this week for an intense, seven-hour talk about the Russian invasion and other issues. They spent part of their time together discussing North Korea's recent intercontinental missile tests.

Still, Beijing's approach to the Russian invasion is causing Washington concern. The White House has made clear to Beijing that throwing a lifeline to Russia's collapsing economy or assisting its bruised military would be hazardous to a country that sees itself as the next great world power. The White House has not publicly specified what actions it would take should China assist Russia.

"We don't need China to be with us. We just need them not to be against us," said Frank Jannuzzi, president of the Maureen and Mike Mansfield Foundation, which focuses on U.S.-Asia relations.

Xi and Putin met in early February, weeks before the invasion, with the Russian leader traveling to Beijing for the start of the Winter Olympics. During Putin's visit, the two leaders issued a 5,000-word statement declaring limitless "friendship."

In the days after Putin ordered the invasion, Xi's government tried to distance itself from Russia's offensive but avoided criticizing Moscow. The government has offered to act as mediator and denounced trade and financial sanctions against Russia.

At other moments, Beijing's actions have been provocative.

Last week, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian echoed unsubstantiated Russian claims that there were 26 bio-labs and related facilities in Ukraine in "which the U.S. Department of Defense has absolute control." The United Nations has said it has received no information backing up such accusations.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki took to Twitter to charge that the Russian claim was "preposterous" and could be part of an attempt by Russia to lay the groundwork for its own use of such weapons of mass destruction against Ukraine. She also blamed China for having "seemingly endorsed this propaganda."

Xi's government has also sought to use the conflict to accentuate Chinese ascendency and the decline of the West.

But China has its own internal troubles, including a major economic slowdown, difficulties that sanctions against Russia could make worse.

"The Ukraine war has proceeded in ways China did not expect and the war is not conducive to China's rise or development," said Xiong Zhiyong, professor of international relations at China Foreign Affairs University.

Still, concerns that China could come to Russia's aid have only deepened at the White House in recent days.

On the same day of the Sullivan-Yang meeting, the U.S. informed Asian and European allies that American intelligence had determined that China had signaled to Russia that it would be willing to provide both military support for the campaign in Ukraine and financial backing to help stave off the impact of severe sanctions imposed by the West.

White House officials said Sullivan made clear there would be "severe" consequences should China assist Russia.

Ryan Hass, who served as China, Taiwan and Mongolia director at the NSC during the Obama administration, said Beijing faces a "momentous decision" on whether to aid Russia.

If Xi decides to do that, "It's hard for me to see how the path remains open for China to maintain non-hostile relations with the United States and others in the West," Hass said.

At the White House, Psaki has said any country doing business with Russia should "think about where you want to stand when the history books are written on this moment in time."

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Associated Press researcher Yu Bing contributed to this report from Beijing.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine's Roma refugees face uncertain future under threat of discrimination in Hungary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6502-3811-JBNF-W423-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 12, 2022 Saturday 1:40 AM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1216 words

**Byline:** Amanda Coakley

**Highlight:** As many Romani people cross the Ukrainian-Hungarian border, fears are rising over how they'll be treated under Viktor Orban's regime. Amanda Coakley reports from the village of Tiszabecs

**Body**

As the warnings grew ever louder in the weeks before [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Romani*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romani) man Maxsim became increasingly concerned about his family and their community in the western Ukrainian city of Vynohradiv.

While he was worried about what he would do if a war started and his work as a labourer dried up, the 21-year-old did not believe deep down that there would be full-scale conflict.

So when Russian missiles started raining down on Ukrainian soil on 24 February, Maxsim was stunned, and heartbroken. He knew his family needed a plan and immediately gathered with his [*Roma*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roma) community to discuss their collective response and next steps.

Several men said they wanted to stay and fight for Ukraine. Wealthier families donated money to poorer ones to ensure they had basic supplies.

It was decided that some men would lead the women and children out of the country, find work abroad, and send the money back home to ensure more could leave in case their community was sidelined by the national humanitarian effort.

Maxsim was tasked with taking his 16-year-old wife, Christina, their one-year-old daughter, and his entire extended family - about 25 people in total - to [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) , a journey that they said took two days despite it only being 20km as the crow flies.

"The second the invasion happened, the work we had lined up disappeared, so we had to go," Maxsim, who only gave his first name, told The Independent. "My parents refused to leave, so it was all up to me to navigate the transport and get everyone to safety."

When the group arrived at the Tiszabecs crossing between Ukraine and Hungary, Maxsim was not stopped despite Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's ban on men aged between 18 to 60 leaving the country. Maxsim says no one asked him questions when they saw he was a Roma.

Activists told The Independent that other Romani men have been prevented from leaving Ukraine at the border and conscripted into the military, seemingly making the outcome dependent on how a particular border guard views the community.

Approximately 100,000 Romani people have left Ukraine in the last two weeks, according to figures given from the European Roma Rights Centre, although the real number is likely to be considerably higher.

Before the invasion and ensuing exodus, there were believed to be anywhere between 300,000 and 400,000 Romani people in Ukraine, according to various estimates.

We are already seeing unequal treatment of Romani refugees

Jonathan Lee, European Roma Rights Centre

Although well established and self-sufficient in the country, the Roma have long been sidelined by Ukrainian society and subjected to discrimination and violence.

Human Rights Watch (HRW) last November warned there was widespread online hate speech against the Roma community in several cities, and said that while attacks on Romani people were frequent, official investigations tended to fall by the wayside.

And now the war has exposed them to new challenges.

Although the majority of Roma live in Ukraine's western Zakarpattia region, those settled in the north and east of the country are finding it difficult to reach safety due to a lack of cash and identification documents. Furthermore, they are unsure of how they will be received abroad, that is if they are even allowed to enter another country.

"At the moment there is unprecedented support and tolerance for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***... however, we are already seeing unequal treatment of Romani refugees," said Jonathan Lee, spokesperson for the European Roma Rights Centre.

"They are more likely to be refused at borders, more likely to be neglected by local authorities once they cross ... and they are also less likely to be hosted in small family apartments in European cities."

The journey to Tiszabecs was particularly hard for Christina, who had been terrified she might have to make the journey alone.

"Having my husband and family with me has made a scary situation better," she said, cradling her infant in the village hall in Tiszabecs.

She has no idea what is in store in the days and weeks ahead, but hopes Maxsim will ultimately find work on construction sites in the capital, Budapest, in order to ensure their survival and send money home to help get the rest of their family out of Ukraine.

However, their prospects in the country could well hinge on the stance of the government and nationalist leader Viktor Orban towards the Roma community - with campaigners fearful of how things might develop as the number of Romani arrivals increases.

Mr Orban has long been accused of anti-Roma sentiment, while his government has supported the segregation of Romani children in schools and hinted that the community should not be entitled to the same family state benefits as the rest of the population.

"There have been some reports of ethnic profiling on the Hungary-Ukraine border, but several aid organisations have been working to counter that," Bernard Rorke, a long-time campaigner for Roma rights in Hungary, told The Independent.

"This government is without scruples and their behaviour is determined by what they deem to be political necessity. Orban has not hesitated before to single out the Roma for political gain as he has scapegoated the LGTBQ community," he added.

Hungary has received more than 214,000 refugees from Ukraine so far -amid an exodus that has seen at least 2.3 million people flee in total -although it is unknown how many of these are Romani people. Members of the Roma community have also fled to other neighbouring countries including Moldova and Romania.

Across Eastern Europe, observers and analysts have pointed out how Ukrainians have been treated favourably compared to the millions of people from nations such as Afghanistan, Syria, and Eritrea who have been arriving at the EU's borders and shores in recent years.

Nevertheless, the local community in Tiszabecs have opened their arms to all those fleeing Russia's war, according to the village's army of volunteers.

The village hall has been inundated with so many donations that they have started to turn away perishable goods, while a stall selling Langos, a Hungarian street dish, has been set up to feed people in need of a hearty meal after their long trek to safety.

"Teachers, old people, chefs, everyone has come to help people in need and in many cases that's Romani people," said Peter Borbely, the village's headmaster who closed his school for three days to focus on the humanitarian response.

"Everyone needs some support and that is what we will continue to provide. We'll keep going until the very end."

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 11, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky gives Churchillian address to MPs as UK announces Russian oil ban*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-0G81-DY4H-K2GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 6:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** BUSINESS; Version:6

**Length:** 1164 words

**Byline:** Patrick Daly

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian president used language similar to the British war leader and quoted from Shakespeare during his address.

**Body**

Ukraine President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) invoked British war leader Sir Winston Churchill in an emotional address to [*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) , vowing to fight invading Russian troops in the air, sea and on the streets.

In a speech to the House of Commons that was greeted before and after by standing ovations, Mr Zelensky repeated his call for a no-fly zone to be established by the West, begging for the UK to "make sure that our Ukrainian skies are safe".

The historic address came shortly after Business Secretary [*Kwasi Kwarteng*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kwasi-kwarteng) announced the UK will phase out the import of Russian oil and oil products by the end of the year as part of a ratcheting up of sanctions on Moscow for the attack, which was launched on February 24.

Elsewhere, there has been frustration at the slow progress in processing ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, with Defence Secretary [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) offering military support to the Home Office to help deal with the backlog of people trying to get into the UK.

During his address to the Commons, Mr Zelensky - who is said to have to keep his whereabouts a secret due to the threat of assassination in Kyiv - appealed to MPs by quoting from Shakespeare and paraphrasing Churchill.

In a nod to one of the former British prime minister's most inspiring speeches of the war, Mr Zelensky said: "We will fight until the end, at sea, in the air. We will continue fighting for our land, whatever the cost.

"We will fight in the forest, in the fields, on the shores, in the streets."

He also pressed home the desire of Ukrainians for their independence to continue, despite their homeland being under attack by Kremlin forces, with a line from Hamlet.

"The question for us now is to be or not to be," he said, in a translation by Parliament TV.

"Oh no, this Shakespearean question. For 13 days this question could have been asked but now I can give you a definitive answer. It's definitely yes, to be."

Never before in centuries of parliamentary history has the House of Commons listened to an address like that given by President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) today.We will employ every method we can for however long it takes to ensure Putin's invasion fails and Ukraine is free once more.- Boris Johnson (@BorisJohnson) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BorisJohnson/status/1501250118711922688?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The embattled president said Ukraine faced a similar dilemma to the one Britain encountered in the Second World War.He said the current conflict, in which he said 50 children had been killed, was akin to when Britain "didn't want to lose your country when the Nazis started to fight your country and you had to fight".Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , who received a personal thanks from Mr Zelensky for his support, told the Commons after the speech that "never before in all our centuries of our parliamentary democracy has the House listened to such an address"."In a great European capital now within range of Russian guns, President Volodymyr Zelensky is standing firm for democracy and for freedom," Mr Johnson said.Before the speech, the UK and the US jointly announced they would be banning the import of Russian oil and related products by 2023 as the allies looked to pile further economic pressure on President Vladimir Putin.Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said the nine-month delay until impact meant the fuel sector and other firms would have "more than enough time to replace Russian imports".NEW - the UK will phase out the import of Russian oil and oil products by the end of 2022.This transition will give the market, businesses and supply chains more than enough time to replace Russian imports - which make up 8% of UK demand.(1/4)- Kwasi Kwarteng (@KwasiKwarteng) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/KwasiKwarteng/status/1501229850454937600?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) With 8% of UK oil demand coming from Russia, the Cabinet minister urged businesses to "use this year to ensure a smooth transition so that consumers will not be affected", with support given to find alternative supplies.No UK petrol demand comes from Russia, nor heating or fuel oil, according to the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (Dukes) 2020.However, 18% of total demand for diesel and 5% of jet fuel comes from Russia.Beis officials said the ban, with the import of Russian oil making up almost half of Russian exports and 17% of federal government revenue through taxation, would "choke off a valuable source of income" for the Kremlin.This decision today is not without costs here at home. Putin's war is already hurting American families at the pump - and this will drive up costs further. So, I will take every step we can to minimize Putin's price hike here at home.- President Biden (@POTUS) [*March 8, 2022*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1501246366164606978?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Speaking in Washington, President Joe Biden said the US joining in with the phased oil prohibition would be a "powerful blow" to the war being raged by Mr Putin.

But he warned Americans that the sanction would have ripple effects at home, telling them that "defending freedom is going to cost" after Brent crude rose 7% to 131.95 dollars per barrel on Tuesday after media reports surfaced about the ban.

A year ago, Brent was trading at around 61 dollars per barrel.

The Prime Minister suggested that diesel prices could be set to rise further in Britain after the announcement, with prices at the forecourts already having soared following Moscow's attack on Kyiv, but predicted the decision "won't affect" domestic businesses.

Mr Johnson said the UK was "less exposed" than some European nations when it came to restricting Russian oil, with the European Union importing more than a quarter of its oil from Moscow.

During talks at Lancaster House, Downing Street said Mr Johnson and his Czech counterpart Petr Fiala agreed to work with European allies to ensure Russia can "no longer control energy supplies", in a sign of a further push to come on blocking the Kremlin's oil sales.

The Prime Minister met with Mr Fiala as part of discussions with the Visegrad group of countries, which also includes Slovakia, Hungary and Poland.

The V4 have received some of the most refugees since the conflict in Ukraine broke out, but the UK Government has faced flak, including from Conservative MPs, for the lack of visas it has so far handed out to those fleeing.

Home Office minister Kevin Foster said in the Commons that the figure for visas issued had risen to more than 500 - up from 300 on Monday night - while a new processing centre at Lille is expected to be set up within the next 24 hours.

The Prime Minister, speaking after his leaders meeting, said the numbers of refugees being accepted could run into the "hundreds of thousands" via what he called a "very generous programme".

Meanwhile, Transport Secretary Grant Shapps said it is now a criminal offence for any Russian planes to enter UK airspace, after a ban was previously announced.

Mr Shapps wrote to airports saying he can order them to detain Russian aircraft and has the power to order the Civil Aviation Authority to terminate registration of planes owned by sanctioned individuals.

"We will suffocate Putin's cronies' ability to continue living as normal while thousands of innocent people die," he tweeted.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Visa red tape is distracting men fighting on frontline, says Ukraine's former PM*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6508-25F1-JBNF-W2XW-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:** 1097 words

**Byline:** Geraldine Scott

**Highlight:** Volodymyr Groysman praised Boris Johnson as a 'strong world leader' but pushed for visa difficulties to be fixed.

**Body**

Red tape holding up refugees from reaching the UK could be distracting husbands and fathers left behind to fight Russian forces as they worry about the safety of their families who have fled, a former prime minister of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has said.

Volodymyr Groysman was Ukraine's premier between 2016 and 2019, and has been warning about the threat from the Kremlin for many years.

He led a government task force co-ordinating investigations into the crash of Malaysian Airlines flight [*Mhl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mhl) , which was shot down by a missile launched from an area of Ukraine controlled by pro-Russia separatists in July 2014.

He also led the resettlement of Ukrainians from the occupied Donbas and Crimea.

Now, although he remains in the country his whereabouts are kept secret as he finds himself on Russian leader Vladimir Putin's kill list as he works to defend his home.

Speaking to the PA news agency through a translator, Mr Groysman had nothing but praise for [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , calling the British Prime Minister, who has spoken most days to the country's President Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's number one ally.

Mr Groysman said he had known Mr Johnson "personally... for many years already".

"We've met on several occasions, I can tell you that he is real, he is genuine and he's a strong world leader, who is clearly on the good side.

"We feel the support and we are very grateful for the support."

But Mr Groysman, who said he could hear bomber jets outside during his interview with PA, said he was meeting every day those having to flee Ukraine, as he called the situation "tragic" and "very frightening".

"I'm not only observing the pictures of those people, I'm also meeting those refugees on a daily basis," he said.

"So this is a real nightmare for families and this nightmare, unfortunately, has a specific name.

"This nightmare's name is Putin and he has to be punished for that and I'm sure, I can tell you for sure, that we are never going to forget what he has done to us."

The former PM said the country was "very grateful for everything the United Kingdom is doing for us in these difficult times" but said he was aware of some "technical difficulties" with refugees from Ukraine getting visas.

"If there is a possibility to cut this red tape for Ukrainians and to help those people of course it will be welcome, because I think you're not going to regret the fact that you care about Ukrainians because Ukrainians are very good people, they are very bright, they need your help."

He added: "You also need to understand that each father or each husband who is now holding arms in his hands, he is really distracted from this war with the fact if he hears that there are some kind of technical difficulties which his family is suffering."

Levelling Up Secretary Michael Gove is due to set out details of a new "sponsored" humanitarian route to allow Ukrainians without family links to the UK to come to the country, following 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 more than 2.5 million now having fled the country.

The [*British Red Cross*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british-red-cross) said the quickest way of fixing the problem would be to remove the requirement for a visa, which has been done in other countries.

Home Office minister Baroness Williams of Trafford said on Friday that 1,305 visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had been issued as of Thursday morning, adding to peers: "Those figures are going up rapidly and that is a good thing."

Home Secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) has said there will be a "streamlined approach" from Tuesday, and 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."

Mr Groysman said it was "very important for people around Europe to know the truth and what's happening today in the centre of Europe", as the Russian invasion entered its third week.

"We hear air alarms several times a day, we hear bombings, bombs are being dropped at our Ukrainian cities, and I really believe that this is a World War Three already there and Putin started this World War Three against Ukraine and against the western countries, against all the democratic countries of the world and his aim is to destroy the western values and the democratic world as we know it and the first country on his way was Ukraine."

"Although he did not wish to dwell on the past, Mr Groysman said he had been warning "all the time that there is a high risk of Putin becoming more and more aggressive".

"I want to look into the future and to discuss what can be done now in order to stop Putin whom I these days refer to (as) modern Hitler," he said.

But this would not include Ukraine accepting Moscow's demands in negotiations that the independence of the occupied areas of Donetsk and Luhansk was recognised.

"I'm with the majority (of) Ukrainians who don't perceive such claims on behalf of Russia as adequate," he said.

"Because just imagine how it looks like, he puts a gun against your head and he asks you to forget about people living in the territories which belong to you.

"So this is of course an ultimatum, and our assignment, of course, is to stay united."

He added: "What he wants to do right now is he wants to steal our identity, and he is in fact executing genocide against the Ukrainian people."

Instead, he called for "more and more weapons and arms from our western partners, Ukraine needs that", and he backed calls for Nato to enforce a no-fly zone over his country.

He also said Russia should continue to be hit with economic sanctions and a "stable cohesion and togetherness between European leaders".

Mr Groysman, who is Jewish and lost half of his family in the Holocaust, said: "My grandmother miraculously survived when she was put in line with other Jews in the mass shooting of them, she fell down with all the other people but only a few of them were not actually killed by a bullet.

"It was a very tragic moment but she survived.

"We all know about those crimes against humanity which Hitler did during World War Two, so it's in our hands, let us all together prevent Putin from repeating Hitler's path.

"He's already started doing that, we can stop him before it's too late."

**Load-Date:** March 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'The Russians are the same as the Germans were then'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-H211-JCS0-D2YC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 11, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1120 words

**Byline:** DAVID COHEN

**Body**

Eighty-seven-year-old Tetyana Vatazhok leans heavily on her crutches and sets her face defiantly against the freezing cold as snow falls all around her. She gazes out in silence as her younger friend, 85-year-old Zhanna Zabrodska, sits immobilised in a wheelchair alongside her. Zhanna clutches a rucksack on her lap from which her cat Masha peeks out.

"Come feel my bag," she says. "Come and feel Masha shivering through the bag". Tears stream down Zhanna's cheeks. "This is too much," Zhanna says. "As a child, I lived through the Second World War. And now we have this."

She gestures to the queue of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** full of exhausted mothers and children who have made it here to Kroscienko on the Polish side of the border crossing - and are waiting for transit to a reception centre where warmth and hot food await them. "The Russians are same as the Germans then. I see them as Gestapo," she says.

Zhanna and Tetyana have travelled from their bombed-out city of Kharkiv and have been en route for more than two days. They are accompanied by their daughters, Veronica, 47, and Vita, 54, and their cats Masha and Syoma. Their grandchildren, they say, thankfully no longer lived in Ukraine. Grandparents are conspicuous at the border mostly because there are so few of them. The difficulty of enduring such an extremely arduous journey is reason enough.

In Zhanna's and Tetyana's case, they have a severe disability, diabetes, hearing loss and a myriad of other medical ailments to contend with. Why have they come?

Veronica says: "We were hiding in the basement for 11 days since the war began. The bombing was intense and non-stop. My mother lives on the ninth floor of an apartment block and Tetyana lives in the neighbouring building, but the elevators no longer worked so they couldn't get back to their flats. They were stuck in those freezing basements because the electricity had been cut off by the Russians and there was no heat, no light, no water - and we started running out of food as well.

"We heard about people in our town who went to the shops to buy food and got killed by the Russians, so we were too scared to go anywhere. The yard was covered with bomb parts and all around buildings have been destroyed. You cannot believe this has happened to the city you love. Things got so bad in that basement that we realised we couldn't stay because our mothers could die of cold. But also, we couldn't go because it was dangerous and there was a chance they weren't strong enough to make it. So we faced a dilemma. A terrible choice. In the end we decided to try make it to safety."

They waited for the Ukrainian checkpoint guards to tell them it was OK to leave, and joined a convoy to the railway station where they boarded a train to Lviv. "We left on 7 March, we were 8 March in Lviv and 9 March at the Polish border." It was at the border, adds Veroncia, that her mother had been in danger of collapsing and aid volunteers had given her a wheelchair.

Ahead of them a sign said "welcome to the European Union" but their conversation was mostly about the people they had left behind. Vita passes me her phone, pointing to a text message from her friend's children who had fled Kharkiv to a nearby town called Balakliya, hoping it would be better. The text says: "Can't go anywhere. We are now occupied."

How did they feel having made it to safety?

"I don't want to talk about my feelings because I will cry," says Veronica. "You can't tell it with words. We're still in shock from the very beginning of the war because it was so unexpected."

As we speak, a Polish fire volunteer (the firefighters have been extraordinary) wheels Zhanna through the muddy slush to the front of the queue, priority being given to the elderly disabled. Her scarf is wrapped tightly around her neck, and over her legs Veronica has draped a blanket, now wet from the snow. An observant Polish photographer notices Zhanna's hands are exposed, so he takes off the black leather gloves he is wearing and gives them to her.

An aid worker from World Central Kitchen offers the grandmothers apples. They take two each. After 20 minutes, a transit van arrives but it has no facility to load wheelchairs, so young mothers and children pile on instead.

One of the people waiting to board is Maria, an 18-year-old in a long flowing coat and high boots who has travelled on her own from Kyiv and who stands out because of her acute fashion sense, despite having fled 24 hours ago from Kyiv.

But Maria also stands out because she exudes red-hot anger and defiance. "At this point, I am so emotionally drained that I don't think anything," she says.

"This is not something I thought I would ever experience in my life. I didn't want to leave and I stayed as long as I could. I left behind my boyfriend and so many people I love, including my elderly relatives."

She looks at Zhanna and Tetyana but it is not clear she even sees them. "I am very, very tired, but I can tell you this. We will be going back to Kyiv. I have no doubt. None."

Suddenly, into their midst, stepping out of a Red Cross van, sweeps a ball of energy handing out soft toys and bringing the first smiles of the day to the faces of children.

It is the mayor of Jaslo, Elwira Musialowicz-Czech, 45, who has travelled from her town about 100km away to drop three vans of aid at the border to be picked up by the mayor of a town they twinned with in Ukraine.

I ask about their link to the Red Cross - one of the 13 charities our Refugees Welcome appeal is funding - and she says: " We are collaborating with the Red Cross because they are the experts in the field who know what is needed and because the Red Cross sign is one recognised all over the country as a sign of good people caring.

"We are working with them to take what is needed now - electricity generators, baby food, first aid kits and medicines. And we will be here same time tomorrow. And the day after. Until this terrible thing is over."

An hour later, Tetyana and Zhanna are still waiting for a transit at the front of the queue. Where will they go? Zhanna shrugs. "We don't know," she says. The snow falls. Tears still roll down her cheeks.

Additional reporting, translating, by Sofiia Sas

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 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Indian students in Ukraine in fear as Russian invasion grows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X4-T8R1-JBNF-W04G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 4:17 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:2

**Length:** 1137 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Thousands of Indians studying in Ukraine have suddenly found themselves in the midst of war after Russia invaded the country last week, with many hunkered inside bunkers and fearful of what lies ahead

**Body**

[*Indian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/indian) student Abrar Sheikh has been waking up to the loud thuds of bombs that have pummeled Sumy, a city in northeastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near the Russian border, for the last three days. When he hears the sounds of shelling, he rushes to a nearby bunker, praying the bombs don't find him.

On Tuesday, the blare of the bombs became louder. The food inside the bunker got scarcer and the cries of children inside grew.

"At that moment, all I could think of was my family," Sheikh, 22, said by cellphone from the underground bunker on Wednesday, his voice thick with fear.

"Sometimes the bunker goes all silent after we hear the sound of the bombs and I think, 'Is this it?'" he said. "At night we pull the curtains in our rooms to keep them dark, hoping Russian troops don't know we are inside."

Thousands of Indians studying in Ukraine have suddenly found themselves in the midst of the war after Russia invaded the country last week, with many hunkered inside bunkers and fearful of what lies ahead.

Pressure on the Indian government to pull out its citizens has intensified in recent days, especially after one student died in shelling in [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) on Tuesday. The government says about 17,000 out of an estimated 20,000 Indian citizens in Ukraine have left the country and that India is trying to evacuate the rest to nearby countries from where they can be flown back home. Many of those who remain stranded are in conflict areas such as Kharkiv and Sumy.

Sheikh, a medical student at Sumy State University, has been trying to leave the city for several days. But shelling by Russian forces has left him and about 500 other Indian students in the city trapped.

They are about 50 kilometers (30 miles) from the Russian border. But they are hundreds of kilometers and at least 10 hours away from Ukraine's western border, considered to be safer, where Indian officials have so far focused their evacuation efforts. Evacuation flights have taken off from countries bordering western Ukraine, such as Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , with more scheduled. A group of Indian Cabinet ministers has flown to these countries to help with rescue efforts.

But for those stuck in the eastern region, there appears no safe way out yet. India has sent a team from its embassy in Moscow to Belgorod, a Russian city close to the border with Ukraine, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla said Tuesday. "This team is in place and ready to see whatever we can do to extract our students and citizens from the Kharkiv and Sumy area," he said.

India has asked all its citizens to immediately leave Kharkiv after receiving information from Russia, External Affairs Ministry spokesman Arindam Bagchi said. They have been advised to move to three safe zones about 15 kilometers (9 miles) away using any means, including on foot, he said. Bagchi did not describe the information provided by Russia.

In Sumy, about 180 kilometers (110 miles) from Kharkiv, an oil depot was reportedly bombed, railway tracks have been destroyed, and there is fighting in the streets, students said.

"We cannot leave. We have no way of getting to the western part. There is no train or bus or any transport to take us there," said Chandra Reddy, 22, another medical student at Sumy State University.

Reddy said he was in touch with Indian authorities, who urged him to stay put for now.

He said he risked his life on Tuesday to go to a nearby grocery store, leaving the bunker where he has spent most of his time over the last six days. He quickly bought packets of rice, vegetables and fruit - enough to last a few days - before rushing back.

On the same day, Indian student Naveen S. Gyanagoudar was killed in Kharkiv when he left his bunker to go buy food.

"When I heard that, it hit me that I had just done the same thing, that this can be me next," Reddy said.

Approximately 18,000 Indian students were in Ukraine, most of them studying medicine. The state-run universities are popular with Indian students for their high-quality education at affordable prices, and as an alternative to India's overcrowded and competitive public universities.

Following the invasion last week, a number of Western and Asian countries slapped sanctions on Russia, but India sought to appear neutral. It has refrained from criticizing Russia or directly acknowledging Ukraine's sovereignty, instead pushing for diplomacy and dialogue. On Wednesday, it abstained from voting on a U.N. General Assembly resolution demanding an immediate halt to Moscow's attack on Ukraine -similarly, it abstained from voting on a U.N. Security Council resolution last week. Experts said the decision didn't signal support for Moscow, but reflected India's historic partnership with Russia, a Cold War ally it continues to rely on for energy, weapons and support in conflicts with neighbors.

Stranded Indians have appealed for help on social media. In one video, a crying student begged the Indian government for assistance. Another showed dozens of students walking toward crowded borders where they waited for hours before being allowed into neighboring countries.

Such images have sparked sharp criticism of the government's rescue operation, with some, including opposition political leaders, saying India should have reacted sooner.

India issued an advisory on Feb. 15 telling those who didn't have essential work in Ukraine to consider leaving temporarily - four days after the United States urged all Americans to leave immediately.

Government officials have rejected the criticism. Many have rushed to [*New Delhi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-delhi) 's airport in recent days to welcome returning students with flowers.

Nimshim Zimik, who returned to India on Tuesday, said she spent a week in a basement in the Ukrainian city of Vinnytsia, ready with her luggage and essential documents. At night, she and her friends took turns sleeping.

"But we could never really sleep knowing that a bomb could fall anytime on us," she said.

On Saturday, with no signs of help arriving, Zimik decided to leave the city.

She and 53 other students contacted a Ukrainian driver and left early in the morning. But the bus broke down midway, forcing them to walk almost 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the Romanian border.

She was finally evacuated in a special flight from Romania on Tuesday.

"It's like a dream," she said. "Arriving here feels like a very heavy load has been lifted off me."

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Associated Press journalists Ashok Sharma and Chonchui Ngashangva 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)

[*Abstract portrait of Sir Michael Caine fetches £25,000 at auction*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/michael-caine-oscar-london-bonhams-indian-b2027208.html)

[*Many non-Ukrainians flee Ukraine, their fates also uncertain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-poland-krakow-germany-middle-eastern-b2025635.html)

[*Volunteers extend help to thousands of refugees from Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-romania-poland-maia-sandu-hungary-b2024456.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine people smugglers make refugees their target*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XB-PT11-F072-450D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 4, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1226 words

**Byline:** NADINE WHITE, MAY BULMAN

**Body**

Refugees trying to flee the conflict in Ukraine say they have been targeted by people smugglers offering transport across the border for extortionate prices, amid fears of a surge in human trafficking on the country's border.

Students stranded in the northeast of the country have said they are being offered safe passage to Poland by smugglers in trucks in exchange for $500 (£375), which they are unable to pay. In other cases, refugees said they have witnessed apparent volunteers colluding with Ukraine immigration officials to prioritise the entry of those who are willing to pay a fee to flee the country at border points.

NGOs said they were urgently working to implement "critically important anti-trafficking measures", as concern mounts that hundreds of Ukrainians are at risk of exploitation from traffickers. More than 1 million Ukrainians have already crossed the border, and the EU has said that 7 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of the conflict.

Many others have crossed the border and are now in surrounding countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia, while some remain trapped within Ukraine's borders struggling to leave due to a lack of available transport to reach the border as violence escalates.

One 23-year-old student who is currently stranded in Sumy, a city in northeast Ukraine, told The Independent he had been targeted by smugglers offering safe passage to Poland in exchange for $500. The man, who studies medicine, said he was currently sleeping in a shelter along with around 100 other refugees, and that he was desperate to return to his family in the UK.

"There's a group of seven smugglers here and they leave with a truck every night - the more fortunate of us are on it - and the last truck will be gone soon," he said. "I really want to leave but haven't got the money to pay the smugglers. But if I miss this opportunity then I have no hope other than walking for days after that - my phone battery is at 15 per cent, I'm scared for my safety and I wouldn't be sure of where exactly to go. Some black refugees with commodities bargain their way onto these trucks; food is worth more than money here and even toothpaste."

More than 1,000 students are currently said to be stuck in Sumy, many of whom are believed to be of Indian, Chinese, Caribbean and African origin. They are contending with shortages in food and water and, while Russia lays siege to the area, there are few safe routes out of the city.

In another case, a young man told The Independent that volunteers, claiming to be a part of the Red Cross, were colluding with Ukraine immigration officials to prioritise the entry of refugees who are willing to pay a fee to flee the country at border points. The refugee, in his early twenties, said he witnessed this happening on Wednesday afternoon at the Chop border crossing into Hungary, where he said those fleeing Ukraine without passports were targeted.

The people claiming to be volunteers announced that refugees who don't have a hard copy of their passports should make themselves known in order to be "sorted" before reaching the stamp point and they were then placed into a separate line, the witness said. They said they saw at least seven refugees, all black, pay a bribe and be fast-tracked through.

"They segregated us and kept us there for a couple hours. A guy whose girlfriend was amongst us started talking to one of the immigration officers and, towards the end of the discussion, he handed over dollars and they then allowed him, his girlfriend and two other of his friends to pass.

"After that, the immigration guy chose a few Red Cross volunteers working with him to collect bribes from people who are desperate to leave. It's saddening. A few hours later, about four other guys followed the same process. They are not students and they don't have a valid passport, not even a picture of it, but they allowed them to cross after bribery."

Luke Tredget, head of emergencies at the British Red Cross, said he was "appalled" to hear the reports and that he had been in touch with his colleagues in the region to raise it "as a matter of urgency" and ensure that it was investigated. "The British Red Cross strongly rejects discrimination and corruption of any kind, and we are very concerned about these allegations being made against members of the Red Cross Movement," he added.

NGOs are bolstering efforts to prevent and tackle an anticipated surge in smuggling and human trafficking on the Ukrainian border, as refugeesfall prey to criminal gangs and opportunists "waiting to traffic people across Europe and into the hands of exploitative industries".

The International Justice Mission (IJM), an NGO focused on protecting vulnerable people form violence, said it was urgently working with local authorities and partners to implement "critically important anti-trafficking measures" on the border. One member of staff at the IJM, who is working close to the Ukraine-Romania border in shelters housing refugees, told The Independent that people smugglers were known to be targeting people, including women and children, once they have crossed the border.

"From the border to where the houses start there is about another 5km walk, most of it on an A-road. Women and children wait for long hours to cross the border. If someone offers you a warm car you're going to take it. You want your children to be warm," she said. "There are charities and the authorities offering lifts, but some people want to offer lifts which are not done through official channels. There are going to be opportunists who hang around there offering to give lifts or accommodation and things like that."

The staff member added that many of those arriving in the shelters had reported that they were forced to pay bribes to cost the border. "We've been told they've been asked to pay by the border authorities. For men crossing it's Euro 2,000, for women and children around Euro 30," she said.

A Romanian police source told The Independent that the authorities were concerned about the risk, and that they were already seeing "signs" of human trafficking at the border. "There are some signs of this happening. We haven't opened any investigations into cases yet, but experience tells us that exploiters will usually first try to gain trust of the victim. This means staying with them for days or even a month, and make an interdependence with them," they said. "We don't except them to be very visible at this stage. The problems will appear in time."

A spokesperson for the Polish government said its Centre for Missing Persons had launched a "special hotline" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their families staying in Poland to report cases of human trafficking, sex crimes or the disappearance of refugees. "Police officers are watching over the safety of residents and people who have come to us from Ukraine. Police patrols are on the streets so that everyone can feel safe [???] In Przemysl alone, there are 300 additional officers," they added.

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. To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign,click here. To sign the petitionclick here.If you would like to donate then pleaseclick herefor our GoFundMe page

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'I love Berlin': Jewish refugee kids reach safety in Germany*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XF-89Y1-DY4H-K2S4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 4, 2022 Friday 7:02 PM GMT

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**Length:** 1075 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** More than 100 Jewish refugee children who were evacuated from a foster care home in war-torn Ukraine and made their way across Europe by bus have arrived in Berlin

**Body**

Maxim and Shaul had spent the last 52 hours on a bus full of dozens of [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) refugee children that took them from war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the dark of night and across six European borders to safety in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin).

Pale, tired and overwhelmed, the two teenagers looked around when they finally arrived in the German capital Friday morning. There were lots of police officers in front of their hotel who had cordoned off the street so the 105 children could exit their buses as Jewish women from Berlin's Chabad community spontaneously started singing at the top of their voices to give them a joyous and relieved welcome.

"I love Berlin, it's beautiful," 14-year-old Maxim said a little while later as he sat down to a kosher breakfast of tuna salad, cucumbers, cereal, eggs and pita bread. "Last week we were still sitting in the bunker and the sirens were wailing nonstop."

His friend Shaul, 13, nodded, too tired to say much, straightened his red-checkered kippa and went over to one of the 15 foster home staffers to make sure he and Maxim would be sharing a room in Berlin. The children's last names were withheld because they are minors.

Only three days earlier, Rabbi Yehuda Teichtal, a Berlin rabbi and the head of the local Chabad community, had received a phone call from a rabbi in the Ukrainian port city of Odesa begging him to help get the children and teens from the foster care home Mishpacha - [*Hebrew*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hebrew) for family - to a peaceful and secure place.

"It's been a huge challenge but with the grace of God we worked it out together to bring these precious souls into safety," Teichtal, 49, told The Associated Press. The rabbi and a team of around 100 volunteers from the Chabad community had barely slept since they got the call for help from Odesa.

They soon figured out that traveling by plane would not be an option since about 40 of the children had no passports, only birth certificates. So they talked to diplomats and security officials from Israel, [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and other European countries the children would have to travel through for help making the 1,000-mile (1,700-kilometer) overland trek come true.

They raised money from Jewish aid groups and told the children to quickly pack warm winter clothes. The teenagers also took along their cell phones, while the little ones clutched their favorite stuffed animals tightly.

"When we got on the road, we told the children that we are going on a winter trip," said Rabbi Mendy Wolff, 25, from Odesa, who accompanied the children on the journey. "They should not feel like refugees for a single moment."

Thanks to the joint international diplomatic efforts the buses - one for the girls and another for the boys - crossed the borders of Moldova, Romania, Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, before finally entering Germany without any problems.

"They made a 'green corridor' for us," Wolff said. When they crossed from Moldova to Romania, the buses were even allowed to use the diplomatic lane, passing a long line of around 100 buses full of other ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** waiting to get into the European Union.

More than 1 million people have fled since Russia invaded Ukraine last week. Several thousand have reached Germany. Many are coming to Berlin, with hundreds arriving daily on trains via Poland. The Berlin mayor, Frankziska Giffey, said earlier this week that around 20,000 refugees from Ukraine are expected to reach the city in the near future.

Most of the children from the Odesa home are foster kids, some are orphans and a few are members of the city's Chabad community who were sent out of the country by parents who couldn't flee their homes. Not all teenagers from the foster care home could come along. Boys aged 18 and older had to stay behind as men of military age are not allowed to leave the country.

After their first breakfast in Berlin, the children grabbed their backpacks and started arguing over who got to share rooms - almost like a regular group of kids on a school trip. Only the sound track was much more international - it was a Babylonian tangle of Ukrainian, Russian, Hebrew, English, German and even some Yiddish.

Baby Tuvia - only 5 weeks old - cried a little as the kids left the breakfast hall for their rooms. Sada, who had just turned 5, proudly held onto a big birthday balloon as she walked through the hallways with one of the caretakers, and Shoshana Khusid, 18, and one of the oldest, stared out of the window worrying about her parents back home.

"I'm still afraid because my mother and father stayed in Ukraine, in Odesa, and all the time something happens there, and I read the news, and all the time I call them and ask, 'What happened?'" the teenager said with a worried face. "They tell me it's all OK because they're my parents. That's something not good."

Asked about the future, she got monosyllabic.

"I hope to be back home in two weeks," she said with an insecure smile.

Nobody really knows how long the children will stay in Berlin - it depends on when the war ends in Ukraine - but the community is determined to do everything to make them feel at home as long as needed.

"We assume that they will stay here a little longer," said Roy Frydling, one of Chabad's volunteers. "The idea is that there will be an everyday life here for them soon, that they can go to school and kindergarten."

"They will definitely stay together as one group," Frydling added. He said the plan was to put the children up at the hotel for the first two to four weeks, and that the Chabad community had already started looking for a building where the children can live afterward.

"We've received an outpouring of support from the community and beyond, lots of clothes and other supplies, but what we really need now are financial donations - only the food for all the children costs about 5,000 euros every day," he added.

Alina Chubattaya, 59, the director of the children's home, looked concerned when asked about a possible return date to Odesa.

"My husband, my daughter, my son and my dog, are all still in Odesa," she said with a sad smile. "My heart is there, too," she added. "But I also wanted to take these kids here to safety."

"I hope we will be back in time for Purim," Chubattaya said, referring to the Jewish holiday which begins on the eve of March 16 this year and commemorates the Jews' rescue from persecution in the ancient Persian empire.

"You know, we Jews, we always dream of a better future."

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AP writer Ilan Ben Zion contributed from Jerusalem.

**Load-Date:** March 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine War: What to know on Day 8 of Russian assault*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-FNW1-JBNF-W046-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 8:52 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS; Version:1

**Length:** 1159 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russia and Ukraine are expected to hold a second round of talks Thursday in Belarus

**Body**

Delegations from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are expected to hold talks in [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) on Thursday, a second round of face-to-face discussions since the Russian invasion eight days ago.

In a video address to the nation early Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Ukrainians to keep up their resistance, but didn't comment on whether the Russians have seized any cities.

"They will have no peace here," Zelenskyy said, calling on the Russian soldiers to "go home" and describing them as "confused children who have been used."

His comments come as Russia acknowledged for the first time since the start of the invasion that nearly 500 Russian troops have been killed in the fighting and around 1,600 wounded. Ukraine has not released a similar casualty figure for its armed forces.

Ukraine's State Emergency Service has said more than 2,000 civilians have died, though it was impossible to verify the claim. The U.N. human rights office said it had recorded the deaths of 136 civilians, including 13 children, in Ukraine since the start of the invasion on Feb. 24.

Meanwhile, the U.N. refugee agency said 1 million people have fled Ukraine since Russian forces invaded last week. It marks the swiftest exodus of refugees this century. Also, the U.N. General Assembly has condemned the invasion and called on Russia to withdraw its troops from Ukraine.

Here's a look at key things to know about the conflict:

POSSIBLE TALKS

The Ukrainian president's office said Wednesday evening that the country's delegation was on its way to the second round of talks with Russia since the invasion began, but it didn't say when it was expected to arrive.

Vladimir Medinsky, Russian President Vladimir Putin's aide and the head of Russia's delegation, told reporters the Ukrainians were expected to arrive Thursday for the talks in the Brest region of Belarus, which borders Poland.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said earlier Wednesday that his country was ready for talks to resume, but he noted that Russia's demands hadn't changed and that he wouldn't accept any ultimatums.

WHAT ABOUT VIOLENCE IN UKRAINE?

Zelenskyy's office reported a powerful explosion Wednesday night between the Southern Railway Station and the Ibis hotel in Kyiv. Ukraine's Defense Ministry is located near that area.

Two cruise missiles hit a hospital in the northern city of Chernihiv, the Ukrainian news agency UNIAN quoted the city's chief health administrator, Serhiy Pivovar, as saying. The hospital's main building was damaged and authorities were working to determine the casualty toll, he said.

And in Mariupol, at least one teenager died and two more were wounded by apparent Russian shelling. The boys' families said they had been playing soccer near a school.

Russia's 40-mile-long (64-kilometer-long) convoy of tanks and other vehicles remains outside the capital, Kyiv. The city has has been struck by deadly shelling.

Russia says troops have taken the Ukrainian port city of Kherson. The Ukrainian military denies this. Russian forces have also been bombarding the country's second-biggest city, Kharkiv, and laid siege to two strategic seaports.

WHAT IS THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION?

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi wrote on Twitter that an exodus of 1 million refugees from Ukraine to neighboring countries has unspooled over the past seven days. This amounts to more than 2% of Ukraine's population, though some of those fleeing Ukraine are citizens of other countries.

The U.N. agency has predicted that up to 4 million people could eventually leave Ukraine, but cautioned that even that projection could be revised upward. The World Bank counted Ukraine's population at 44 million at the end of 2020.

The EU Commission says it will give temporary residence permits to refugees fleeing the violence and allow them to study and work in the 27-nation bloc. The move would need the approval of member states, which have already expressed broad support.

U.N. CONDEMNATION AND WAR CRIMES INVESTIGATION

The U.N. General Assembly voted Wednesday to demand that Russia stop its offensive in Ukraine and withdraw all troops, with nations from world powers to tiny island states condemning Moscow. The vote was 141 to 5, with 35 abstentions.

U.S. President Joe Biden said the vote "demonstrates the extent of global outrage" at Russia's assault on its neighbor.

The resolution deplored Russia's "aggression" against Ukraine "in the strongest terms." General Assembly resolutions aren't legally binding.

The International Criminal Court's prosecutor opened an investigation Wednesday into possible war crimes, crimes against humanity or genocide in Ukraine, dating back to 2013 and covering the current conflict. Prosecutor Karim Khan said he did so after 39 of the court's member states requested an investigation.

Ukraine and Russia, however, are not among the International Criminal Court's 123 member states.

ARE SANCTIONS HURTING RUSSIA?

In Washington, the White House announced additional sanctions against Russia and Belarus, including extending export controls that target Russian oil refining and entities supporting both countries' militaries. The U.S. is also joining Europe and Canada in closing off its airspace to Russian airlines.

Additionally, [*Airbus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/airbus) and Boeing said they would cut off spare parts and technical support to the country's airlines. The French-based Airbus and U.S.-based Boeing's aircraft account for the vast majority or Russia's passenger fleet.

The sanctions also threaten ultra-wealthy Russians who own properties across Europe and send their children to elite European private schools. Some have begun, albeit tentatively, to speak out.

Russian billionaire [*Roman Abramovich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roman-abramovich) confirmed Wednesday he's trying to sell the Premier League Chelsea soccer club, with a price tag of at least $2.5 billion floated. He said net proceeds from the sale will be donated to benefit all victims of the war in Ukraine.

Ordinary Russians are also feeling the impact of the sanctions, from payment systems that won't operate and problems withdrawing cash to not being able to purchase certain items.

Also, in a stunning reversal, Russian and Belarusian athletes have been banned from the Paralympics Games for their countries' roles in the war in Ukraine. The International Paralympic Committee announced the about-face less than 24 hours after it had said it would allow the athletes to compete when the Games open on Friday as neutral athletes with colors, flags and other national symbols removed.

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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)

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)

[*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)

[*Elderly woman arrested in Russian anti-war protest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-elderly-woman-anti-war-protest-b2027436.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Wagner says no ammunition from Putin ahead of Victory Day parade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6863-6SM1-JBNF-W0KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 8, 2023 Monday 10:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:21

**Length:** 5276 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Bakhmut fight will go on as mercenary chief says he does not want to ‘spoil’ celebrations

**Body**

The leader of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) Group mercenary forces has again accused the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) of failing to send promised ammunition to the frontline.

Speaking as Russia prepared to mark its annual Victory Day with a parade through Moscow today, [*Yevgeny Prigozhin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yevgeny-prigozhin) said he did not want his complaints to “spoil” the celebrations.

Yet in a video post on Telegram he withdrew comments from just hours earlier saying the requested supplies were on route to his forces in [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut).

“The people who were supposed to fulfil the (shipment) orders have so far, over the past day, not fulfilled them,” Prigozhin said.

On the [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) front, Russian forces continued to drop missiles and lethal drones overnight on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities, marking the 10th day of bombardments in a row.

Air raid sirens wailed across Ukrainian cities in the early hours of Tuesday, with more than two-third of Ukrainian cities under air raid alert.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) will oversee the Moscow celebrations of the anniversary of victory over Nazi Germany in the Second World War with a parade in Red Square amid tight security arrangements.

Key Points

Wagner says no sign of promised ammunition from Putin Ukraine’s air defence systems repel overnight attacks on Kyiv Ukraine issues nationwide air alert Putin launches suicide drone attack on Kyiv Ukraine says Russia has effectively stopped Black Sea grain deal US to announce $1.2bn in military aid for Ukraine

Wagner says no sign of promised ammunition from Putin

Russia’s mercenary Wagner forces have not yet received the ammunition promised by Moscow, the group’s leader Yevgeny Prigozhin said, backtracking on his previous comments from just hours earlier claiming that they were being supplied with promised weapons.

“The people who were supposed to fulfil the (shipment) orders have so far, over the past day, not fulfilled them,” Prigozhin said in a video post on Telegram.

However, he added that he does not want to “spoil” Russia’s grand Victory Day parade today and reserved more details on ammunition hunger for later.

Late yesterday, he had said preliminary data showed his troops were beginning to get the ammunition, while cautioning they had not “seen it in practice”.

Russia’s Bakhmut campaign threatening water supply in Donetsk – MoD

Water scarcity has been a growing issue for Russian-occupied Donetsk since the invasion of Ukraine last year and a separatist leader there says regional water supplies are now dangerously low, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.

“The Siversky-Donets canal which supplies the region remains largely under Ukrainian control but has been frequently contested along its long route. Russian forces have likely been seeking to secure the canal to reduce water scarcity within Donetsk,” the MoD said.

It added that the Siversky-Donets canal traverses through the town of Chasiv Yar, approximately 6km to the west of Bakhmut.

“Russia’s heavy use of indirect artillery to support the capture of Bakhmut and surrounding territory has likely inflicted collateral damage to the canal and other regional water infrastructure, undermining Russia’s efforts to remedy the lack of water that its invasion originally created,” the ministry said.

Russia is likely constructing a water pipeline to mitigate the water shortage in Donetsk to compensate for its lack of success in capturing and retaining the canal but this is highly unlikely to fully compensate for the occupied regions’ reduced access to water, the ministry said.

Ukraine downs 23 out of 25 cruise missiles fired by Russia overnight

The Ukrainian military has downed 23 out of a total 25 cruise missiles launched by the Russia overnight, officials said.

Russia fired a range of Kalibr and X-101/X-555 cruise missiles overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force said in its Tuesday morning update.

Of these, eight Kalibr cruises missiles were fired around 10pm last night from warships in the Black Sea facing the eastern regions of the war-hit nation, the air force said.

“As at the front, the plans of the aggressor failed,” Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv’s city military administration, said on Telegram.

“(They) try to kill as many civilians as possible – on this day,” the official said, referring to the annual Victory Day celebration of the defeat of Nazi Germany.

No immediate casualties have been reported so far according to preliminary information, he added.

The cruise missiles were fired on Ukraine from the Caspian Sea region.

Today’s attacks – the fifth such bombardment this month – came a day after Russia launched its biggest drone swarm yet as part of a renewed air campaign unleashed 10 days ago.

Russia marks Victory Day with missiles and drones on sleeping civilians, says top US envoy

The US ambassador to Kyiv has condemned Russian airstrikes and drone attacks on the besieged country after over a dozen missiles were fired on Ukrainian cities overnight.

“Ukraine, Europe, and the United States commemorated victory over tyranny yesterday. Russia marks 9 May with more missiles and drones launched toward Ukrainian cities and sleeping civilians,” US envoy Bridget A Brink said today.

Ukraine, Europe, and the United States commemorated victory over tyranny yesterday. Russia marks May 9 with more missiles and drones launched toward Ukrainian cities and sleeping civilians.— Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) [*May 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/USAmbKyiv/status/1655791066426097665?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

US to announce $1.2bn in military aid for Ukraine

The Biden administration is likely to announce a new $1.2bn (£9.5m) military aid package for Ukraine, packing in air defence systems, ammunition and funds for training, an official said.

Ukraine will receive 155-mm Howitzer ammunition, counter-drone ammunition, and funding for satellite imagery as well as various types of training in this tranche of aid, the official said.

The package is paid from Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funding which allows president Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry rather than pull from US weapons stocks.

Ukraine’s air defence systems repel overnight attacks on Kyiv

Ukraine’s air defence systems are repelling Russian attacks on Kyiv, the capital city’s military administration said early today as air raid sirens wailed across the country in the small hours.

“Air defence systems are working on the outskirts of Kyiv,” the administration said on its Telegram.

This comes just a day after Russia launched its biggest drone swarm yet in a renewed air campaign unleashed 10 days ago after a lull since early March.

Watch: Moment shell explodes in Bakhmut amid heavy fighting

Footage from a Ukrainian military drone shows the moment a shell exploded in the western part of embattled Ukrainian city Bakhmut.

The footage shows damaged buildings and heavy plumes of smoke rising over the city, which has been the focus of heavy fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

Reuters news agency verified the location from the buildings, road layout, and field, which matched satellite photography of the area.

Russia has intensified shelling of Bakhmut hoping to take it by Tuesday, Ukraine’s top general in charge of the defence of the besieged city said late on Sunday, vowing to do everything to prevent it.

Ukraine, Sudan conflicts fuel alarming surge in tuberculosis

Top UN officials and health industry leaders are trying to tackle an alarming surge in tuberculosis, which is now killing more people worldwide than Covid-19 or AIDS. Among the problems: a high number of cases in conflict zones, including Ukraine and Sudan, where it’s difficult to track down people with the disease and diagnose new sufferers (Edith Lederer writes).

Tuberculosis is the biggest infectious disease killer in the world today, taking the lives of around 4,400 people every day, including 700 children, Dr Lucica Ditiu, executive director of the Stop TB Partnership, said before a hearing Monday to prepare for a high-level meeting in late September during the annual gathering of world leaders at the UN General Assembly.

Before Covid-19, which like TB is transmitted through the air, “we didn’t see very dramatic cases of TB,” she said, “but after Covid we saw a type of TB that we saw in … movies in which people spit blood and they are very weak, and so on.”

Ditiu said the economic impact of Covid and conflicts, first and foremost in Ukraine but now also in Sudan, are having “a huge impact” on efforts to treat people with TB and diagnose new cases.

Ukraine has the highest number of estimated people with TB in the European region – 34,000 – and also a high number with drug-resistant TB, she said at a news conference last week.

Click here to read on:

[*Ukraine, Sudan conflicts fuel alarming surge in tuberculosis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-covid-sudan-ukraine-aids-b2335078.html)

NYT takes Pulitzer prize for Ukraine reporting

The New York Times won the Pulitzer prize for international reporting for its coverage of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. A Reuters team was named as a finalist in that category for a series exposing grave human-rights abuses by the Nigerian military against women and children during its long war with Islamist militants.

The Wall Street Journal won the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting for revealing financial conflicts of interest among officials at dozens of federal agencies, the award administrator said on Monday.

The Los Angeles Times won the Pulitzer Prize for breaking news for revealing a secretly recorded conversation among city officials that included racist comments, while the Washington Post took home the national reporting award for her coverage of abortion after the US Supreme Court’s decision to eliminate a nationwide right to abortion.

The annual Pulitzers, first presented in 1917, are the most prestigious honours in US journalism.

Wagner group chief says ammunition arriving after furious rant

The head of Russia‘s mercenary Wagner group said on Monday that according to preliminary data his troops were beginning to receive the ammunition they needed, and reported heavy fighting in the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut.

“Today, the groups advanced a maximum of 130 metres (400 feet) ... Fierce fighting is going on, but the groups are continuing to advance,” Yevgeny Prigozhin said in an audio message posted on social media.

“According to preliminary data, we are starting to receive ammunition. We have not (yet) seen it in practice.”

Mr Prigozhin last week posted a video of himself raging against military leaders in Moscow for what he claimed was an ammo shortage that had allowed many of his troops to die.

Russia bans jet skis and car sharing ahead of Victory Day

Russia enacted a major security clampdown ahead of Tuesday’s annual commemorations marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War, curbing the use of drones and car-sharing services in its largest cities amid its 14-month war with Ukraine.

At least 21 Russian cities cancelled May 9 military parades – the staple of Victory Day celebrations across Russia – for the first time in years, Russian media said.

Regional officials blamed unspecified “security concerns” or vaguely referred to “the current situation” for the restrictions and cancellations. It was not clear whether their decisions were taken in co-ordination with the Kremlin.

Last week, Russia – which has not witnessed the carnage experienced by Ukraine during the invasion – was rattled by ambiguous official reports that two Ukrainian drones flew into the heart of Moscow under the cover of darkness and reached the Kremlin before being shot down.

Media and local officials have blamed other sporadic drone attacks, especially targeting oil depots near the two countries’ border, on the Ukrainian military. Kyiv officials have declined to comment on such claims.

Italy ‘strongly recommends’ its citizens leave Ukraine by any means

Rome’s foreign ministry on Monday “strongly recommended” that any Italians still in Ukraine leave by any means.

The alert was issued in the wake of “ever heavier missile attacks on Kyiv and across all Ukrainian territory”, the ministry said on its “Viaggiare sicuri” (Travelling safely) website.

“All travel to Ukraine, in any capacity, is strongly discouraged,” it said, urging anyone going for work to take “appropriate risk prevention and mitigation measures” and exercise “maximum caution”.

Russia launched its biggest swarm of drone attacks for months against Ukraine on Monday, and Kyiv says it will soon launch a counteroffensive to try to reclaim territory from Moscow’s invasion forces.

Ukrainian Eurovision act hails UK ‘family'

Ukraine‘s Eurovision act has described the UK as “family” after arriving in Liverpool to the sight of sunflowers and their national flag.

The city has been transformed with public artworks and installations for the international music competition, which the UK is hosting on behalf of Ukraine amid the Russian invasion.

Electronic duo Tvorchi, made up of producer Andrii Hutsuliak and Nigeria-raised vocalist Jeffery Kenny, will compete in the grand final with their rousing song Heart Of Steel.

The pair are hoping to defend Ukraine‘s Eurovision title after Kalush Orchestra swept to victory last year on a wave of support from the voting public.

They are yet to meet the folk-rap outfit, who are scheduled to perform during the grand final on Saturday, and also said President Volodymyr Zelensky had not yet reached out to wish them luck.

In pictures: Russian suicide drone strikes injure 5

Russia launched a wave of kamikaze drones across Ukraine overnight, according to Kyiv officials.

Vitali Klitschko, the capital’s mayor, said Russia had fired 60 Iranian-made kamikaze drones, including 36 at Kyiv, all of which had been shot down. However, debris hit apartments and other buildings, injuring at least five people.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian military said 16 rockets had hit the Kharkiv, Kherson, Mykolaiv and Odesa regions in the last 24 hours, in addition to 61 strikes and 52 rocket salvos on Ukrainian positions and populated areas.

Ukraine steel giant gives staff day off over missile fears

Ukraine’s largest steel producer, ArcelorMittal Kryvyi Rih, said it told staff to take Tuesday off or work remotely because of the threat of Russian air strikes.

The company, which employs about 20,000 people is located in the central city of Kryvyi Rih, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s hometown, often the target of Russian drone and missile attacks.

A spokesperson said the measure reflected “the escalation of enemy attacks throughout the country and the downing of a reconnaissance drone in Kryvyi Rih, on Saturday.

Moscow has intensified air strikes this month as Ukraine prepares to launch a counteroffensive against Russia‘s invasion.

It has also vowed to retaliate after blaming Kyiv for an apparent drone attack on Moscow’s Kremlin citadel, for which Ukraine denied responsibility.

On Tuesday, Russia will commemorate the Soviet Union’s defeat of Nazi Germany in 1945, a major state holiday, with a Victory Day military parade across Red Square.

The steel company, which said it had also told staff not to come in to work on Monday, told staff in an internal memo not to ignore air alerts and to use air raid shelters, the spokesperson said.

Russia launches huge drone attacks on Ukraine ahead of Victory Day holiday

Russia launched its biggest swarm of drone attacks on Ukraine on Monday as it also prepared for annual commemorations marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II.

Kyiv’s mayor said Russia fired 60 Iranian-made kamikaze drones at Ukrainian targets, including 36 at the capital, all of which had been shot down. Debris hit apartments and other buildings, injuring at least five people in the city.

A food warehouse was set ablaze by a missile in the Black Sea city of Odessa, where officials reported three people were injured.

It was the biggest drone swarm yet in a renewed Russian air campaign unleashed 10 days ago after a lull since early March.

Click here to read on:

[*Russia launches huge drone attacks on Ukraine ahead of Victory Day holiday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kyiv-drones-russia-moscow-victory-day-bakhmut-b2335039.html)

Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant suspends operations, say reports

Reactors at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant are being temporarily shut down in case of “provocations” by Ukrainian forces, the Tass state news agency said today, citing Yevgeny Balitsky, the Moscow-installed governor of the Russia-controlled part of Ukraine‘s Zaporizhzhia region.

Russia is reported to have been evacuating residents from villages near the plant, while UN inspectors yesterday warned that the situation at Zaporizhzhia was growing more perilous.

Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) said:“The general situation in the area near the Zaporizhzhya nuclear power plant is becoming increasingly unpredictable and potentially dangerous.”

“I’m extremely concerned about the very real nuclear safety and security risks facing the plant.”

The plant, which has been occupied by Russia since early in the invasion, was shut down for a time last November after missile attacks, which Ukraine and Russia traded blame for, damaged power lines fuelling the site.

Nato raised alert level after Russian near-miss

Nato air policing units were put on a higher state of readiness following a near-miss between a Russian fighter jet and a Polish aircraft on patrol for the EU’s border agency Frontex on Friday, a Nato official said.

“Nato air policing detachments were put on higher readiness in response to the dangerous behaviour of a Russian military plane in the vicinity of a Polish Frontex aircraft over the Black Sea near Romania,” the official said on Monday, speaking on condition of anonymity.

The official said Nato “remains vigilant” and referred further questions to Polish authorities.

ICYMI: Zelensky says world has ‘historic responsibility’ to prosecute Putin for war crimes

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has to face justice for war crimes in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has declared during a visit to The Hague – the home of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

“We all want to see a different Vladimir here in The Hague, the one who deserves to be sanctioned for his criminal actions here, in the capital of international law,” the Ukrainian president said, referring to the Russian leader.

“The aggressor must feel the full power of justice. This is our historical responsibility.” Mr Zelensky added that he was sure “we will see that happen when we win... and we will win”.

Chris Stevenson has the story:

[*Zelensky says it is a ‘historic responsibility’ to prosecute Putin for war crimes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-crimes-b2332722.html)

Breakaway Moldovan region suggests Russia deploy more peacekeepers -RIA

Moldova’s unrecognised breakaway region of Transdniestria said on Monday it wanted Moscow to bulk up its small contingent of peacekeepers because of what it called growing security risks, Russia’s RIA news agency reported.

Though Moldova does not allow Russia to deploy new troops in Transdniestria, Russia has had hundreds of peacekeepers in the region since a bloody war between pro-Russian separatists and Moldovan government forces after the 1991 Soviet break-up.

"As long as Russia’s peacekeeping mission continues, Moldova is constrained in any military plans and preparations against Trandsniestria," Leonid Manakov, the region’s envoy to Moscow, was cited as saying by RIA.

"Transnistria has repeatedly applied for an increase in the number of Russian peacekeepers ...there is such an option, and it is justified in terms of the worsening security risks...," he was quoted as saying.

Moldova’s ties with Russia are currently badly strained and have deteriorated rapidly over the course of Moscow’s full-scale invasion of neighbouring Ukraine, which Chisinau has repeatedly condemned.

ICYMI: Zelensky congratulates King Charles on ‘historic’ coronation

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has congratulated [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) on his [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation).

The president of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) described the new monarch and his wife, Queen Camilla, as “true friends of Ukraine” as he addressed the royal family.

“On behalf of the entire Ukrainian people, I congratulate Their Majesties, true friends of Ukraine, on this historic event that begins a new era of the British monarchy,” Mr Zelensky said.

“I wish King Charles III many years of successful reign.”

Watch the video here:

[*Watch: Zelensky congratulates King Charles on ‘historic’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/coronation-king-charles-ukraine-zelensky-b2334423.html)

Bank apologises after mortgage refused over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

[*A bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/halifax) has issued an apology after rejecting a homeowner’s mortgage application due to them hosting two ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

A mother and her young daughter have been staying in an annexe at Dominik Zaum’s family home since June 2022.

Fixed-rate mortgage deals leapt up in the wake of last autumn’s disastrous mini-budget, with many predicting they will continue to edge up even further as the Bank of England looks set to hike interest rates.

Emily Atkinsonreports:

[*Bank apologises after mortgage refused over* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/halifax-mortgage-refused-ukraine-refugees-b2334762.html)

Denmark, Sweden sign solidarity agreement on gas supply

Denmark and Sweden have signed an agreement on mutual support in case of gas shortages, the energy authorities of the two countries said on Monday.

In the case of gas shortages or disruptions, Denmark will help secure supply to Swedish customers protected by the agreement, including about 30,000 households, hospitals and emergency services, Sweden’s energy authority said.

"The agreement we have signed today reflects the great work and cooperation that has taken place in the wake of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine," the director of the Danish Energy Authority, Kristoffer Bottzauw, said in a separate statement.

"No country in the EU or the Nordic region can solve the energy supply crisis alone," Bottzauw added.

The majority of the natural gas used in Sweden comes via a pipeline from Denmark.

Ukraine moves day to mark Nazi surrender in shift towards West

President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday moved to formalise the day that Ukraine marks the allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two as May 8, aligning it with Western nations in a repudiation of the Soviet past quickly condemned by Moscow.

Speaking to Ukrainians on a hill overlooking Kyiv, Zelensky said "the old evil" had returned, this time waged by a "modern Russia" pursuing the same goal as the Nazis of "enslavement and destruction" -but that it would not succeed.

Zelensky said he had submitted a bill to parliament officially making May 8 Ukraine’s day of remembrance and victory, while May 9 would become Europe Day. Zelensky wants Ukraine one day, after the war, to join the European Union.

"We are returning to our state an honest history without ideological influences. It is on May 8 that most nations of the world remember the greatness of the victory over the Nazis," he said in a video posted on the president’s Telegram channel.

Nazi Germany’s unconditional surrender came into force at 11:01 p.m. on May 8, 1945, which was already May 9 in Moscow.

Russia bans jet skis, ride-hailing ahead of WWII tributes

Russia enacted a major security clampdown ahead of Tuesday’s annual commemorations marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II, curbing the use of drones, jet skis and car-sharing services in its largest cities amid its 14-month war with Ukraine.

At least 21 Russian cities canceled May 9 military parades — the staple of Victory Day celebrations across Russia — for the first time in years, Russian media said.

Regional officials blamed unspecified "security concerns" or vaguely referred to "the current situation" for the restrictions and cancellations. It was not clear whether their decisions were taken in coordination with the Kremlin.

Last week, Russia — which hasn’t witnessed the carnage endured by Ukraine during the invasion — was rattled by ambiguous official reports that two Ukrainian drones flew into the heart of Moscow under the cover of darkness and reached the Kremlin before being shot down.

Media and local officials have blamed other sporadic drone attacks, especially targeting oil depots near the two countries’ border, on the Ukrainian military. Kyiv officials decline to comment on such claims.

Ukraine says Russia has effectively stopped Black Sea grain deal

Russia has effectively stopped the Black sea grain deal by refusing to register incoming vessels, Ukraine’s reconstruction ministry said on Monday.

Ukrainian Black Sea ports were blockaded after Russia’s invasion last year, but access to three of them was cleared last July under a deal between Moscow and Kyiv that was brokered by the United Nations and Turkey.

"The Russian Federation once again effectively stopped the Grain Initiative by refusing to register incoming vessels and carry out their inspections. This approach contradicts the terms of the current agreement," the ministry said in a statement.

It said that 90 ships, including 62 vessels for loading, were waiting in Turkey’s territorial waters for approval to go to Ukrainian ports.

The deal expires on May 18. Moscow has threatened to quit the agreement intended to help ease a global food crisis. Turkey and the United Nations are working to extend the deal.

Watch: Moment shell explodes in Bakhmut amid heavy fighting

Footage shows a Ukrainian military drone capturing the moment a shell explodes in the western part of Bakhmut

The footage shows damaged buildings and heavy plumes of smoke rising over the city, which has been the focus of heavy fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

Reuters news agency verified the location from the buildings, road layout, and field, which matched satellite photography of the area.

Moscow has increased attacks on Ukraine in recent days as it gears up for its Victory Day celebrations on Tuesday, 9 May.

Billal Rahman reports:

[*Moment shell explodes in Bakhmut amid heavy fighting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/shell-explodes-ukraine-bakhmut-b2334842.html)

ICYMI: Ukraine says whole of Russia will ‘panic’ when counteroffensive begins

Success for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in its long-awaited counteroffensive against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) could spell the complete “collapse” of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s military or even the Russian economy, a senior minister in Volodymyr Zelensky’s government has said.

In an interview with The Independent, deputy defence minister Volodymyr Havrylov was deliberately vague about the timing of the counteroffensive, which is expected imminently as the mud and rains of spring give way to more favourable fighting conditions.

Arpan Rai:

[*Russia will ‘panic’ under Ukraine counteroffensive, says top Kyiv minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-russian-losses-putin-b2334687.html)

War shadows Victory Day, Russia's integral holiday

Victory Day, Russia’s most important secular holiday, lauds two tenets that are central to the country’s identity: military might and moral rectitude. But the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) undermines both this year.

The holiday falling on Tuesday marks the 78th anniversary of [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) ‘s capitulation in World War II after a relentless Red Army offensive pushed German forces from Stalingrad, deep inside [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , all the way to Berlin, about 2,200 kilometers (1,300 miles).

The [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) lost at least 20 million people in the war; the suffering and valor that went into the German defeat have been touchstones ever since.

However, many regions have canceled their May 9 observances because of concerns the events could be targets for Ukrainian attacks.

Full report:

[*War shadows Victory Day, Russia's integral holiday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-ukraine-vladimir-putin-soviet-union-b2334696.html)

ICYMI: Russian forces evacuate towns near Zaporizhzhia plant as IAEA warns of ‘very real nuclear safety risk’

Russian forces evacuated residents from a town near the occupied Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in Ukraine on Sunday as the head of the United Nations’ nuclear watchdog said he was “extremely concerned” about the safety of the facility.

Ukraine’s military said local Russian passport-holders were being taken to the port city of Berdyansk and the town Prymorsk, both on the coast of the Sea of Azov.

The evacuation, which could not be verified on the ground, comes as Ukraine is expected to launch a much-anticipated counteroffensive to retake Moscow-held territory in the area.

Alastair Jamieson reports:

[*Russian forces evacuate towns near Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zaporizhzhia-nuclear-power-plant-evacuate-russian-b2334707.html)

Putin is unprepared for the blowback his assault on Ukraine will bring Russia

Russia is already paying a huge price that will only increase, writes [*Borzou Daragahi.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/borzou-daragahi)

Read Borzou’s full piece here:

[*Russia is unprepared for the blowback to its assault on Ukraine | Borzou Daragahi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/russia-kremlin-ukraine-assault-putin-blowback-b2334370.html)

EU’s Von der Leyen to meet Zelensky in Kyiv on Tuesday

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen will meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky in Kyiv on Tuesday, which is Europe Day, the European Commission announced on Monday.

The visit reaffirms "the EU’s unwavering support towards the country", a spokesperson for the European Commission told reporters.

"The visit will focus on all the dimensions of our relations with Ukraine", he added.

Russian shelling hits power networks in five Ukrainian regions-Ukrenergo

Russian shelling damaged electricity distribution networks in five Ukrainian regions overnight, Ukraine’s state grid operator said on Monday.

"The night attack by drones did not damage the main energy infrastructure," Ukrenergo said in a statement.

"However, due to Russian shelling along the frontline and border shelling, there is again damage to distribution networks in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kherson, Sumy and Chernihiv regions."

Ukraine’s energy system has survived months of Russian missile and drone attacks that have at times left millions without power or heating during the cold winter months.

But fast repairs, equipment supplied by Ukraine’s Western partners and favourable weather for hydro-power stations have allowed Kyiv to restore power supplies and even start small electricity exports to neighbouring countries.

Electricity generation now fully covers consumption thanks to hydro-power stations and the seasonal increase in power production by solar and wind power plants, Ukrenergo said.

It also said that repair work continued actively across Ukraine, and that officials and the energy industry were committed to strengthening the heavily damaged system and preparing it for the next cold season.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2023

**End of Document**



[*‘Energy genocide’: Ukraine pleads for urgent help as Russia blitz on infrastructure grows*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66PR-PPK1-JBNF-W41M-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1299 words

**Byline:** Bel Trew

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Ukraine’s energy minister German Galushchenko tells Bel Trew in Kyiv that Moscow is trying to sow ‘darkness and despair’ with its all-out assault on the country’s power plants

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is committing “energy genocide” by bombing nearly half of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*power*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power) infrastructure, the government has said as Ukrainian officials warned the [*damage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/damage) could spark Europe’s worst humanitarian catastrophe since the Second World War.

Speaking to The Independent, energy minister German Galushchenko said Russia wanted to “sow darkness and despair” with daily “en masse” strikes on the electricity supply chain, which together with the occupation of facilities, has left many without power.

He said at least 40 per cent of its total energy infrastructure has been damaged, including massive destruction to green generation facilities.

In total, 90 per cent of Ukraine’s wind generation and 40 per cent of their solar power capacity has been decommissioned, he added.

Mr Galushchenko spoke as Ukrainian energy officials warned the wave of strikes since 10 October was likely the “largest attack on energy infrastructure in history”.

They said the situation was so critical that Ukraine has had to stop providing electricity to the European Union, exports which had been helping Europe to replace Russian energy resources.

“Russia cannot win on the battlefield by giving in to our armed forces, so it has decided to go down the path of energy genocide,” Mr Galushchenko said.

“The Russians are intentionally attacking our energy facilities right now, when the cold has started and energy supply is of particular value to citizens. Their plan is to sow not only darkness but also despair among Ukrainians.”

He urged the country’s Western partners to provide more air defence systems that could be deployed specifically to protect energy and nuclear facilities.

“We fight for [Europe] too. And we hope that your support will continue because our skies still need protection,” he implored.

Ukraine’s energy companies also sounded the alarm.

Volodymyr Kudrytskyi, chairman of Ukrenergo, Ukraine’s grid operator, told The Independent the barrage of strikes was the “biggest attack on energy infrastructure in history”.

“The scale of these attacks is unseen in the world,” he said. “We are speaking about hundreds of missiles launched specifically at electricity transmission infrastructure. I cannot remember any other instance [where] we have seen such a scale of destruction.”

Meanwhile, Antonina Antosha, from DTEK, the largest private energy investor in Ukraine which controls multiple power plants, warned the damage will leave millions of people in the country without light and heat, sparking “the biggest humanitarian disaster since 1945”.

“We are convinced that this is only the beginning and that attacks on other objects will continue. The craziest scenario is an attack on a nuclear power plant,” she added.

Ukraine has been plunged into darkness by an unprecedented wave of Russian strikes on the energy grid, right as a bitter winter approaches.

Moscow has repeatedly acknowledged targeting energy infrastructure but denies targeting civilians or violating international law since President Putin launched his invasion of the country in February.

Their plan is to sow not only darkness, but also despair among Ukrainians

German Galushchenko, Ukraine energy minister

However, Amnesty International and other rights groups have said the attacks on the facilities could amount to war crimes.

“The Russian army clearly intends to undermine industrial production, disrupt transportation, sow fear and despair and deprive civilians in Ukraine of heat, electricity and water as the cold grip of winter approaches,” said Marie Struthers, the group’s Eastern Europe and Central Asia director.

“The morale of the civilian population is not a lawful target, and carrying out these attacks with the sole purpose of terrorising civilians is a war crime,” she added.

President Zelensky has personally appealed to citizens to reduce energy consumption, as scheduled four-hour power cuts have been rolled out across the country to stabilise the embattled grid.

The energy ministry said that civilians had responded to the call already, reducing consumption nationally by up to 10 per cent. But that is still not enough to halt needed planned power cuts which are expected to get much longer, with Kyiv officials warning citizens last week to brace for up to a week without power.

The pressure on the system has become so severe deputy prime minister Iryna Vereshchuk urged ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to stay away.

In a TV interview on Tuesday, Ms Vereshchuk told Ukrainians currently sheltering abroad that they should wait until spring before returning home.

She said the grid “won’t survive” the return of refugees from abroad, and that the situation would “only get worse”.

Mr Galushchenko told The Independent a major part of the problem they were facing was that after they carried out repair and restoration work, sites would often be bombed again.

At least 54 workers in the energy industry have been killed, often in double-tap attacks on electricity distribution systems, trunk networks, substations and thermal generation, Mr Galushchenko said.

“The enemy’s goal is to make it difficult to reconnect the power supply from other sources. Often they fire at the same objects over and over again until they are completely destroyed,” he added.

Kudrytskyi said that Ukraine believes Russia is using Soviet-era maps of Ukraine, coupled with open-source information to precisely strike the grid.

He said they were hitting Ukrenego’s substations sometimes with “six or seven rounds of shelling” at one time.

“Often Russians repeat the attack, like a double tap, sometimes a triple-tap attack,” he added, saying that five of their personnel have been killed.

Ms Antosha, of DTEK, warned that these blackouts could mean that civilians will die, as temperatures dip well below zero.

Of the six thermal power plants under DTEK’s control, five of them have already been attacked. Ten employees have been injured and one killed.

There are also concerns about Ukraine’s renewable energy sector.

Ukraine had sought to diversify the energy sector before the war, with officials boasting of rapid growth of its green energy sector that pre-war provided the country with about 11 per cent of the country’s total energy mix. Since the invasion about 90 per cent of wind and about 50 per cent of solar power has been decommissioned.

There are also growing fears about the country’s nuclear power plants.

Russia has occupied the Zaporizhia nuclear power plant (ZNPP) since March. It is the largest in Europe and can produce more than 6,000 MW of power.

Ukraine claims around 500 soldiers and military vehicles are occupying the power plant and that Ukrainian personnel working there have been tortured and coerced into working.

“In an attempt to disconnect the ZNPP from Ukraine’s power system, the Russians have already put the plant into blackout mode three times by firing at the power lines that provide its power,” Minister Galushchenko said.

“At that time, [the plant] was working on diesel generators, which could also be fired upon by the Russian military forces at any moment. And then the Fukushima scenario may await us.”

He called on Russian troops and personnel to immediately leave the nuclear plant and for the International Atomic Energy Agency to create a neutral zone where neither Russian nor Ukrainian military are present.

The European Commission has urged European Union countries and companies to donate more money and equipment to support the energy sector in Ukraine.

But the energy ministry said it needed air defence systems to halt the strikes, as reconstructing power plants and substations was pointless if they get hit again.

“Our skies still need protection. Protection, including for energy and nuclear facilities,” he said. “We need air defence systems, we needed them yesterday.”

**Load-Date:** October 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Inside Politics: Ukraine must accept it will not join Nato, Zelensky says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650Y-8001-DY4H-K13K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 9:39 AM GMT

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:3

**Length:** 1669 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Ukraine president offers what appears to be first major concession to Russia ahead of further round of peace talks, writes Matt Mathers

**Body**

Today's Independent editorial cartoon, 'Escaping the bear hug' (below), perfectly encapsulates the dilemma faced by Boris Johnson, who is in Saudia Arabia "cap in hand", asking the crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman (MBS), to pump more oil to ease pressure on supplies and thus bring down fuel prices for consumers in the UK and elsewhere. In his efforts to offset the loss of oil from Vladimir Putin's Russia amid the Ukraine crisis, the prime minister is turning from one authoritarian leader accused of being implicated in murder to... well, another authoritarian leader allegedly implicated in murder.

Since the war broke out, commentators have said time and again that there are varying levels of morality to consider when trying to solve a crisis. As prime minister, Boris Johnson's first priority is ensuring the security and prosperity of citizens here in the UK, so it seems only right that he remains pragmatic in exploring all avenues when trying to reduce the cost of oil when Britons are finding it increasingly difficult to fill their cars up with petrol and struggling to heat their homes. That's a particular problem in Northern Ireland, where a majority of families rely on heating oil due to the country's outdated infrastructure.

While all the signs suggest Johnson's overtures on behalf of the UK and the west are likely to be rejected (Saudi Arabia and the UAE - which the PM also visits today - are bound by rules determined by the wider OPEC oil cartel), the mere fact that he is attempting to switch energy reliance away from Putin's kleptocracy to MBS's autocracy in a time of global insecurity only serves to further underline the importance of speeding up our transition away from fossil fuels. Failing to embrace renewable energy leaves us open to the whims of states whose interests are often diametrically opposed to our own, not to mention further imperilling the climate.

Inside the bubble

Politics commentator Andrew Grice on what to look out for:

With Boris Johnson on an oil mission in the Middle East, prime minister's questions will be a battle of the deputies between Dominic Raab and Angela Rayner. Kevin Foster, the immigration minister, can expect some tough questions from the home affairs select committee about the government's response to the ***Ukraine*** ***refugee crisis***. Defence Secretary Ben Wallace will travel to Brussels for a meeting of Nato defence ministers.

Coming up:

- Foreign secretary Liz Truss on BBC Breakfast at 7.30am

- Shadow economic secretary to the Treasury Tulip Siddiq on LBC at 8.20am

Daily Briefing

CONCESSION: Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukraine president, said yesterday that his country must accept that it will never join Nato in what appeared to be a first [*major concession to Russia*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvemVsZW5za3ktdWtyYWluZS1jb25mbGljdC1uYXRvLXJ1c3NpYS1iMjAzNjI4MC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B8ec79b81&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=6qa4YB4eQX37LADJE9HYLj8jR6jhhmD2Oq1jlOsau58%3D&reserved=0) as Putin's bombs continued to rain down on targets across the country, including in the capital Kyiv, where attacks intensified with residential buildings and a subway station targeted. Speaking to military officials of the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force in a video message on Tuesday, Zelensky, who has won plaudits around the world for his conduct during the war, said it was a "truth" that his country would not join the military alliance. "Ukraine is not a member of Nato. We understand that. We have heard for years that the doors were open, but we also heard that we could not join. It's a truth and it must be recognised," he said. Putin's intentions in the war are disputed, although in announcing his invasion on 24 February, he again repeated what he described as security concerns about Ukraine, saying Russia could not feel "safe, develop and exist" due to the alleged threat from its Slavic neighbour. Another round of peace talks are scheduled to take place later today and the mood surrounding the discussions is again more upbeat than in previous weeks. Zelensky himself said has said the peace talks are "more realistic" but that more time is needed. Nato's defence ministers meet in Brussels later for the first time since the war started to discuss what more can be done to help Ukraine, although a no fly zone remains off the table. We'll have all the [*latest updates on our liveblog.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1ydXNzaWEtd2FyLWxhdGVzdC1wdXRpbi1reWl2LW5hdG8tYjIwMzY4MDEuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Be6d50d56&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=olopOo08Z5cpYnQ1KPtUwC6pWoGDbDehBJvwISNXlaA%3D&reserved=0) FRESH SANCTIONS: The UK continues to tighten the economic screws on Putin and the oligarchs linked to his Kremlin regime. His prime minister and defence minister were among some [*370 super-rich Russians hit in a fourth round of sanctions*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy91a3JhaW5lLXJ1c3NpYS1zYW5jdGlvbnMtam9obnNvbi1wdXRpbi1iMjAzNjEzNC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B07aade61&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=SHzwD8YA8GKaO6ndGNTd5JrscWDCsuBfbNBc9kRQP9k%3D&reserved=0) announced by the Foreign Office, which has been able to ramp up its targeting of individual oligarchs following the passing of the Economic Crime Act on Monday. "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," Liz Truss said. "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." The Labour Party welcomed the fresh round of financial penalties and urged ministers to ensure there are no loopholes for oligarchs to escape the sanctions. "Urgent sanctions have been needed so that Putin and his inner circle cannot live a Mayfair lifestyle in Moscow while committing atrocities in Ukraine," Nick Thomas-Symonds, the shadow international trade secretary, said. "The government now needs to ensure that the export ban has no loopholes so it has maximum impact." MIDDLE EAST TRIP: Johnson's one day trip to the Middle East includes a visit to the United Arab Emirates and he arrived in Abu Dhabi in the early hours of the morning. He will meet with leaders there and in Riyadh and is scheduled to have talks with Mohammed bin Zayed, the crown prince, before going on to [*Saudi Arabia to see its crown prince, MBS.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLXNhdWRpLW9pbC1ydXNzaWEtYjIwMzYxMzIuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bd2a44e4a&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=od%2FoZzylaUsCMbLvA0BHsZAy9L0teNXCHUa8lWfR8b4%3D&reserved=0) Downing Street said the visit is to "ensure coordinated international action on Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine" and to "discuss energy security in the region". His visit to Saudi Arabia comes just days after the kingdom executed 81 people in the largest mass imposition of the death penalty for many years. Downing Street said the PM will raise human rights and the UK's opposition to capital punishment with the kingdom's de facto ruler, but declined to say whether Johnson will raise the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, in which "MBS" is widely alleged to have been implicated. Confronted by a Sky News interviewer over whether he was seeking support from "unpleasant" countries like Saudi and Iran in order to counter the threat from Putin, Johnson insisted it was necessary to "build the widest possible coalition". Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, accused Johnson of "going cap in hand from dictator to dictator" to seek alternative oil supplies, although he stopped short of saying he would not do the same. "Obviously there's a real energy crisis in terms of the cost at the moment, so anything that brings the cost down now is a step in the right direction, whatever it is," he said. "But going cap in hand from dictator to dictator is not an energy strategy". HOPE FOR NAZANIN: Talks over the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe are at a "delicate" stage, the PM said yesterday after the detained British-Iranian mother [*had her passport returned by Iranian authorities.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9ob21lLW5ld3MvbmF6YW5pbi16YWdoYXJpLXJhdGNsaWZmZS1pcmFuLWRldGFpbmVkLXBhc3Nwb3J0LWIyMDM2MDE4LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Ba18b53be&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=P0FsKy5UCL2geejThlvVSSfWJ3LbPHhZqHalpdwjsxM%3D&reserved=0) The move had sparked hopes that Zaghari-Ratcliffe might finally be released - but Johnson declined to comment in detail, saying he did not want to "tempt fate." Her lawyer, Hojjat Kermani, told Reuters: "I am hopeful that we will have good news soon." Zaghari-Ratcliffe has been detained in Iran since 2016 when she was arrested on charges of plotting to overthrow the government, which she has always denied. BREXIT FESTIVAL: The PM's planned "Festival of Brexit" is a waste of public money and set for failure, a [*committee of MPs has warned.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9mZXN0aXZhbC1vZi1icmV4aXQtZmFpbHVyZS1qYWNvYi1yZWVzLW1vZ2ctYjIwMzY1NzcuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bfeecf559&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=hlwm3SbSusyDdilq8a5HXYBKySejgIGXoEe0OPIsoCs%3D&reserved=0) In a scathing report the cross party-culture media and sport select committee criticised the government's handling of the £120 million project - which is set to take place this year. The event is now officially known as "Unboxed: Creativity in the UK" but government figures including Brexit opportunities minister Jacob Rees-Mogg have characterised it a "[*festival of Brexit*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdG9waWMvZmVzdGl2YWwtb2YtYnJleGl0%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B9b3c1719&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=kO4whG7OhVgkfKDKze%2FlnAFVCRt%2FbeDpkbOuPpogWJQ%3D&reserved=0) ". MPs say they were told that the event's final name could not be chosen before October 2021, less than a year before it was due to take place, because ministers "did not know what it was". On the record "Ukraine is not a member of Nato. We understand that. We have heard for years that the doors were open, but we also heard that we could not join. It's a truth and it must be recognised."Zelenksy offers apparent concession to Russia.From the Twitterati"Today we have passed another terrible milestone: three million refugees have fled from Ukraine. The war has to stop. Now."UN high commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi.Essential readingJohn Rentoul, The Independent: [*Boris Johnson's visit to Saudi Arabia is a trip too far*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy9ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLXNhdWRpLWFyYWJpYS1tb2hhbW1lZC1iaW4tc2FsbWFuLWIyMDM2MjczLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bc88d8ca4&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=d5n1GeedPywhzTwSTpaxK1gorWbc1Ohlv0r8%2FGiAhDw%3D&reserved=0) Hamish McRae, The Independent: [*War in Ukraine will affect food prices - the real question is how badly*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy91a3JhaW5lLXdhci1mb29kLXByaWNlcy1lbmVyZ3ktYjIwMzYzNzEuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B90daa9d2&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=a74DdPL1F7FWOa2bxKRuIvEySphbRoBNKsFrRUhK3%2FU%3D&reserved=0) Joyce Fegan, The Independent: [*A hundred thousand welcomes - how Ireland has embraced Ukrainians fleeing war*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1ydXNzaWEtaXJlbGFuZC1yZWZ1Z2Vlcy13ZWxjb21lLWIyMDM1NjM0LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B8947f1e6&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=LgO%2FrJqHJrQ7iVlF8ljak%2FqY8WoWGZRGj265PZQ8gkA%3D&reserved=0) Sebastian Payne, The Financial Times: [*Conservatives hope May's local elections will bolster their 'red wall'*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27040027.36836%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZnQuY29tL2NvbnRlbnQvOTUyNTQxYWEtMGM5Mi00YzYzLTkyMjktZjQ2ZGRkZGQ4NjNj%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B6a782f92&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C79f434f74dad431704c808da0725ee32%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637830156750874375%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=QEYeRhlvpzAY4h%2F8NrB3CQyTLkjD47JYorVdry%2FqMpw%3D&reserved=0)

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**Load-Date:** April 13, 2022

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[*Biden set to revisit Irish roots after marking Good Friday Agreement anniversary*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6805-P0F1-JBNF-W0VR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1443 words

**Byline:** Andrew Feinberg

**Highlight:** The 46th US president – a proud Irish-American – will visit Belfast to celebrate a quarter-century of peace under the Good Friday Agreement before travelling to Ireland, Andrew Feinberg writes

**Body**

When [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) television networks finally declared [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) the winner of the 2020 election, the BBC broadcast a compilation of clips from Mr Biden’s long political career, including his aborted presidential runs in 1987 and 2008, and his eight years as vice-president during the Obama administration.

Of that pastiche of videos, spanning multiple decades, one short clip set the internet ablaze: a years-old exchange with Nick Bryant, one of the British broadcaster’s New York-based correspondents.

When Mr Bryant asked Mr Biden if he could offer a “quick word for the BBC”, Mr Biden quickly replied: “The BBC? No thanks – I’m Irish!”

The 46th US president is not the first Irishman to hold America’s highest office. He’s not even the first Irish-Catholic to do so. But in the 21st century, when the white ethnic enclaves and rivalries that once played a huge role in America’s political and civic life have largely fallen dormant in favour of a far more homogenised culture, he remains intensely proud of his ancestral roots in the Republic of [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) , and has made references to his heritage a touchstone of his rhetorical style.

In his 2017 memoir, Promise Me, Dad, Mr Biden recounted an anecdote he often uses on the stump, in which he recalls his grandfather urging him to “keep the faith”.

In his public remarks, he often includes his grandmother’s reply, in which she counters that he should “spread the faith” as well. But in his book, Mr Biden noted that his grandfather also told him: “Remember the best drop of blood in you is Irish.”

Biden’s Irish roots run deep

According to the director of the Irish Family History Centre, Fiona Fitzsimmons, there’s far more than a drop of Irish blood flowing through Mr Biden’s veins.

She told USA Today that of Mr Biden’s 16 great-grandparents, 10 were from Ireland. And while a number of US presidents – including Andrew Jackson, John F Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and Barack Obama – have traced at least some of their roots to the same island, the genealogist called the 46th US chief executive, whose family roots hail from County Derry and County Louth on Ireland’s east coast, “probably ... the most Irish of all the presidents”.

This week, that “most Irish” American president is set to make his first pilgrimage to his family’s homeland since assuming office in 2021, with a planned four-day visit to [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) and Ireland. He last visited Ireland in 2017, a year after he had made an official visit as vice-president during the Obama administration.

He’ll depart the White House on Tuesday morning, and will land in [*Belfast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belfast) that evening. On Wednesday, he and UK prime minister Rishi Sunak will mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which ended decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. He’ll then cross the border into Ireland for a three-day stay, including trips to the areas where his ancestors lived before emigrating to the US.

Because of the continuing dispute over customs checks between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, the Democratic Unionist Party’s boycott of the power-sharing government, which was established under the Good Friday Agreement, remains in effect, meaning that Mr Biden will not be able to address that devolved legislature.

Instead, he will deliver an address at Ulster University to mark the quarter-century anniversary of the peace accords.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby said on Monday that the president’s speech in Belfast would mark “the tremendous progress since the signing of the Belfast Good Friday agreement 25 years ago”, and that it would “underscore the readiness of the United States to preserve those gains and support Northern Ireland’s vast economic potential to the benefit of all communities”.

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“The president is very much looking forward to that trip ... and to celebrating the deep historic ties that our two countries and our two peoples continue to share,” he said.

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“My family is Irish-American, and we have a long history ... not fundamentally unlike [that of] the Palestinian people, with Great Britain and their attitude toward Irish-Catholics over the years, for 400 years,” he said.

And world leaders have in turn recognised Mr Biden’s affinity with his ancestral home, with one – Irish prime minister [*Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/leo-varadkar) – describing him as “unmistakeably a son of Ireland” during his traditional St Patrick’s Day visit to the White House last month.

“President Biden, in your life story we see reflected the story of Ireland,” he said.

**Load-Date:** April 10, 2023

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[*Biden to travel to Mayo and Dublin after visiting Belfast*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6808-T7P1-F072-44FF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 11, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1425 words

**Byline:** ANDREW FEINBERG WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

When US television networks finally declared Joe Biden the winner of the 2020 election, the BBC broadcast a compilation of clips from Mr Biden's long political career, including his aborted presidential runs in 1987 and 2008, and his eight years as vice-president during the Obama administration.

Of that pastiche of videos, spanning multiple decades, one short clip set the internet ablaze: a years-old exchange with Nick Bryant, one of the corporation's New York-based correspondents. When Mr Bryant asked Mr Biden if he could offer a "quick word for the BBC", Mr Biden quickly replied: "The BBC? No thanks - I'm Irish!"

The 46th US president is not the first Irishman to hold America's highest office. He's not even the first Irish-Catholic to do so. But in the 21st century, when the white ethnic enclaves and rivalries that once played a huge role in America's political and civic life have largely fallen dormant in favour of a far more homogenised culture, he remains intensely proud of his ancestral roots in the Republic of Ireland, and has made references to his heritage a touchstone of his rhetorical style.

In his 2017 memoir, Promise Me, Dad, Mr Biden recounted an anecdote he often uses on the stump, in which he recalls his grandfather urging him to "keep the faith". In his public remarks, he often includes his grandmother's reply, in which she counters that he should "spread the faith" as well. But in his book, Mr Biden noted that his grandfather also told him: "Remember the best drop of blood in you is Irish."

Biden's Irish roots run deep

According to the director of the Irish Family History Centre, Fiona Fitzsimmons, there's far more than a drop of Irish blood flowing through Mr Biden's veins.

She told USA Today that of Mr Biden's 16 great-grandparents, 10 were from Ireland. And while a number of US presidents - including Andrew Jackson, John F Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, and Barack Obama - have traced at least some of their roots to the same island, the genealogist called the 46th US chief executive, whose family roots hail from County Derry and County Louth on Ireland's east coast, "probably ... the most Irish of all the presidents".

This week, that "most Irish" American president is set to make his first pilgrimage to his family's homeland since assuming office in 2021, with a planned four-day visit to Northern Ireland and Ireland. He last visited Ireland in 2017, a year after he had made an official visit as vice-president during the Obama administration.

He'll depart the White House this morning and will land in Belfast this evening. Tomorrow, he and UK prime minister Rishi Sunak will mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement, which ended decades of sectarian violence in Northern Ireland. He'll then cross the border into Ireland for a three-day stay, including trips to the areas where his ancestors lived before emigrating to the US.

Because of the continuing dispute over customs checks between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK, the Democratic Unionist Party's boycott of the power-sharing government, which was established under the Good Friday Agreement, remains in effect, meaning that Mr Biden will not be able to address that devolved legislature. Instead, he will deliver an address at Ulster University to mark the quarter-century anniversary of the peace accords.

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**Load-Date:** April 10, 2023

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[*'When children tell the full story they heal themselves'; Siobhan O'Grady and Kamila Hrabchuk on the museum where young Ukrainians leave their memories of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67XT-11Y1-F072-418K-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

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First Edition

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**Section:** SECTION 2; Pg. 24

**Length:** 1336 words

**Byline:** SIOBHAN O'GRADY AND KAMILA HRABCHUK

**Body**

After Russian forces rampaged through this suburb of Kyiv last year Anna, now 10, hid in a neighbour's basement. While there she sought solace in her stuffed fox, Foxy, and cat, Vatka.

Vlada, nine, fled with her mom to Spain - carrying Octopus, her blue and pink octopus toy which was gifted to her by her sister.

Kira, also nine, clung to Basik, a grey stuffed cat her mother gave her after they fled Bucha with her older brother, separating them from their father, who stayed behind.

For the past year, these children from the once idyllic town where Russian soldiers executed many civilians have withstood the toll of an adult war.

For the children in Bucha and throughout Ukraine, plush animals, security blankets and other comfort items have served as lifelines amid the chaos, especially for those who escaped taking only what they could carry.

Such precious belongings are now being slowly collected by the War Childhood Museum, a project dedicated to documenting the experiences of children raised in war by cataloguing and displaying their most personal memories and possessions.

The museum, which is based in Bosnia, is planning to add to its Ukrainian collection - now made up of around 150 toys, books and other ephemera mainly donated by children who, since 2014, had survived the Russian-backed separatist war in the country's east.

By preserving children's mementoes and memories of war, the project has been able to document the individual and shared experience of growing up in a conflict zone.

Some of the museum's irreplaceable modern artefacts - a stuffed penguin, a plastic horse and carriage, and a cardboard cat - are stored in an enormous metal safe in an office in Kyiv. Others are in a secret location in the western city of Lviv, where they were relocated in a rush last year when staff feared the collection could be destroyed as Russian forces advanced on Kyiv.

The oral histories the museum collects, paired with a donated item from each child, challenge the idea that children only bear passive witness to conflict - offering young people the agency to reflect on how they managed life during war.

More than 400 children have been recorded killed and more than 800 wounded in Ukraine since Russia launched its invasion last February, although the true toll is probably far higher. Some were schoolmates of the children in Bucha, murdered alongside many parents in the community.

Among them were Katya, a year 11 student who died when Russian forces struck her family's car as they tried to escape; and Vanya in year 9, shot by Russian snipers as he tried to crawl to safety. He was killed, his school principal suspects, "because he was a tall, beautiful boy" and the Russians "may have thought he was a man".

As the war in Ukraine continues to rage in the country's east and south, it is too soon for many kids to part with their comforting items or to talk in-depth about their experiences. Even children living far from the front lines face regular air raid alerts that send them running for cover. Others have family and friends fighting or living in the combat zone.

The museum's researchers are treading carefully, and have interviewed just 11 children since February last year: five in the northeast city of Kharkiv, five living abroad in Poland and one, by video chat, in Spain. Two other researchers are now documenting the stories of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Germany.

"We don't want to talk to kids who are still coping" with the most extreme circumstances, says Svitlana Osipchuk, 37, project director of the museum's Kyiv branch. Participating children, she says, should tell their experience "as a past story".

Museum staff create a file for each child they interview. The child's donated item is then given a unique identification number, wrapped in protective paper and handled with gloves.

Only a handful of people know where exactly the full collection is stored in Lviv and only five know the passcode to the safe in Kyiv. Items from the collection have been displayed in exhibits in Kyiv and Kherson, in Ukraine, in Sarajevo, and soon in Bucharest.

When children offer a toy or book for the collection, Viktoriia Nesterenko, 30, a Kharkiv-based researcher for the museum, tells them: "Your pain is in this object and this object will be in a museum," she says. "Your pain is here. Not in you, but here."

"When children tell the full story they are healing themselves," she says.

Many Ukrainian children are still learning how to tell theirs.

At School Number Four in Bucha, a year after the Russian retreat, signs of war are still everywhere. The basement is used as a bomb shelter. One gymnasium has been transformed into a volunteer hub.

Administrators replaced the shrill school bell - too similar to air raid sirens - with music. One hall on the first floor is now home to a "memory wall" honouring students and alumni killed during the Russian occupation last year or on the front lines elsewhere in the country.

Fourth grade teacher Ina Makariva, 60, weeps as she describes how the children in her class have been forced to mature.

These students fled at different points in the war - some under intense shelling, others before Russian forces advanced. Many have since returned home; but some, joining the class on Zoom, are still abroad. Their teachers say they aren't the same.

"The students even learnt the difference between kinds of weapons," Makariva says. "They are changed. They are much older. They became much more serious."

"It's like a line appeared," she adds. "There was childhood on one side - and all of a sudden they grew up."

Sitting in the front row, nine-year-old Kira clutches Basik, the cat, and her other stuffed animal, Brut, a dog. Both are dressed in baby clothes she took from a volunteer centre where her dad had been working. But a month ago, he was deployed as a soldier for the first time. She says she doesn't know where he is - only that they hadn't been able to talk as much as before.

This separation has been especially hard; her dad is the only one she allows to tuck her in at night.

A few days later she gets a welcome surprise when her dad, Viacheslav Kryvitskiy, 40, is able to briefly return home - offering the family some rare time together before he goes back to his new post.

Sitting around their kitchen table, the family takes turns cuddling their guinea pig and puppy - acquired shortly before Kryvitskiy was deployed - and sharing stories from the early days of the war.

Kira's mom, Tetiana Kryvytska, 40, recalls how she drove the kids west last February, relying on strangers for help. She soon lost contact with her husband, who stayed behind to volunteer in Bucha.

When asked if, during the month apart, he had ever come face-to-face with Russian soldiers, Kryvitskiy glanced at his wife. Her eyes widened. He had never told his family this story.

One day, he says, he and other volunteers went looking for bread. Russian forces had already started executing civilians, and outside a grocery store, they found the dead strewn across the street. Horrified, they tried to move one of the bodies. Then a Russian soldier appeared. "He cocked his gun at us and said: 'Put it back,'" Kryvitskiy recalls, his voice cracking. They slowly backed away and returned to the hospital where they were based.

Even after all this time, he hadn't wanted to burden his family with that memory.

Otherwise, the parents say, they have not tried to hide the horrible realities of war from Kira, or her brother, Nazar, who is 12 - even as they see how it has changed them. They watch the news. They tell the children they have an enemy. On a drive one day, Nazar asked his father: "Is this the street where the executions happened?" He told him it was.

At school, Kira's classmates shared the words they think of when they reflect on life during wartime. They called out from their seats: "Sad." "Terrible." "War." "Fear." "Pain." "Lost." "Shelling."

At home, her dad reviewed the list and said there was one more word he wanted to add: "Victory."

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**Load-Date:** April 3, 2023

**End of Document**



[*A historic King's speech*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-4521-JCS0-D2HK-00000-00&context=1519360)

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March 31, 2023 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** VOICES; Pg. 23

**Length:** 1380 words

**Byline:** MARY DEJEVSKY

**Body**

That King Charles should be making the first state visit of his monarchy to Germany is a diplomatic accident of the sort that is not supposed to happen. It could, though, turn out to have been a happy one. The King had planned to make what were essentially "twin" visits to France and Germany. It was a careful orchestration, designed at once to start fence-mending with the EU after Brexit and to signal that the two countries are of prime significance to the UK - but that France might have the very slightest edge, by virtue of history, geography and defence ties.

Then France dropped out. Or at least, Emmanuel Macron judged - correctly - that the unrest triggered by his effort to raise the state pension age was hardly conducive to a successful state visit, especially when the schedule was to include a full-dress state banquet at Versailles. At which point, it is not hard to imagine the urgent discussions on this side of the Channel between the palace and the government as to whether the Germany visit should be rescheduled, too.

The King's warm reception in Berlin has more than vindicated the decision to proceed. Germany had already prepared to pull out all the stops for the new King, starting with an official welcome at the Brandenburg Gate - the first time this symbol of Germany's division and reunification has formed the backdrop for any state visit. On the second day, the King was invited to deliver an address to the Bundestag - an honour never accorded to the Queen on any of her four state visits. He did so, what is more, in German - a mark of respect, but also a rare public acknowledgement of the House of Windsor's German lineage.

The visit also recognises the King's trademark personal interests, with trips to ecological projects in the former East Germany and to Hamburg, where he might be tempted to contrast the bold but sensitive restorations with the many "monstrous carbuncles" that, despite his best efforts as Prince of Wales, disfigure many British cities.

So the German visit was always intended to make a statement, by both sides. With the postponement of the France leg, however, Germany has stolen a bit of a diplomatic march on its neighbour - and claimed a primacy among the UK's prospective post-Brexit partners that it might not otherwise have had. What is also true, however, is that the UK-German relationship has been in need of sprucing up for some time. It has arguably never really flourished since Margaret Thatcher became one of very few national leaders to make known her misgivings about German reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

More recently, political relations wilted in the face of the UK's growing Euroscepticism. In 2009, David Cameron destroyed a productive alliance between Conservative MEPs and their German counterparts when he ordered them to leave the centre-right bloc in the European parliament, in a vain attempt to boost the Tory vote in the following year's general election.

Relations languished again after the Conservatives narrowly won the 2015 election, and Cameron banked on Germany's then chancellor, Angela Merkel, to deliver the concessions he believed would secure a Remain vote in the EU referendum. Not for the first time, he had underestimated the zeal of the Eurosceptics at home, and overestimated what Merkel could or would offer as a staunch defender of the EU.

The long and fractious path to Brexit followed, with Germans among those most shocked by the referendum result. Britain's relations with Germany soured, as they did with France and many other EU countries. The pandemic, along with the turmoil that attended the tenure of Boris Johnson, hardly made for a productive or even stable sequel. But, of course, there is far more to the UK-German relationship than the ups and mostly downs of the past three decades. Relations at state level are haunted by the spectres of the past to a greater extent than Britain's relationship with France or perhaps any other country.

Almost 80 years on, the continued British preoccupation with "the war" is almost the least of it. There is the German background of the Windsors, unusually made explicit by the King this week. There is the sympathy for Nazism once harboured by parts of the English aristocracy, including (it is reputed) the Duke of Windsor. Watching King Charles meeting the people in Berlin, it was hard not to note the physical resemblance to his two male predecessors on the throne, and be reminded of those complex, if long past, times.

I say complex because it is often forgotten how close the two countries were at many levels between the wars - in culture, in science, and in social ties that went far beyond the elite. It is an aspect that has been largely written out of the British - that is, the victor's - version of history. And perhaps because of these blank pages, relations with Germany are something UK governments all too frequently misjudge. I would even venture that the British understanding of Germany was superior in the two decades immediately after the war to what it is now.

There was still, from the 1920s and 1930s, a residual knowledge of the country and the language. There had been an extensive programme of community exchanges that lasted right up to the war. Then a school-leaver, my father returned home from his German host family just days before war was declared. The two countries knew each other well, which may be one reason why the British did the creditable job that they did in helping to build the post-war West German state. All these years on, the structures, institutions and services established then have largely worn better than ours.

Today's Germans have been brought up with a strong sense of the country's war guilt, and an equally strong sense of civic responsibility. They tend to show more compassion than we do towards the less fortunate; they are mostly better at integrating outsiders, and more protective of the natural world that surrounds them. There is something to learn.

But too much has been written out of the script about what we have in common, both as relatively large and diverse countries and as northern European ones. Too much of the good from our shared past has been forgotten, even as we have comprehensively jettisoned the bad. Now could be the time to discover - or rather rediscover - the beneficial affinity we once had.

It is often said that Germany's chancellor, Olaf Scholz, must tread carefully as he steers his fragile coalition. Less remarked upon is that his three-party government well reflects the complexion of German opinion, and that, within days of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he had executed one of the most complete policy U-turns any country has managed in recent years. He took office as the continuity chancellor, but now Merkel's 16 years in office have been virtually erased.

His government has moved to end energy supplies from Russia, and reversed track on abandoning nuclear power. It has undertaken to raise Germany's defence budget to Nato's prescribed norm of 2 per cent of GDP, and overridden constitutional constraints in order to supply military hardware, including tanks, to Kyiv. It has opened the borders to more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and it has ended a half-century of routine dialogue with Moscow that began with Willy Brandt's famed Ostpolitik.

And one effect of these changes is that many long-standing points of friction between Berlin and London have been eliminated almost at a stroke. There can scarcely have been a time in recent years when the UK and Germany were more naturally aligned. There is also, now, more interest in Germany and things German beyond "the war" than I can remember.

Some question how much the Scholz government's policy shift, known as the Zeitenwende (watershed), has really changed Germany. However, to the extent that it coincides with a new bout of soul-searching in the UK - about our place in the world post-Brexit, about the deficiencies of our state, and about some less comfortable aspects of our history - there could be an opening for a radical improvement in relations.

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**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[*Voices: Why the King’s address to the German parliament was so significant*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WT-BSS1-JBNF-W436-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:3

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**Byline:** Mary Dejevsky

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The King had planned to make what were essentially “twin” visits to [*France*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/france) and Germany. It was a careful orchestration, designed at once to start fence-mending with the EU after [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit) and to signal that the two countries are of prime significance to the UK – but that France might have the very slightest edge, by virtue of history, geography and defence ties.

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What is also true, however, is that [*the UK-German relationship has been in need of sprucing up for some time*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html). It has arguably never really flourished since Margaret Thatcher became one of very few national leaders to make known her misgivings about German reunification after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

More recently, political relations wilted in the face of the UK’s growing Euroscepticism. In 2009, David Cameron destroyed a productive alliance between Conservative MEPs and their German counterparts when he ordered them to leave the centre-right bloc in the European parliament, in a vain attempt to boost the Tory vote in the following year’s general election.

Relations languished again after the Conservatives narrowly won the 2015 election, and Cameron banked on Germany’s then chancellor, Angela Merkel, to deliver the concessions he believed would secure a Remain vote in the EU referendum. Not for the first time, he had underestimated the zeal of the Eurosceptics at home, and overestimated what Merkel could or would offer as a staunch defender of the EU.

The long and fractious path to Brexit followed, with Germans among those most shocked by the referendum result. Britain’s relations with Germany soured, as they did with France and many other EU countries. The pandemic, along with the turmoil that attended the tenure of Boris Johnson, hardly made for a productive or even stable sequel.

But, of course, there is far more to the UK-German relationship than the ups and mostly downs of the past three decades. Relations at state level are haunted by the spectres of the past to a greater extent than Britain’s relationship with France or perhaps any other country.

Almost 80 years on, the continued British preoccupation with “the war” is almost the least of it. There is the German background of the Windsors, unusually made explicit by the King this week. There is the sympathy for Nazism once harboured by parts of the English aristocracy, including (it is reputed) the Duke of Windsor. Watching [*King Charles meeting the people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-title-royal-engineers-b2309305.html) in Berlin, it was hard not to note the physical resemblance to his two male predecessors on the throne, and be reminded of those complex, if long past, times.

I say complex because it is often forgotten how close the two countries were at many levels between the wars – in culture, in science, and in social ties that went far beyond the elite. It is an aspect that has been largely written out of the British – that is, the victor’s – version of history.

And perhaps because of these blank pages, relations with Germany are something UK governments all too frequently misjudge. I would even venture that the British understanding of Germany was superior in the two decades immediately after the war to what it is now.

There was still, from the 1920s and 1930s, a residual knowledge of the country and the language. There had been an extensive programme of community exchanges that lasted right up to the war. Then a school-leaver, my father returned home from his German host family just days before war was declared.

The two countries knew each other well, which may be one reason why the British did the creditable job that they did in helping to build the post-war West German state. All these years on, the structures, institutions and services established then have largely worn better than ours.

Today’s Germans have been brought up with a strong sense of the country’s war guilt, and an equally strong sense of civic responsibility. They tend to show more compassion than we do towards the less fortunate; they are mostly better at integrating outsiders, and more protective of the natural world that surrounds them. There is something to learn.

But too much has been written out of the script about what we have in common, both as relatively large and diverse countries and as northern European ones. Too much of the good from our shared past has been forgotten, even as we have comprehensively jettisoned the bad. Now could be the time to discover – or rather rediscover – the beneficial affinity we once had.

It is often said that [*Germany’s chancellor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/king-charles-camilla-berlin-trip-b2310230.html) , Olaf Scholz, must tread carefully as he steers his fragile coalition. Less remarked upon is that his three-party government well reflects the complexion of German opinion, and that, within days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, he had executed one of the most complete policy U-turns any country has managed in recent years. He took office as the continuity chancellor, but now Merkel’s 16 years in office have been virtually erased.

His government has moved to end energy supplies from Russia, and reversed track on abandoning nuclear power. It has undertaken to raise Germany’s defence budget to Nato’s prescribed norm of 2 per cent of GDP, and overridden constitutional constraints in order to supply military hardware, including tanks, to Kyiv. It has opened the borders to more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and it has ended a half-century of routine dialogue with Moscow that began with Willy Brandt’s famed Ostpolitik.

And one effect of these changes is that many long-standing points of friction between Berlin and London have been eliminated almost at a stroke. There can scarcely have been a time in recent years when the UK and Germany were more naturally aligned. There is also, now, more interest in Germany and things German beyond “the war” than I can remember.

Some question how much the Scholz government’s policy shift, known as the Zeitenwende (watershed), has really changed Germany. However, to the extent that it coincides with a new bout of soul-searching in the UK – about our place in the world post-Brexit, about the deficiencies of our state, and about some less comfortable aspects of our history – there could be an opening for a radical improvement in relations.

It may have been chance that made Germany the destination for [*King Charles’s first and only state visit before his coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html). But the seeds of a new special relationship may have been sown.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Zelensky tells Irish students to ‘take care of your freedom’ in university address*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66WN-VT61-DY4H-K3W7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 18, 2022 Friday 8:07 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 97 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has addressed students in an auditorium at a Dublin university, advising them to “take care of your [*freedom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/freedom) ”.

In his speech, the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) president also said that he was grateful to [*Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ireland) for its “incredible warmth” in taking in 63,000 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invasion began.

“I thank you for the incredible warmth that you gave to our people, 63,000 Ukrainians, that’s a lot of Ukrainian students,” Mr Zelensky said.

“Thank you, good luck and take care of your freedom,” he added, concluding his address.

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**Load-Date:** November 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine refugees forced to live in unvetted homes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DD-MC21-F072-43CY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 9, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 66 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been placed with unvetted hosts and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks. Arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine route are breaking down, as it emerged background checks are not always being done before refugees arrive in the UK. Some families have been forced to pay for hotel rooms or register as homeless.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine refugees forced to live in unvetted homes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65DF-Y0V1-JCS0-D4FB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 9, 2022 Monday

Third Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 66 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have been placed with unvetted hosts and in unsuitable homes because the government has yet to give councils any funding for vital safety checks. Arrangements under the Homes for Ukraine route are breaking down, as it emerged background checks are not always being done before refugees arrive in the UK. Some families have been forced to pay for hotel rooms or register as homeless.

**Load-Date:** May 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voices: I look at what’s happened in Ukraine and realise the importance of national service*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:661J-NGX1-JBNF-W4RD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

July 28, 2022 Thursday 5:52 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1245 words

**Byline:** Mary Dejevsky

**Highlight:** There is a good argument to be made that everyone could devote a small part of peacetime to acquiring habits and skills that might one day become life-savers, writes Mary Dejevsky

**Body**

The war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has brought the brutality of armed conflict home to generations of Europeans who had lived their whole lives in peace.

It has had a particular immediacy because of satellite television, social media, and the millions of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have brought their ineradicable memories into exile with them.[*Amid all the horror*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-missile-strike-russia-nuclear-war-latest-b2123730.html) , however, it is possible to identify one positive: the huge mobilisation of especially young Ukrainians who immediately volunteered to join the war effort, contributing in whatever way they could.

Many – not only young men [*– took up arms and set off to fight the enemy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-donbas-luhansk-donetsk-b2115059.html) , wherever that enemy was to be found. By no means everyone took up arms; many others have helped to organise evacuations, ensure medical care or distribute food supplies. A “PR Army”, (metaphorically) bombards [*people like me with information.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-donetsk-vladimir-putin-taxi-drivers-b2130355.html)

[*And however great the death and destruction around them*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/ukraine-russia-war-mariupol-reality-b2088130.html) , it is not uncommon to hear Ukrainians sounding, if not actually happy, then (to an outsider) surprisingly upbeat and fulfilled. They see their involvement as a formative experience; they are busy and feel useful, some for the first time in their lives.

The war has given a lot of people a new and very real sense of purpose, and that includes young men who might never have ventured beyond their home area and found it hard to find a job. The crime rate, it has been noted, has gone down.

Adversity, of course, calls forth its own heroes. Remember the volunteer efforts that sprang up in the early months of the Covid pandemic, in the UK as in many other countries, and the spontaneous help, in Poland, and elsewhere, for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***?

To delve into the past, I and many others will recall female relatives reminiscing with a degree of nostalgia about their “war work”, from driving officers, to packing parachutes, manufacturing munitions or taking their place on the fire-watching rota.

Anyone could do something, and felt needed. That, as well as stoical solidarity, is what the hackneyed “Blitz spirit” was about. I don’t want to underrate the extreme traumas suffered by those who fought, or who experienced conflict – traumas that last to this day, and will surely mark Ukrainians, too, far into the future.

But might there not be something to be learned from a national war effort that mobilises everyone and proceeds from the belief, the necessary belief – that everyone can contribute in some way? And that this effort can work to the individual and common good?

This is why I have in the past supported the principle of some sort of national service, and may also be why David Cameron’s National Citizenship Service – proposed as part of his Big Society initiative in 2010 – was generally favourably received.

[*That it failed to flourish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/david-cameron-national-citizen-service-b2006983.html) – to the point where its budget has been slashed and an independent investigation described it as akin to a “holiday camp for middle-class kids” – underlines some of the difficulties in organising such a project in peacetime, but not that it should be entirely written off.

One drawback is that the young people who tend to join organised volunteer efforts are by and large – and I realise this is a generalisation – those who can afford it and whose life prospects are already good. Those who might benefit most from leaving their immediate surroundings and trying something new are often the least likely to have that chance.

Which is why I have supported not only the principle of some sort of national service, but the idea that it should be compulsory. Yes, obligatory for everyone. And this is not only for reasons of social equity – the offspring of the better-off and better-connected should not be able to buy or network their way out, nor should those with lesser means feel that they would not fit in – but also to demonstrate what is currently being demonstrated to such effect in Ukraine: that everyone, whatever their means and their background, can contribute in some way.

But surely, you might object, it is different for Ukraine, which is engaged in a military struggle for its very survival.

Why should the UK and other countries at peace disburse any resources at all, given the improbability of war. Maybe. But it is not necessary to envisage a military conflict on the horizon to believe that there could be an emergency of some kind or other around the corner and that it would be better for citizens who have known only peace to be prepared.

Seen from outside the country, the UK has an enviable degree of public resilience. People tend to keep calm; they are resourceful; they help: the public response to the 7/7 London bombings and other attacks are testament to that. But might it not be an asset if more people, a lot more people, were trained from an early age in a range of emergency skills.

First aid, elementary civil defence, even – I can already hear the qualms – how to handle a firearm? It is routine for journalists, aid workers and others going to conflict zones to take what is known as a hostile environment course. Is that sort of knowledge – about how to avoid or respond to attack, how to tell incoming from outgoing fire, how to defend yourself – not useful for everyone, not just those who expect to find themselves in a war zone.

Keeping fit, knowing how to swim ([*eight young men drowned in the recent heatwave)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/heatwave-drowning-water-deaths-uk-b2126634.html) , reading a map, using GPS, basic navigation? How many of us know how to do this? How many would benefit from such skills? A new national service need not be primarily military or even military at all.

Nor, if it introduced such a programme, would the UK be a particular outlier. More countries than you might imagine either never abolished national service or have reintroduced something of the kind, with civilian and military strands. Sweden reintroduced conscription as recently as 2017, in part as a social solidarity measure, and the subject is a hot topic again in the Netherlands and Germany.

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The fiercest opposition tends to come not only from those reluctant to spend a year or so of their lives in this way, but from the top brass, who argue that in this day and age they need committed professionals, not “kids” just parked with them for a few months. With the military starting to be called upon again to supplement services at home, they may need to rethink.

[*As the Commonwealth Games open in Birmingham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commonwealth-games-birmingham-lenny-henry-b2133064.html) and London basks in nostalgia [*10 years after the London Olympics*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/london-olympics-opening-ceremony-2012-b2132230.html). I would add as a footnote the role played by young volunteers, many of whom discovered strengths that might otherwise have lain undiscovered.

In particular, I remember watching two teenage marshals shepherding huge crowds over the complicated crossing at Marble Arch, with a confident charm that would surely stand them in good stead later on. It is a long way from Marble Arch 2012 to the war raging in Ukraine today.

But the hidden link is the opportunity people have to feel needed and to serve a purpose,[*as the late Senator John McCain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-mccain) used to say, greater than themselves. There is a good argument to be made that everyone could devote a small part of peacetime to acquiring habits and skills that might one day become life-savers – even in emergencies that fall well short of war.

**Load-Date:** July 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WJ-PRG1-DY4H-K0B9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2023 Wednesday 11:57 AM GMT

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**Length:** 152 words

**Byline:** Mary-Kate Findon

**Body**

Watch live as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Consort, Camilla, arrive in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

The first leg of the King's trip to France was cancelled due to ongoing protests over controversial pension reform.

German president [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) will welcome Charles and Camilla at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

On Thursday, the King is expected to deliver a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament, and meet with chancellor Olaf Scholz.

The monarch will also meet with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, along with military personnel.

Friday will see the royals travelling to Hamburg where they will visit the Kindertransport memorial for Jewish children who fled to Britain.

Before returning to the UK, they will attend a green energy event.

The trip is seen as the British royal family's attempt to improve post-Brexit relations with Europe.

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**Load-Date:** March 29, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war -live: Putin ‘loses entire brigade’ as Moscow suffer painful losses in latest battle*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69GR-CC71-JBNF-W14Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 27, 2023 Friday 5:31 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:17

**Length:** 10032 words

**Byline:** Holly Evans

**Highlight:** The Russian Army has suffered over 400 casualties a day in a drive to take the city of Avdiivka, Kyiv said

**Body**

Russian troops have lost “at least a brigade of troops” during their latest offensive in the ruined city of Avdiivka, with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky claiming they had suffered “painful losses”.

This comes as news emerged that Putin’s troops had been executed for retreating from the [*offensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/offensive) in the eastern city in [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) , according to the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house).

“We have information that the [*Russian military has been*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-nuclear-weapons-drones-putin-b2436217.html?page=6) actually executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders,” [*White House spokesperson John Kirby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ukraine-war-funding-us-white-house-putin-b2423590.html) told a media briefing on Thursday.

Ukrainian forces have been repelling the Russian onslaught on [*the frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-east-frontline-b2434678.html) in Donetsk for several weeks since mid-October.

In a call to Rishi Sunak, Zelensky said: “The invaders made several attempts to surround Avdiivka, but each time our soldiers stopped them and threw them back, causing painful losses. In these cases, the enemy lost at least a brigade.”

Meanwhile, Oleksandr Shtupun, a spokesperson for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s southern groups of forces, said last week that Russian forces had suffered over 400 casualties a day in its campaign which has relied on small assault groups of 30 to 40 men.

Key Points

US says executing own soldiers is ‘barbaric' Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive 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

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.

Ukraine shot down three out of the four Iskander cruise missiles

Ukraine’s air force claimed it has shot down three out of the four Iskander cruise missiles that Russia launched overnight at Dnipropetrovsk oblast.

They wrote on Telegram that the launches were carried out from the Dzhankoi district of Russian-occupied Crimea and that the remaining missile did not reach its target. Explosions were heard around 1am with no casualties reported.

Ministry of Defence latest update

In their daily update on social media, the Ministry of Defence said that “heavy but inconclusive” fighting had been taking place around the town of Avdiivka, with Russian troops likely to have suffered some of their highest casualty rates in 2023.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 28 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/hYWKv7sZQC*](https://t.co/hYWKv7sZQC) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/4eNIA2Vtmi*](https://t.co/4eNIA2Vtmi) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 28, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1718173562190659694?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) War-weary mothers, wives and children of Ukrainian soldiers demand a cap on military service time 08:50 , Holly Evans[*Scores*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scores) of protesters gathered on the streets of Ukrainian cities on Friday to demand a cap of 18 months on mandatory military service, amid new suggestions of possible Ukrainian and international weariness with the 20-month war.Both the warring sides are striving to keep their military momentum, though neither side is able to land a knockout blow, and the fighting is expected to drag on deep into next year.The 18-month service limit would be the same maximum as before the war. It is currently open-ended for draftees. The protesters, who are part of a loose national network, want the Verkhovna Rada, Ukraine’s parliament, to consider possible alternatives on service time.Read more here[*War-weary mothers, wives and children of Ukrainian soldiers demand a cap on military service time*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kremlin-scores-kyiv-russia-b2437155.html) French president Macron condemns Orban and Putin handshake08:03 , Holly Evans French president, [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/emmanuel-macron) , has condemned the Hungarian leader Viktor Orbán’s recent meeting and handshake with Vladimir Putin.“I want to condemn it [the meeting with the Russian president once again and make it very clear. I can tell you what I said to [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/viktor-orban) publicly around the table,” he said. “First of all, I respect all the heads of state and government around the table and they have this sovereignty.There’s absolutely no need to prohibit a head of state or government from going in one direction or another. It doesn’t shock us. What I am asking, out of respect and loyalty, is that we coordinate beforehand and coordinate afterwards and that, especially in the situation we are in with Russia, we do not use these bilateral contacts to negotiate things about ourselves that would weaken our unity.Russia shells Kherson injuring eight people and damaging buildings07:00 , Sam Rkaina Russian forces heavily shelled the centre of the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson on Friday, injuring eight people and destroying or damaging at least 15 buildings, a senior city official said.Pictures posted on social media showed at least three sites dotted with piles of rubble and the interior of one building strewn with shattered building materials and other debris.Roman Mrochko, head of the city’s military administration, said on the Telegram messaging app that three of the injured were being treated in hospital. He said two buildings had been destroyed, three suffered heavy damage and 10 less damage.“In the evening the entire city trembled,” Ukraine‘s Emergency Services said on Telegram. “The enemy targeted the very centre of Kherson.”The posting said emergency workers had rescued two women, in their 70s and 80s, who had been blocked in a building, and brought a fire under control in a rubble-strewn area.Ukraine‘s Suspilne public broadcaster said Russian forces had also shelled Beryslav, a town further north on the Dnipro River in Kherson Region, wounding one person.Russian forces captured Kherson in the early days of the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, but abandoned the city and the western bank of the Dnipro late last year. They now regularly shell those areas from positions on the eastern bank.EU summit turns its eyes away from Ukraine despite a commitment to stay the course with Zelensky06:00 , Joe Middleton It was a good thing Ukrainian Prime Minister Volodymyr Zelensky had his videoconference address to the European Union summit pre-slotted for the opening session.Immediately afterward, EU leaders switched off and went to the order of the day — the Israel-Hamas war. They didn’t come back to the issue of Russia‘s war in Ukraine again before Friday’s closing day of the summit.After dominating summit after summit since Moscow launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022, the timing alone, anecdotal as it was, underscored a deeper reality: Zelensky will be facing tougher times to get all the attention and political, economic and military aid that Ukraine wants.[*EU summit turns its eyes away from Ukraine despite a commitment to stay the course with Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-ap-viktor-orban-robert-fico-russia-b2437245.html) A Russia without Putin? Be careful what you wish for...05:00 , Joe Middleton As rumours swirl about the health of the Russian president,Mary Dejevsky explains what the death of Putin could mean for Russia, Ukraine and the rest of the world[*A Russia without Putin? Be careful what you wish for... | Mary Dejevsky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-health-successor-b2436599.html) Russia is executing its own retreating soldiers as Ukraine offensive fails, says US04:00 , Joe Middleton The White House said it had information that Russia was executing its own soldiers who retreated from an offensive in Ukraine or refused to follow orders.“We have information that the Russian military has been actually executing soldiers who refuse to follow orders,” White House spokesperson John Kirby told a media briefing on Thursday.“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,” Mr Kirby said.[*Russia is executing its own retreating soldiers as Ukraine offensive fails, says US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-avdiivka-white-house-b2436884.html) Abortion restrictions in Russia spark outrage as the country takes a conservative turn03:00 , Joe Middleton Despite its last-minute scheduling, the meeting at a bookstore in Russia’s westernmost city of Kaliningrad still drew about 60 people, with many outraged by a lawmaker’s efforts to ban abortions in local private clinics.The weeknight turnout surprised and heartened Dasha Yakovleva, one of the organizers, amid recent crackdowns on political activism under President Vladimir Putin.“Right now, there is no room for political action in Russia. The only place left is our kitchens,” Yakovleva, co-founder of the Feminitive Community women’s group, told The Associated Press. “And here, it was a public place, well-known in Kaliningrad, and everyone spoke out openly about how they see this measure, why they think it’s unjustified, inappropriate.”[*Abortion restrictions in Russia spark outrage as the country takes a conservative turn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-tallinn-russia-kaliningrad-vladimir-putin-b2436913.html) Moscow succession: What would happen if Putin dies?02:00 , Joe Middleton 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 were forced to deny rumours that 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 that were introduced in 2020, he could rule Russia until 2036.Yet since his invasion of Ukraine and the loss of tens of thousands of his troops, the fallout of his military gamble has caused cracks to appear for the first time under his 20-year leadership. Speculation has also dogged the ageing tyrant that his health is failing, with the future of Russia uncertain upon his demise.[*If Putin dies, this is what would happen in Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-putin-death-health-russia-kremlin-b2436918.html) Putin loses ‘at least a brigade’ in offensive on Ukrainian town01:00 , Joe Middleton Vladimir Putin has lost “at least a brigdade” of troops in his offensive push towards the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka, president Volodymyr Zelensky said.“The invaders made several attempts to surround Avdiivka, but each time our soldiers stopped them and threw them back, causing painful losses. In these cases, the enemy lost at least a brigade,” Zelensky said.Russia renewed the offensive on the embattled town in mid-October, trying to overwhelm Ukrainian positions with constant barrages of artillery and waves of troops and fighting vehicles, according to local and military authorities in Ukraine.Brigades vary in size and can number between 1,500 and 8,000 troops. Battlefield losses are a state secret in Russia and Ukraine, though they are believed to run into the many tens of thousands on both sides since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.Slovak coalition partner expects commercial military sales to Ukraine to continueFriday 27 October 2023 23:59 , Joe Middleton The new Slovak government’s pledge to stop military aid to Ukraine should only affect army supplies and not commercial sales, parliament’s speaker and leader of the second-biggest ruling party, Peter Pellegrini, was quoted as saying on Friday.Prime Minister Robert Fico took part in a two-day European Union summit on Thursday and Friday where he said that Slovakia will stop supporting its neighbour Ukraine militarily while still being a backer of humanitarian aid.Fico won last month’s election with pledge to stop military aid to Ukraine on his manifesto. He was appointed as prime minister for a fourth time this week, leading a three-party government.Commenting on the message on Friday, Pellegrini, leader of the centre-left Hlas party, was quoted by media as saying he favoured allowing orders made on a commercial basis to continue.“If someone orders and pays for these systems, then that is support for Slovak industry,” Dennik N quoted him saying.Slovakia’s defence industry has seen a boost with others in central and eastern Europe amid efforts to aid Ukraine‘s battle against the Russian invasion.Germany, Denmark and Norway said a year ago they would buy 16 Slovak-made Zuzana-2 howitzers for Ukraine.Dennik N said the first was delivered in August.Fico told a parliamentary committee ahead of the summit that he saw no military solution to the conflict, and said the army’s supplies were depleted and the army needed to concentrate on its own stocks.ReutersGerman prosecutors receive evidence regarding ‘Russian war crimes in Ukraine’Friday 27 October 2023 23:00 , Joe Middleton 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.CFJ said in a statement: “The organisation submitted detailed dossiers against the perpetrators and is representing 16 survivors and families of victims.” 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) ‘Essential not to lose focus’ on war in Ukraine, Varadkar warnsFriday 27 October 2023 22:00 , Joe Middleton Irish premier Leo Varadkar has said it was “essential” to not “lose focus” on the war in Ukraine as global attention focuses on the Israel-Palestine conflict.The Taoiseach was speaking ahead of a two-day meeting of the EU’s 27 leaders in Brussels on Friday.Mr Varadkar said on the first day of the summit that some countries wanted attention to be drawn away from the Russian invasion of Ukraine and towards the threat of an escalating conflict in the Middle East.[*‘Essential not to lose focus’ on war in Ukraine, Varadkar warns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-leo-varadkar-irish-taoiseach-israel-b2437104.html) ICYMI: Ukraine’s frontline troops say they’re surrounded by Putin’s forces – and ammo’s running outFriday 27 October 2023 21:00 , Joe Middleton As all eyes are on Israel and Gaza,Askold Krushelnycky speaks to military officers in Ukraine about facing Russian forces from multiple sides in the northern and eastern battlegrounds – and their fears that US support for Israel’s war on Hamas could drain the flow of essential munitions for their fight[*Ukraine’s troops face intensifying attacks by Putin’s forces – and ammo’s running out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-east-frontline-b2434678.html) Separatist lined up to be Putin’s puppet leader in Ukraine ‘is shot in Crimea home’Friday 27 October 2023 20:00 , Joe Middleton A pro-Russian former politician in Ukraine is fighting for his life after being shot in his Crimea home, an official has said.Oleg Tsaryov, who was reportedly being lined up to lead a puppet administration in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv after Russia’s invasion, is in intensive care, Vladimir Rogov, a Russian-installed official in southern Ukraine, said.He was reportedly shot twice at around midnight at his home in Crimea.“Oleg’s condition is very serious. He is currently in intensive care,” Mr Rogov wrote on the Telegram messaging app.[*Separatist lined up to be Putin’s puppet leader in Ukraine ‘is shot in Crimea home’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/oleg-tsaryov-shot-ukraine-crimea-b2437109.html) ICYMI: Republican senators want to separate Israel funding from Ukraine aidFriday 27 October 2023 19:00 , Joe Middleton A group of conservatives in the US Senate are pushing to drive a wedge between military aid for Ukraine and Israel at a time when passing legislation to support the former seems more uncertain than ever.The senators, including JD Vance, Ted Cruz, Mike Lee and Roger Marshall, are hoping to force Senate leadership to separate a planned funding package for Ukraine and Israel into two pieces of legislation. Opposition to aid for Ukraine is sharply growing among conservatives in the Senate and House in particular, with some arguing that continued support for such a cause risks further escalating the conflict into a global war.Last week, the White House submitted a supplemental budget request to Congress requesting $105bn in funding for three areas: Ukraine, Israel, and security measures along the US-Mexico border. Republicans have long been urging the Biden administration to act on border security, making a combined bill all the more politically risky for GOP lawmakers to oppose.[*Republican senators want to separate Israel funding from Ukraine aid*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/senate-ukraine-israel-gaza-aid-b2436734.html) British support for Ukraine remains ‘unshakeable’, Sunak saysFriday 27 October 2023 18:00 , Alexander Butler British support for Ukraine remains “unshakeable”, prime minister Rishi Sunak said.“Good conversation with President Zelensky this morning on the latest military situation and the importance of getting grain out of Ukrainian ports. “Our support for Ukraine and the defence of its freedom remains unshakeable. As I said earlier this week: Putin will fail,” he said on X, formerly Twitter.Good conversation with President [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) this morning on the latest military situation and the importance of getting grain out of Ukrainian ports.Our support for Ukraine and the defence of its freedom remains unshakeable.As I said earlier this week: Putin will fail.— Rishi Sunak (@RishiSunak) [*October 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/RishiSunak/status/1717856884068159537?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Zelensky gives out posthumous awards to ‘heroes'Friday 27 October 2023 17:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has given posthumous awards to 21 soldiers.It is an honor for me to award Golden Stars to the families of our heroes. Twenty-one Heroes of Ukraine. Posthumously,” he wrote on X, formerly Twitter.“I very much want these state awards to serve as a reminder that our heroes will never be forgotten. That their names and stories will be known. That Ukraine will always be grateful to them.”It is an honor for me to award Golden Stars to the families of our heroes. Twenty-one Heroes of Ukraine. Posthumously.I very much want these state awards to serve as a reminder that our heroes will never be forgotten. That their names and stories will be known. That Ukraine… [*pic.twitter.com/U3HAFo0JLr*](https://t.co/U3HAFo0JLr) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1717904056599941567?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Putin loses ‘at least a brigade’ in offensive on Ukrainian townFriday 27 October 2023 14:41 , Alexander Butler Vladimir Putin has lost “at least a brigdade” of troops in his offensive push towards the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka, president Volodymyr Zelensky said.“The invaders made several attempts to surround Avdiivka, but each time our soldiers stopped them and threw them back, causing painful losses. In these cases, the enemy lost at least a brigade,” Zelensky said.Russia renewed the offensive on the embattled town in mid-October, trying to overwhelm Ukrainian positions with constant barrages of artillery and waves of troops and fighting vehicles, according to local and military authorities in Ukraine.Brigades vary in size and can number between 1,500 and 8,000 troops. Battlefield losses are a state secret in Russia and Ukraine, though they are believed to run into the many tens of thousands on both sides since Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.Hungary following “peace strategy” for Ukraine, Orban saysFriday 27 October 2023 14:00 , Alexander Butler Hungary is following a “peace strategy” for Ukraine, Viktor Orban said.“Hungary is following a peace strategy. We will do everything in order to make peace. My meeting with the President of Russia served this purpose,” the prime minister said.It comes after Mr Orban said the European Union’s Ukraine strategy has “failed” and Ukraine will not win on the front line.He added that 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.Putin’s meeting with North Korea and Hamas ‘humiliating’, UK defence secretary saysFriday 27 October 2023 12:26 , Alexander Butler Vladimir Putin’s meeting with terror group Hamas shows how far “Russia has fallen” since its invasion of Ukraine, the UK defence secretary said.“Tyranny meets terrorism. Pariah meets proscribed, as Russia sits down with Hamas,” defence secretary Grant Shapps said on X, formerly Twitter.“Putin’s humiliating search for friends, from North Korea to Hamas, has shown how far Russia has fallen & proven the disastrous cost of his failing invasion of Ukraine.”Tyranny meets terrorism... pariah meets proscribed, as Russia sits down with Hamas.Putin’s humiliating search for friends, from North Korea to Hamas, has shown how far Russia has fallen & proven the disastrous cost of his failing invasion of Ukraine. [*pic.twitter.com/9hlsaZgUn*](https://t.co/9hlsaZgUn) — Rt Hon Grant Shapps MP (@grantshapps) [*October 27, 2023*](https://twitter.com/grantshapps/status/1717862481505251690?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Slovakia calls for guarantees on EU aid to UkraineFriday 27 October 2023 11:45 , Alexander Butler Slovakia’s new prime minister Robert Fico has told other European Union leaders that 50bn euros in EU aid to Ukraine should include guarantees that the funds would not be misappropriated.“Ukraine is among the most corrupt countries in the world and we are conditioning what is excessive financial support on guarantees that European money will not be embezzled,” Mr Fico said.Mr Fico was appointed prime minister on Wednesday for the fourth time after pledging in his election campaign to end military support for Ukraine and criticising sanctions on Russia.Israel-Hamas conflict won’t affect UK’s support for Ukraine, Sunak saysFriday 27 October 2023 11:27 , Alexander Butler Rishi Sunak has spoken to Volodymyr Zelensky, to reassure him the UK’s support for Ukraine will not change despite the Israel-Hamas war.A Downing Street spokeswoman said the Prime Minister spoke to the Ukrainian President this morning “to reiterate the UK’s support for Ukraine.“The Prime Minister underscored the UK’s long term and unwavering commitment to Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and reiterated that the conflict in the Middle East would not change that.”Mr Sunak added that “the principle of a rules based order, in which people could live in peace and stability, needed to be protected both in Ukraine and the Middle East”.Pro-Russian Ukrainian politician is shot and woundedFriday 27 October 2023 10:25 , Alexander Butler Former Ukrainian lawmaker Oleg Tsaryov, a pro-Russian figure who was reported to have been lined up by Moscow to lead a puppet administration in Kyiv after Russia’s invasion, is in intensive care after being shot, a Russian official said.The official, Vladimir Rogov, did not say where the shooting had taken place. “Oleg’s condition is very serious. He is currently in intensive care,” said Rogov, a senior Russian-installed official in southern Ukraine.“Oleg was shot,” he added on Telegram, asking Orthodox Christian believers to pray for Tsaryov. Previously Tsaryov had been a member of the Ukrainian parliament and then speaker of the parliament of “Novorossiya” an entity formed after Russian-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine broke away in 2014 and began fighting Ukrainian forces.Russian missile injures eight, Kyiv saysFriday 27 October 2023 10:05 , Alexander Butler A Russian missile hit a fire department building in the northern region of Kharkiv, injuring at least eight rescuers, Ukraine’s interior minister said.The attack targeted the town of Izium, the minister, Ihor Klymenko, said in a post on the Telegram messaging app that was accompanied by images of the wrecked building and fire trucks.“The building itself and 13 pieces of equipment were also damaged,” he added, but did not say what type of missile had been used.Five of six drones were destroyed in two waves of Shahed drone attacks that Russia launched overnight on the southern regions of Mykolaiv and Kherson, said Natalia Humeniuk, a spokesperson for the southern military command.Ukraine attempted to attack Kursk nuclear plant with drones, Russia claimsFriday 27 October 2023 09:24 , Alexander Butler Russia said it had thwarted a Ukrainian drone attack near a nuclear plant in the country’s south, where two news outlets said an explosion had damaged the facade of a warehouse storing nuclear waste.Air defences foiled “an attempt by the Kyiv regime to carry out a terrorist attack” when they intercepted a drone near the settlement of Kurchatov in the southern region of Kursk, Russia’s defence ministry said.Kurchatov is the location of the Kursk nuclear power station, which said in a separate statement that an attempt to attack it with not one but three drones had been thwarted.It said there were no casualties or damage, and that radiation levels were normal and the plant was operating as usual.Russia likely to attack Ukrainian energy infrastructure over winter long range munitionsFriday 27 October 2023 08:39 , Alexander Butler 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 saysFriday 27 October 2023 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 crimesFriday 27 October 2023 07:20 , 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?Friday 27 October 2023 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'Friday 27 October 2023 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 AugustFriday 27 October 2023 03:00 , 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 exportsFriday 27 October 2023 02:00 , 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 workingFriday 27 October 2023 01:00 , 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.

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[*Billions set to be cut from foreign aid projects*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6689-BYH1-F072-44C5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

August 29, 2022 Monday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 97 words

**Byline:** ROB MERRICK DEPUTY POLITICAL EDITOR

**Body**

Billions more will be slashed from overseas aid projects unless ministers abandon rules diverting a quarter of funds to the costs of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, Save the Children is warning. The alarm has been raised over a decision to include spending on 118,000 Ukrainians in Britain within a budget reduced from 0.7 to 0.5 per cent of GDP. The charity estimates the bill will reach £3bn, which would be 25 per cent of aid spending in 2022, after £4bn has already been slashed from the budget. The agency said there would be "unimaginable consequences" without an urgent rethink.

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[*Fate of 2,500 Ukrainian POWs from steel plant stirs concern*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65H6-FP31-JBNF-W14W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 22, 2022 Sunday 5:05 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1381 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** As the West rallies behind Ukraine in its war with Russia, Polish President Andrzej Duda has arrived in Ukraine on an unannounced visit

**Body**

With [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) claiming to have taken prisoner nearly 2,500 Ukrainian fighters from the besieged [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol) steel plant, concerns grew about their fate as a Moscow-backed separatist leader vowed they would face tribunals.

Russia has declared its full control of the Azovstal steel plant, which for weeks was the last holdout in Mariupol and a symbol of Ukrainian tenacity in the strategic port city, now in ruins with more than 20,000 residents feared dead. The seizure gives Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) a badly wanted victory in the war he began nearly three months ago.

As the West rallies behind Ukraine, Polish President Andrzej Duda arrived in Ukraine on an unannounced visit and will address the country's parliament on Sunday, his office said.

Poland, which has welcomed millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the start of the war, is a strong supporter of Ukraine's desire to join the European Union. With Russia blocking Ukraine's sea ports, Poland has become a major gateway for Western humanitarian aid and weapons going into Ukraine and has been helping Ukraine get its grain and other agricultural products to world markets.

The Russian Defense Ministry released video of Ukrainian soldiers being detained after announcing that its forces had removed the last holdouts from the Mariupol plant's extensive underground tunnels. It said a total of 2,439 had surrendered.

Family members of the fighters, who came from a variety of military and law enforcement units, have pleaded for them to be given rights as prisoners of war and eventually returned to Ukraine. Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said Saturday that Ukraine "will fight for the return" of every one of them.

Denis Pushilin, the pro-Kremlin head of an area of eastern Ukraine controlled by Moscow-backed separatists, said the captured fighters included some foreign nationals, though he did not provide details. He said they were sure to face a tribunal. Russian officials and state media have sought to characterize the fighters as neo-Nazis and criminals.

"I believe that justice must be restored. There is a request for this from ordinary people, society, and, probably, the sane part of the world community," Russian state news agency Tass quoted Pushilin as saying.

Among the defenders were members of the Azov Regiment, whose far-right origins have been seized on by the Kremlin as part of its effort to cast the invasion as a battle against Nazi influence in Ukraine.

A prominent member of Russia's parliament, Leonid Slutsky, said [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) was studying the possibility of exchanging the Azovstal fighters for Viktor Medvedchuk, a wealthy Ukrainian with close ties to Putin who faces criminal charges in Ukraine, the Russian news agency Interfax reported. Slutsky later walked back those remarks, saying he agreed with Pushilin that their fate should be decided by a tribunal.

The Ukrainian government has not commented on Russia's claim of capturing Azovstal. Ukraine's military had told the fighters their mission was complete and they could come out. It described their extraction as an evacuation, not a mass surrender.

The capture of Mariupol furthers Russia's quest to create a land bridge from Russia stretching through the Donbas region to the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow seized from Ukraine in 2014.

The impact on the broader war remained unclear. Many Russian troops already had been redeployed from Mariupol to elsewhere in the conflict.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov reported Saturday that Russia destroyed a Ukrainian special-operations base near Odesa, Ukraine's main Black Sea port, as well as a significant cache of Western-supplied weapons in northern Ukraine's Zhytomyr region. There was no confirmation from the Ukrainian side.

The Ukrainian military reported heavy fighting in much of the Donbas in eastern Ukraine.

"The situation in Donbas is extremely difficult," President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address to the nation. "As in previous days, the Russian army is trying to attack Sloviansk and Sievierodonetsk." He said Ukrainian forces are holding off the offensive "every day."

Sievierodonetsk is the main city under Ukrainian control in the Luhansk region, which together with the Donetsk region makes up the Donbas. Gov. Serhii Haidai said the only functioning hospital in the city has just three doctors and supplies for 10 days.

Sloviansk, in the Donetsk region, is critical to Russia's objective of capturing all of eastern Ukraine and saw fierce fighting last month after Moscow's troops backed off from Kyiv. Russian shelling on Saturday killed seven civilians and injured 10 more elsewhere in the region, the governor said.

A monastery in the Donetsk region village of Bohorodichne was evacuated after being hit by a Russian airstrike, the regional police said Saturday. About 100 monks, nuns and children had been seeking safe shelter in the basement of the church and no one was hurt, the police said in a Facebook post, which included a video showing extensive damage to the monastery as well as nuns, monks and children boarding vans on Friday for the evacuation.

Zelenskyy on Saturday emphasized that the Donbas remains part of Ukraine and his forces were fighting to liberate it.

Speaking at a joint news conference with Portuguese Prime Minister Antonio Costa, he pressed Western countries for multiple-launch rocket systems, which he said "just stand still" in other countries yet are key to Ukraine's success.

Portugal and Poland, where Costa stopped for talks before traveling on to Kyiv, support bringing Ukraine into the European Union quickly, even if some other EU members balk at granting it speedy access.

U.S. President Joe Biden signed off Saturday on a fresh, $40 billion infusion of aid for Ukraine, with half for military assistance. Portugal pledged up to 250 million euros, as well as continued shipments of military equipment.

Mariupol, which is part of the Donbas, was blockaded early in the war and became a frightening example to people elsewhere in the country of the hunger, terror and death they might face if the Russians surrounded their communities.

The seaside steelworks, occupying some 11 square kilometers (4 square miles), were a battleground for weeks. Drawing Russian airstrikes, artillery and tank fire, the dwindling group of outgunned Ukrainian fighters held out with the help of airdrops that Zelenskyy said cost the lives of many "absolutely heroic" helicopter pilots.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Saturday released video of Russian troops taking into custody Serhiy Volynskyy, the commander of the Ukrainian Navy's 36th Special Marine Brigade, which was one of the main forces defending the steel plant. The Associated Press has not been able to independently verify the date, location and conditions of the video.

With Russia controlling the city, Ukrainian authorities are likely to face delays in documenting evidence of alleged Russian atrocities in Mariupol, including the bombings of a maternity hospital and a theater where hundreds of civilians had taken cover. Satellite images in April showed what appeared to be mass graves just outside Mariupol, where local officials accused Russia of concealing the slaughter by burying up to 9,000 civilians.

An estimated 100,000 of the 450,000 people who resided in Mariupol before the war remain. Many, trapped by Russia's siege, were left without food, water and electricity.

The Ukrainian mayor of Mariupol warned Saturday the city is facing a health and sanitation "catastrophe" from mass burials in shallow pits across the ruined city as well as the breakdown of sewage systems. Vadim Boychenko said summer rains threaten to contaminate water sources as he pressed Russian forces to allow residents to safely leave the city.

"In addition to the humanitarian catastrophe created by the (Russian) occupiers and collaborators, the city is on the verge of an outbreak of infectious diseases," he said on the messaging app Telegram.

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McQuillan reported from Lviv. Stashevskyi reported from Kyiv. Associated Press journalists Yuras Karmanau in Lviv, Andrea Rosa in Kharkiv, Frances D'Emilio in Rome, and other [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) staffers around the world contributed.

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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 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians forced to choose 'either war or homelessness'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:677C-TV01-F072-40PF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

January 3, 2023 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 8

**Length:** 1435 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT

**Body**

Ukrainians in the UK are being forced to choose between homelessness and returning to their war-torn homeland as their sponsorship arrangements end, charities have warned. Councils have a legal obligation to house Ukrainians if they do not have anywhere to live, but some local authorities have told refugees they cannot house them when their six-month Homes for Ukraine placement ends.

In one example, Ealing Council told a 23-year-old woman it was unlikely to be able to help her because she did not have "severe health needs", while others have been told they will only get help when they are 48 hours away from having nowhere to live.

Home Office figures show that 2,985 Ukrainian households presented themselves as homeless to councils between the end of February and November last year. Some 69 per cent of those included dependent children, and the majority, 1,920, had come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

There was a 37 per cent rise in Ukrainians presenting as homeless from October to November, as more sponsorship arrangements ended, with 670 households moved to temporary accommodation by councils.

Anna Jones, CEO of charity RefuAid, said: "We are facing a varied level of support from councils. Sometimes councils have said that until it is 48 hours before a person is made homeless, they can't help or they can't receive a referral. This is causing added stress to people who have already fled war. It is also a huge amount of pressure on hosts.

"Often, both the host and the guest have done the right thing of giving the councils three months' notice of the arrangement coming to an end, but they come back and say they can't help until the last minute.

"There is a very real decision for some of our families: is it better to be homeless in the UK, where you know nobody, or go back to Ukraine? These are all people who want to rebuild their lives in safety, and for whom six months is never going to be long enough to do so. We are pushing people off a cliff-edge."

It comes as Vladimir Putin continues his assault on Ukraine at the start of the new year, with fresh waves of missile strikes and no sign of an end to the war. Despite this, according to a recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey of 1,530 previous sponsors involved in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 11 per cent of hosts said their Ukrainian guests had returned to Ukraine.

Councils receive £10,500 of non-ringfenced money per Ukrainian refugee, and hosts get a thank-you payment of £350 a month. The government has recently increased the monthly thank-you payment to £500 for hosts supporting guests who have been in the country for more than a year. It has also handed out an additional £150m to councils to help support Ukrainians.

In the Ealing case, a council worker messaged the Ukrainian woman, who was facing the end of her sponsorship arrangement in January, saying that she could present herself as homeless and she would then have her eligibility for housing assessed. If she was found to be "in priority need", the council would provide temporary accommodation, but "if the offer is declined, the council will discharge their duties", the message read.

It continued: "Be extremely mindful that very few people meet those criteria, and for transparency, single women without severe health needs will be extremely unlikely to be found in need ... Expecting the council to house you may be a risky approach." After being contacted by The Independent about this woman's case, Ealing Council told the woman that it had provisionally found a new host family for her.

A spokesperson for the council said that there was currently an acute shortage of temporary accommodation in the borough, and a lack of new Homes for Ukraine hosts. They said: "The council is doing all it can to support Ukrainians in need of accommodation when their sponsorship arrangements come to an end," adding that, while the council doesn't ever guarantee rent, it is "able to support people to negotiate with landlords".

In Birmingham, the council declined to help when a Ukrainian woman's sponsorship arrangement fell through before she got to the UK. When RefuAid asked for help, the council replied: "We do not have the capacity to offer a host, therefore we encourage any guest with visas not issued to find a sponsor themselves."

A spokesperson for the council told The Independent that it maintained "a list of potential sponsors that may be used to respond to sponsorship breakdowns". They added that hosts had been given an increased monthly top-up payment of between £150-250.

Vlasta Tarasova, also from RefuAid, warned that "many people will struggle" over the next few months as more sponsorships end. "From what I've seen, not many sponsors are able to host people longer than six months. I have more than 40 clients, and I have only one sponsor who said they can stay as long as they need," she said. "I would say more than half of our clients are considering going back to Ukraine," she added.

In another case, Ukrainian refugee Serhii Zhelieznov told The Independent that while he and his wife and daughter had found a hotel in Scotland, he was struggling to find a home for his elderly mother. "I contacted Aberdeen council, volunteers, Facebook groups and I have had no luck," he said. "I am scared that Russia will again try to attack Kyiv and capture it. My mother lives in an area which will be the first to suffer if the Russians launch an attack from the north."

Lauren Scott, executive director of charity Refugees at Home, which has been helping to find hosts for Ukrainian families, said it was "inevitable" that different councils would have different approaches without any clear guidance or overall strategy from the government.

"Many councils are doing a great job, particularly given the tough financial decisions they face," she said. "But the picture is very mixed.If a placement that involves children breaks down, then local authorities have a statutory duty to provide accommodation under their homelessness provisions, and that does not always happen.

"We know of many Ukrainian guests who are longing to move into private accommodation and start to build their own lives here, but few have enough savings or the paperwork to pass referencing requirements." She added that councils could help by stepping in as guarantors of rent, or by helping with a deposit.

Some 81 per cent of hosts who had tried to help their guests into private rented accommodation had faced difficulties doing so, according to an ONS survey of 1,270 people. In Bristol, the council is offering people incentives to rent homes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. Landlords get a £1,000 thank-you payment when the tenancy starts, the first month's rent paid in advance, and a deposit of one month's rent. Up to £2,000 is offered for the tenant to spend on furniture and items to help make the house a home.

Tami Frankel, a former Homes for Ukraine host who now supports refugees in Essex, said that the support available is different depending on where people are located. "It varies completely across the country," she said.

"All authorities with responsibility for housing and homelessness can provide money for deposits. You have to accept that they can't magic up council houses, so what they've got to try and do is put people into rented accommodation. Local authorities do have the ability to help with that, just most of them are choosing not to."

Reverend Nick Ralph, who supports refugees in Hampshire with Citizens UK's Communities for Ukraine project, said: "Finding hosts is getting harder. At the beginning, a lot of people were willing to help. We desperately need people to host."

Councillor James Jamieson, Chair of the Local Government Association, which represents councils across England and Wales, said: "Councils are working incredibly hard with local partners to deliver the schemes in line with local circumstances and the needs of guests and hosts, take their statutory duties extremely seriously, and will always step in in an emergency."

He added: "We are deeply concerned at the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless, and in particular the significant rise in the number of those who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme."

A spokesperson for the Department of Levelling Up said: "The vast majority of sponsors want to provide support beyond six months. We are working closely with councils to ensure all arrivals have a safe place to live and, 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."

**Load-Date:** January 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainians in UK forced to choose between homelessness and returning to war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6778-2031-DY4H-K0GK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

January 2, 2023 Monday 5:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1450 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Ukrainians living in the UK to escape Vladimir Putin’s war face a postcode lottery of support

**Body**

Ukrainians in the UK are being forced to choose between homelessness and returning to war as their sponsorship arrangements end, charities have warned.

Councils have a legal obligation to house Ukrainians if they do not have anywhere to live, but some local authorities have told refugees they cannot house them when their six-month Homes for Ukraine placement ends.

In one example, [*Ealing Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ealing-council) told a 23-year-old woman it was unlikely to be able to help her because she did not have “severe health needs”, while others have been told they will only get help when they are 48 hours away from having nowhere to live.

Home Office figures show that 2,985 Ukrainian households presented themselves as homeless to councils between the end of February and November last year. Some 69 per cent of those included dependent children, and the majority, 1,920, came to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

Have you been affected by this story? If so email [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

There was a 37 per cent rise in Ukrainians presenting as homeless from October to November, as more sponsorship arrangements ended, with 670 households moved to temporary accommodation by councils.

Anna Jones, CEO of charity RefuAid, said: “We are facing a varied level of support from councils. Sometimes councils have said that until it is 48 hours before a person is made homeless, they can’t help or they can’t receive a referral.

“This is causing added stress to people who have already fled war. It is also a huge amount of pressure on hosts. Often, both the host and the guest have done the right thing of giving the councils three months’ notice of the arrangement coming to an end, but they come back and say they can’t help until the last minute.

“There is a very real decision for some of our families: is it better to be homeless in the UK, where you know nobody, or go back to Ukraine? These are all people who want to rebuild their lives in safety, and for whom six months is never going to be long enough to do so. We are pushing people off a cliff-edge.”

It comes as Vladimir Putin continues his assault on Ukraine at the start of the new year, with fresh waves of missile strikes and no sign of an end to the war.

Despite this, according to a recent Office for National Statistics (ONS) survey of 1,530 previous sponsors involved in the Homes for Ukraine scheme, 11 per cent of hosts said their Ukrainian guests had returned to Ukraine.

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“I would say more than half of our clients are considering going back to Ukraine,” she added.

In another case, Ukrainian refugee [*Serhii Zhelieznov told The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugee-russia-war-uk-b2254745.html) that while he and his wife and daughter had found a hotel in Scotland, he was struggling to find a home for his elderly mother.

“I contacted Aberdeen council, volunteers, Facebook groups and I have had no luck,” he said. “I am scared that Russia will again try to attack Kyiv and capture it. My mother lives in an area which will be the first to suffer if the Russians launch an attack from the north.”

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“Local authorities do have the ability to help with that, just most of them are choosing not to.”

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He added: “We are deeply concerned at the growing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless, and in particular the significant rise in the number of those who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.”

A spokesperson for the Department of Levelling Up said: “The vast majority of sponsors want to provide support beyond six months.

“We are working closely with councils to ensure all arrivals have a safe place to live and, 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.”

**Load-Date:** January 2, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Live updates | Ukraine reports more airstrikes on Azovstal*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65F3-3841-JBNF-W0KN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 12, 2022 Thursday 7:03 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1369 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukraine's military says Russian forces are continuing airstrikes on the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol and pressing their advance on towns in eastern Ukraine

**Body**

KYIV, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - Ukraine's military says Russian forces are continuing airstrikes on the Azovstal steelworks in [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol) and pressing their advance on towns in eastern Ukraine.

In its operational statement for Day 78 of the war, the Ukrainian military's General Staff says Russian forces have also fired artillery and grenade launchers at Ukrainian troops in the direction of [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , which has been a refuge for civilians fleeing Mariupol.

It did not elaborate on the latest action around Azovstal.

The military says Russian forces also fired artillery at Ukrainian units north of the city of Kharkiv in the northeast, and reported Russian strikes in the Chernihiv and Sumy regions to the north.

Across the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine, site of sustained fighting since the war began, the Ukrainian military noted "partial success" in Russia's advance. It said Ukrainian forces repulsed nine Russian attacks and destroyed several drones and military vehicles. The information could not be independently verified.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Ukraine offers to swap prisoners for hurt Mariupol fighters

- Quick Senate OK ahead for House-passed $40B aid for Ukraine

- Wives of Mariupol defenders to pope: 'You are our last hope'

- Wartime birth amid the air raid sirens in Ukraine hospital

- 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:

KYIV, Ukraine - An adviser to the Mariupol mayor said Wednesday that Russian forces have blocked all evacuation routes out of the city.

The adviser, Petro Andriushchenko, said there were few apartment buildings fit to live in after the weeks of bombardment and very little food or drinking water.

Andriushchenko said some residents who have remained in the city are cooperating with the Russian occupying forces in exchange for food.

Meanwhile, Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk says Ukraine has offered to release Russian prisoners of war if Russia will allow the badly injured fighters to be evacuated from the Mariupol steel plant.

Russian forces have surrounded the plant, the last bastion of Ukrainian resistance in the southern port city.

Vereshchuk said no agreement has been reached but negotiations were underway. The fighters trapped in the plant have refused to surrender to the Russians, saying they fear being tortured or killed.

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WASHINGTON - U.S. Commerce Secretary [*Gina Raimondo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gina-raimondo) said a ban on sales of semiconductors and other technology to Russia by the U.S. and its allies is having a serious impact on Russia's ability to manufacture military equipment.

"We have reports from Ukrainians that when they find Russian equipment, military equipment, on the ground, it's filled with semiconductors that they took out of dishwashers and refrigerators," Raimondo said Wednesday during a Senate hearing, adding that she met a few weeks ago with Ukraine's prime minister.

Raimondo said two of Russia's tank manufacturing plants have shut and many of its auto makers have furloughed workers and closed down.

"And so the point is, we are having a very serious effect," she said. "What we need to do in order to continue this is enforcement, enforcement, enforcement."

Raimondo said U.S. exports of technology to Russia are down nearly 70% since late February when the Biden administration, in coordination with European and Asian allies, imposed sanctions and export controls on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine.

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WASHINGTON - Final congressional approval of a $40 billion Ukraine aid bill seems certain within days, according to some lawmakers.

The Senate's top Republicans said Wednesday they expect strong GOP backing for the House-passed measure. That will signal a bipartisan, heightened commitment to helping thwart the bloody Russian invasion.

In his nightly video address Wednesday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said funds from the aid bill will allow Ukraine to get more weapons and equipment plus help investigate war crimes by Russia.

The bill also would 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 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.

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BERLIN - The U.N. nuclear agency says it is again receiving remote data from the Chernobyl power plant in Ukraine following an interruption caused by the Russian occupation of the site.

The International Atomic Energy Agency said late Wednesday that data transmission was re-established following a visit by its inspectors and technicians in April, after Russian forces withdrew.

The agency said it was the first time in two months that it has received remote data from all nuclear power plants and spent fuel storage facilities in Ukraine where monitoring systems are in place.

Its head, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said this was "a very important step for the IAEA to continue to implement safeguards in Ukraine."

Grossi cautioned, though, that on-site verification at the Zaporizhzhya nuclear plant "continues to be challenging owing to the presence of Russian forces and Rosatom personnel at the site," calling the situation "unsustainable."

Grossi said he has proposed leading an expert visit to Zaporizhzhya "after the necessary consultations and at the earliest possible opportunity."

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MOSCOW - The governor of a Russian region near Ukraine says that at least one civilian has been killed and another six have been wounded in the Ukrainian shelling of a village close to the border.

Belgorod Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said that the village of Solokhi came under shelling from the Ukrainian side late Wednesday. He said that the village residents will be evacuated.

Gladkov's account couldn't be independently verified. Russian authorities in the regions near Ukraine have repeatedly reported incidents when border areas came under Ukrainian shelling.

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KYIV, Ukraine - Ukraine's Foreign Ministry has accused Russia of stealing the country's grain and trying to sell some of it at global markets.

The ministry said in Wednesday's commentary that the stealing of Ukrainian grain amounts to looting.

It warned countries that purchase Russian grain that some of its shipments could contain the grain stolen from Ukraine, making its buyers possible accomplices.

The ministry cited official estimates indicating that Russia already may have stolen 400,000-500,000 metric tons of grain that cost over $100 million. It charged that "practically all ships leaving Sevastopol with a load of grain are carrying the grain stolen from Ukraine."

It urged the global community to toughen the sanctions against Russia.

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TURIN, Italy - A Ukrainian band that's competing in this year's Eurovision Song Contest turned out in a Turin park for a rally with a few dozen of their compatriots to express solidarity for their war-ravaged homeland.

Ahead of Wednesday night's competition, the Kalush Orchestra posed for photos with some 50 Ukrainians who live in Italy.

Each of the rally's participants put a hand to the heart in a sign of devotion to Ukraine.

Kalush Orchestra this week was one of the entrants advancing to the finals of the wildly popular European annual songfest, whose winner will be decided on Saturday.

The Ukrainians rallied behind a stage where free concerts by some of the musical groups from among the 35 nations sending entries are held nightly on the sidelines of the actual competition.

The upbeat entry by Kalush Orchestra for the competition is a song that was composed by the band's front-man as a tribute to his mother.

But the song, "Stefania," has been transformed to a kind of anthem to Ukraine, which was invaded by its powerful neighbor Russia on Feb. 24.

The song quickly became a sentimental favorite for many of Eurovision's fans.

**Load-Date:** May 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 5:45 a.m.*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65BS-7KP1-DY4H-K20M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 1, 2022 Sunday 10:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1384 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - Some women and children have been evacuated from a steel plant that is the last defensive stronghold in the bombed-out ruins of the Ukrainian city of Mariupol, while U.S. House Speaker [*Nancy Pelosi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nancy-pelosi) visited Ukraine's president in the country's capital in a show of American support. By Cara Anna Cherov and Yesica Fisch. SENT: 1,190 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-PELOSI-VISIT - Pelosi visits Kyiv, meets with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) president; RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE-LATEST (sent).

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-ROMANIA-REFUGEES - Elena Trofimchuk fled Ukraine to [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) more than a month ago. She now sees Bucharest's North Railway Station as second home. She doesn't live there. But it's where she spends most of her day welcoming fellow Ukrainians and helping them sort out tickets, accommodation and onward destinations. The Romanian government is currently giving away free train tickets to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in Romania that they can use to travel on to Hungary, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, Slovakia and Bulgaria. By Chisato Tanaka. SENT: 450 words, photos.

BIDEN-CORRESPONDENTS' DINNER - The annual White House press corps gala returned Saturday night along with the roasting of Washington, the journalists who cover it and the man at the helm: President Joe Biden. White House Correspondents' Association dinner, which the pandemic sidelined in 2020 and 2021, returned with Biden as the first president in six years to accept an invitation. Donald Trump shunned the event while in office. By Farnoush Amiri and Will Weissert. SENT: 850 words, photos.

OBIT-NAOMI-JUDD - Naomi Judd, the Kentucky-born singer of the Grammy-winning duo The Judds and mother of Wynonna and Ashley Judd, has died. She was 76. The daughters announced her death in a statement provided to The Associated Press. By Kristin M. Hall. SENT: 970 words, photos. With OBIT-NAOMI-JUDD-[*APPRECIATION*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) - ESSAY: For a gay country boy, Naomi Judd did build a bridge (sent).

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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UKRAINE-ANGELINA-JOLIE - actress and U.N. humanitarian Angelina Jolie made a surprise visit to the western Ukrainian city of Lviv on Saturday, the Lviv regional governor said on Telegram. According to the U.N., Jolie had come to speak with displaced people who have found refuge in Lviv, including children undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in the missile strike on the Kramatorsk railway station in early April. SENT: 240 words, photos.

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VIRUS OUTBREAK

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VIRUS-OUTBREAK-CHINA - Many Chinese are marking a quiet May Day holiday this year as the government's "zero-COVID" approach restricts travel and enforces lockdowns in multiple cities. SENT: 370 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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CHINA-BUILDING-COLLAPSE - Chinese police have arrested a building owner and eight other people, two days after the structure collapsed, leaving dozens trapped or missing, police and state media said. SENT: 290 words, photos.

JAZZ-FEST-MEMORIAMS -The memorial garden at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival is about to get a lot more crowded as fellow musicians honor the many musical icons - known as "Ancestors" - who have passed since the festival was last held three years ago. SENT: 580 words, photos.

BILL MURRAY-FILM SUSPENDED - [*Bill Murray*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bill-murray) is acknowledging that his behavior on set led to a complaint from a woman and the suspension of filming on his latest movie. SENT: 390 words, photos.

CANADA-ANGLICAN-APPOLOGY - The head of the Anglican Church told a gathering of Canadian residential school survivors he was sorry for the church's role in the "terrible crime" that was committed. SENT: 170 words.

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WASHINGTON/POLITICS

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ELECTION-2022-SENATE-KENTUCKY - U.S. Sen. Rand Paul promised Saturday to wage a vigorous review into the origins of the coronavirus if Republicans retake the Senate and he lands a committee chairmanship. SENT: 670 words, photo.

KENTUCKY GOVERNOR-QUARLES - Kentucky Agriculture Commissioner Ryan Quarles announced Saturday night that he will enter the 2023 governor's race, joining what's shaping up to be a crowded Republican contest to select a nominee to challenge Democratic Gov. Andy Beshear. SENT: 320 words, photo.

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NATIONAL

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SEVERE-WEATHER-KANSAS - A tornado that barreled through parts of Kansas destroyed or damaged hundreds of homes and buildings, injured several people and left more than 15,000 people without power, officials say. SENT: 680 words, photo, video.

SPRING WILDFIRES - Over 1,000 firefighters backed by bulldozers and aircraft battled the largest active wildfire in the U.S., after strong winds had pushed it across some containment lines and closer to a small city in northern New Mexico. SENT: 620 words, photos, video.

VOTING-FRAUD-SENTENCING - A judge in Phoenix has sentenced a Scottsdale woman who now lives in California to two years' felony probation, fines and community service for voting her dead mother's ballot in the 2020 general election. SENT: 680 words.

ARREST-DEATH-AWARD --San Diego County lawyers are seeking to wipe out an $85 million jury award to the family of man who died after being restrained by sheriff's deputies in 2015, or get a new trial in the lawsuit that generated the case. SENT: 440 words, photo.

HEALTH-CARE-OVERHAUL-GEORGIA - President Joe Biden's administration halted Gov. Brian Kemp's plan to have the private sector, not the government, engage in outreach to get state residents to sign up for insurance under the Affordable Care Act. SENT: 420 words.

MOTORCYCLE GANG KILLINGS-TENNESSEE - Two members of motorcycle gangs were fatally shot during a fight that broke out in the parking lot of a Tennessee bar, police said. SENT: 140 words.

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INTERNATIONAL

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MOROCCO-EXTREMISTS - Morocco's prison authority has been offering "de-radicalization" training since 2017 to former Islamic State group fighters and others convicted of terrorism offenses. The program's ninth batch of graduates completed the course of classes last week. The Associated Press and other media were invited to observe their graduation ceremony in a prison in Sale near the capital Rabat. SENT: 600 words, photos.

AUSTRALIA-POLITICS - Australia's opposition party officially launched its election campaign on Sunday with an emphasis on cutting costs of living for voters as inflation surges to its highest rate in 21 years. SENT: 590 words, photos.

EGYPT-SINAI - Suspected Islamic State militants blew up a natural gas pipeline in Egypt's restive northern part of the Sinai Peninsula, causing a fire but no casualties, security officials said. SENT: 200 words.

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SPORTS

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FBN-NFL DRAFT - The final four rounds of the NFL draft can't possibly have as much bartering as the opening three. General managers have to get tired of the trading at some point. By Pro Football Writer Barry Wilner. SENT: 650 words, photos.

BKN-76ERS-EMBIID - Joel Embiid's injuries that have sidelined the MVP candidate indefinitely will force adjustments by Philadelphia when the 76ers-Heat postseason showdown begins Monday in Miami. By Basketball Writer Tim Reynolds. SENT: 700 words, photos.

BKW-STRINGER-RETIREMENT - Hall of Fame coach C. Vivian Stringer has announced her retirement after 50 years in college basketball. She finished with 1,055 wins - fourth all-time among Division I women's basketball coaches. Stringer made four Final Four appearances and reached the NCAA Tournament 28 times while leading Cheyney State, Iowa and Rutgers. Stringer was emotional when she talked to her team Friday night on a Zoom call. By Basketball Writer Doug Feinberg. SENT: 600 words, photos.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Vincent K. Willis can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** May 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 3:20 am*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65C5-HB71-JBNF-W4WH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 3, 2022 Tuesday 7:24 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1356 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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TOP STORIES

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SUPREME COURT-ABORTION - A draft opinion circulated among Supreme Court justices suggests that earlier this year a majority of them had thrown support behind overturning the 1973 case Roe v. Wade that legalized abortion nationwide. That's according to a report published in Politico. It's unclear if the draft represents the court's final word on the matter. By Mark Sherman and Zeke Miller. SENT: 1,310 words, photos, video, interactive.

SUPREME COURT-ABORTION-LEAKS - The Supreme Court keeps secrets. Year after year, in major case after major case, there's little beyond what the justices say during oral arguments that suggests how they will rule. That's what makes the leak of an apparent draft of a major opinion in an abortion case so shocking to court observers. By Jessica Gresko. SENT: 670 words, photo.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - Russia plans to annex much of eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) later this month, a senior U.S. official warned, and the Mariupol steel mill that is the city's last stronghold of resistance came under renewed assault a day after the first evacuation of civilians from the plant. Michael Carpenter, U.S. ambassador to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, said Monday that the U.S. believes the Kremlin also will recognize the southern city of Kherson as an independent republic. Neither move would be recognized by the United States or its allies, he said. By Cara Anna and Inna Varenytsia. SENT: 1,110 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE-LATEST. For full coverage.

ELECTION 2022 - [*Ohio*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ohio) Republicans vote in one of the most contentious and closely watched Senate primaries in the nation. Author and venture capitalist JD Vance is seen as the GOP frontrunner in the race to replace retiring Sen. Rob Portman after receiving former President Donald Trump's endorsement. By Jill Colvin and Julie Carr Smyth. SENT: 1,300 words, photos. UPCOMING: Updates throughout the day; [*Indiana*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/indiana) polls close at 6 p.m. local time; Ohio polls close at 7:30 p.m. With ELECTION 2022-QUESTIONS - What to know about Ohio, Indiana primaries. Also see ELECTION 2022 below.

INDIA-POWER CRISIS - An unusually early and brutal heat wave is scorching parts of India, where acute power shortages are affecting millions as demand for electricity surges to record levels. Supplies of coal at many thermal power plants are running perilously low, spawning daily power outages in several states. The shortages are sparking scrutiny of India's long reliance on coal, which produces 70% of the country's electricity. By Krutika Pathi and Aniruddha Ghosal. SENT: 760 words, photos.

ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS-WORLD VISION - Nearly six years after Israel accused Mohammed el-Halabi of diverting tens of millions of dollars from an international charity to Gaza's militant Hamas rulers, he has yet to be convicted in an Israeli court and is still being held in detention. World Vision - a major Christian charity that operates around the world - as well as independent auditors and the Australian government have found no evidence of any wrongdoing. By Joseph Krauss. SENT: 980 words, photos.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR-BIDEN-[*WEAPONS*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) - Can the U.S. sustain the rate of shipping vast amounts of weapons to Ukraine while maintaining a healthy stockpile? SENT: 1,340 words, photos. UPCOMING: 990 words after 2:20 p.m. visit.

MEXICO-UKRAINE-REFUGEES - Some 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** waiting in tents on the east side of this sprawling capital are hoping the U.S. government moves rapidly to process their applications for entry. SENT: 860 words, photos.

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MORE ON THE VIRUS OUTBREAK

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VIRUS OUTBREAK-CHINA - Beijing is preparing new hospital facilities to deal with a spike in COVID-19 cases, despite numbers remaining low in the Chinese capital. SENT: 380 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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BLAC CHYNA-KARDASHIANS TRIAL - Jury gives sweeping win to Kardashians in Blac Chyna lawsuit. SENT: 850 words, photos.

BODY-IN-BARREL-NEVADA - Body in barrel exposed as level of Nevada's Lake Mead drops. SENT: 270 words, photos.

TWITTER-MYPILLOW-LINDELL - MyPillow CEO Mike Lindell gets banned from Twitter, again. SENT: 240 words, photo.

CAPITOL RIOT-TRIAL - NYPD veteran convicted of assaulting officer in Capitol riot. SENT: 1,060 words, photos, video.

POLICE-SHOOTING-YOUTH-KILLED - Fired Philly officer charged with murder in shooting of boy, 12. SENT: 780 words.

GRINER-DECAL - WNBA to honor Griner with decal on teams' floor. SENT: 290 words, photos.

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ELECTION 2022

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ELECTION 2022-HOUSE - A rematch pitting one of the left's rising stars against a U.S. House incumbent backed by the more moderate Democratic establishment will provide another key litmus test of the progressive movement's Rust Belt clout during congressional primaries in Ohio and Indiana. SENT: 590 words, photos.

ELECTION 2022-GOVERNOR-OHIO - Republican Gov. Mike DeWine's performance in the state's primary will provide a gauge of just how far to the right his party has shifted under the influence of Trump. SENT: 390 words, photos.

ELECTION 2022-SECRETARY OF STATE-OHIO - Ohio's Republican primary for secretary of state features a matchup between incumbent Frank LaRose, endorsed by Trump, and conservative challenger John Adams, who has questioned the results of the 2020 presidential election. SENT: 470 words, photos.

ELECTION 2022-LEGISLATURE-INDIANA - Frustrated conservatives wanting to push the Republican-controlled Indiana Legislature further to the right are trying to unseat several current GOP lawmakers. SENT: 510 words, photos.

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NATIONAL

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PITTSBURGH SYNAGOGUE SHOOTING-RENOVATION - The caretakers of the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh have big plans to transform the site of the deadliest antisemitic attack in U.S. history. SENT: 890 words, photos.

TRANSGENDER YOUTH - Democratic lawmakers in more than a dozen states are following California's lead in seeking to offer legal refuge to displaced transgender youth and their families. SENT: 480 words, photo.

SPRING-WILDFIRES - A wildfire near a small northeastern New Mexico community is expected to keep growing, but authorities were encouraged by a forecast for of improving humidity and shifting winds. SENT: 830 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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AUSTRALIA-GAY HATE - An Australian man was sentenced to more than 12 years in prison for the 1988 murder of an American who fell off a Sydney cliff that was known as a gay meeting place. SENT: 410 words, photos.

CHINA-BUILDING COLLAPSE - Rescuers have found two more survivors in the rubble of a building in central China that collapsed more than three days ago, state media reported. SENT: 230 words, photos.

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HEALTH/SCIENCE

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NEW ZEALAND-ROCKET CATCH - Rocket Lab partially pulled off using a helicopter to catch a falling rocket as it pushes to make its small Electron rockets reusable. SENT: 670 words, photos.

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BUSINESS/ECONOMY

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FINANCIAL MARKETS - Asian shares were mixed after Australia's central bank raised a key interest rate for the first time since 2010. By Business Writer Elaine Kurtenbach. SENT: 470 words, photos. With AUSTRALIA-ECONOMY - Australian central bank hikes rate for first time in 11 years.

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ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

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MET GALA - Kim Kardashian shut down the Met Gala red carpet in one of Marilyn Monroe's most iconic dresses, a gold-beaded body hugger Monroe wore when she sexily sang happy birthday to President John F. Kennedy 60 years ago. SENT: 1,590 words, photos, videos.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Jerome Minerva can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, Wally Santana (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

**Load-Date:** May 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Greece conflicted when it comes to Ukraine support; Far-right Azov fighters with Greek roots spark outrage*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657H-9591-F072-4209-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 16, 2022 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 25

**Length:** 1338 words

**Byline:** MOIRA LAVELLE

**Body**

When Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky delivered a speech via teleconference to Greece's parliament last week, in which he made allusions to the political, cultural and religious ties between the two countries, it was greeted with hearty applause. But the mood changed after Mr Zelensky gave the floor - virtually speaking - to two Ukrainian fighters with Greek roots.

When one of the soldiers mentioned that he was a member of the Azov battalion, a far-right militia with neo-Nazi roots, three members of Greece's opposition party stood up and walked out. For days, the Greek media covered the incident with varying degrees of outrage, regret, condemnation, and understanding.

The mixed reaction to the video address to parliament reflects the divided response within Greece following Vladimir Putin's invasion. On the one hand, Greece has become more involved in the war in Ukraine than it has in other conflicts abroad. The country has sent arms, military equipment and supplies; its foreign minister went on a humanitarian mission to Odesa; and the government has stated that it will request an international investigation into alleged war crimes in the besieged city of Mariupol.

But listening to Greece's largest leftist opposition party, Syriza - and to public opinion - reveals a different perspective: there is opposition to the country's involvement in the conflict, and even pro-Russian sentiment in some quarters.

Just a few days after the war began in Ukraine on 24 February, Athens announced that it would be sending military equipment to Ukraine - two planes filled with ammunition, Kalashnikov rifles and anti-tank missiles - as well as humanitarian aid. This marked a huge departure from Greece's response to other global conflicts, where it has remained largely on the sidelines.

"Because we have always been on the right side of history, we do the same now," said Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in a debate in parliament on 1 March. "We belong to the west."

The day before, the government had announced that 10 Greek nationals had been killed in Mariupol, which has endured some of the war's heaviest bombardment and worst suffering. There are some 150,000 ethnic Greeks across Ukraine, with especially large communities in Odesa and Mariupol - a fact that has featured heavily in Greece's actions and rhetoric during the war.

As the bombing of Mariupol raged on, the consul general of Greece stayed in place from 28 February until mid-March, and was the last EU diplomat to leave the besieged city. When the city's maternity hospital was bombed, Mr Mitsotakis offered support: "Greece is ready to rebuild the maternity hospital in Mariupol, the center of the Greek minority in Ukraine, a city dear to our hearts and symbol of the barbarity of the war," he tweeted.

At the beginning of April, Greece's foreign minister Nikos Dendias visited Odesa to deliver humanitarian aid, meet with members of the Greek diaspora, and reopen the country's consulate in the city. He had initially planned to go to Mariupol, but the intense fighting scuppered that idea.

Just a few days later, Athens announced it would request an investigation by the International Court of Justice into possible war crimes in Mariupol, and ordered 12 Russian diplomats to leave Greece, declaring them "personae non gratae".

"The killing of many ethnic Greeks by Russian bombardments in Mariupol and other cities has poisoned relations between Athens and Moscow, possibly for many years," Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis, a global security expert at King's College London, told The Independent.

But Greece's support for Ukraine also touches on the country's own defence concerns. Both Russian and Greek politicians have made comparisons between Russia's war in Ukraine and Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

The Turkish military invaded Cyprus in 1974 in response to a coup that had been staged with support from Athens. Turkey occupied a large portion of the northern part of the island and declared it a new republic, Northern Cyprus, which is recognised neither by Greece nor by much of the world. The island is still divided by a UN-patrolled demilitarised zone, and is a point of great tension between Greece and Turkey.

In late February, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, suggested that Russians in the Donbas region of Ukraine should be treated like the ethnic Turks are in northern Cyprus. Mr Mitsotakis has made similar comparisons. "With what moral status and stature would we ask for such help if we are in the same situation?" he said, referring to the arms sent to Ukraine.

Mr Karagiannis said Russia's invasion holds many parallels with Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. "Both Moscow and Ankara have claimed that they seek to protect compatriots who have supposedly suffered by discrimination or even 'genocide'," he said. "In reality, both Russia and Turkey have weaponised minorities to undermine the sovereignty of independent states for geopolitical and ideological reasons. Greece supports Ukraine like it supports Cyprus in this regard."

However, most Greeks are not so pleased with the country's involvement in the war. In a poll conducted by public opinion research institute Public Issue in March, 68 per cent of 1,000 respondents said they were dissatisfied generally with the Greek government's position regarding the situation in Ukraine, and 54 per cent said they completely disagreed with the provision of military aid to Kyiv.

The poll showed that, although the majority of Greeks are opposed to the invasion, many believe the country should remain neutral during the conflict. And while there have been dozens of pro-Ukraine demonstrations in Athens, there has been at least one rally in support of Russia.

Greece's main opposition party, Syriza, has said it is against supplying arms to Ukraine. "What is the expediency of turning Greece, a country constantly involved in peace initiatives, into a country involved in the war?" its leader and former prime minister Alexis Tsipras asked in parliament on 1 March.

Instead he pushed for sanctions on Russia, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the welcoming of refugees, warning that any military involvement could prove dangerous for Greece.

Greece has so far welcomed more than 19,200 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, who have arrived in the country via a variety of border crossings. Greece immediately activated a temporary protection regime for the displaced Ukrainians, and began registering applications. Asylum seekers from other countries are often pushed back illegally from Greece's borders. If they are able to enter, many are faced with years-long waiting times for similar procedures, and are frequently forced to do so in camps or detention centres.

At the end of April, a concert was held under the slogan "No to war - No to Russian invasion - The only option is peace". It featured dozens of Greece's biggest stars, and was attended by thousands of people. Representatives of Syriza attended the concert and cited it as proof of support for their position, calling on the current New Democracy government to "acknowledge its mistake in making Greece part of the war by sending weapons to Ukraine instead of humanitarian aid".

When Mr Zelensky spoke before the Greek parliament last week, he was welcomed by speaker Costas Tassoulas, who talked about the importance of the Greek community in Mariupol and the similarities with the invasion of Cyprus. The Ukrainian president picked up on these threads, opening with plaintive descriptions of Mariupol, calling Odesa a "great centre of Hellenism", and saying: "We, Greeks and Ukrainians together, must not allow them to destroy our common cultural heritage."

But in local media, the speech given by the fighter from the Azov battalion almost overshadowed Mr Zelensky's address, and offered Greece's opposition another opportunity to criticise the government's stance on the conflict, with opposition leader Mr Tsipras stating: "Solidarity with the Ukrainian people is a given. But the Nazis cannot have a say in parliament."

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Volunteers sort through Ukrainian refugee donations at London club*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WR-NTW1-DY4H-K41F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 9:05 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 81 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

Footage shows endless [*volunteers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volunteers) sorting through [*donations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donations) to be sent to [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) affected by the ongoing attacks on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The clip was filmed at the Klub Orla Bialego (White Eagle Club) in Balham, south [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london).

Volunteers sorted through bags and bags of items given by [*people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) all across the [*city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/city-0) at the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) community centre.

The donations will all be sent oversees to aid the [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** affected by the Russian invasion.

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**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*PM braced for legal bids over forced removal of asylum seekers to Rwanda*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6575-K1W1-JBNF-W1GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 14, 2022 Thursday 4:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:3

**Length:** 1274 words

**Byline:** Sam Blewett

**Highlight:** Migrants, including asylum seekers who enter through unauthorised methods, will be flown 4,000 miles to East Africa under Government plans.

**Body**

Ministers were braced for legal challenges over widely criticised plans to forcibly send to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) up to tens of thousands of asylum seekers who arrive in the UK in unauthorised Channel crossings.

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) insisted his scheme to detain and fly migrants more than 4,000 miles to East Africa at the expense of the taxpayer was not "draconian and lacking in compassion".

But both the Prime Minister and [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) said on Thursday they were prepared to fight attempts to use the courts to block the plans heavily criticised by refugee charities.

They would not detail how much the programme will cost, but the Home Secretary has struck a £120 million economic deal with Rwanda and cash for each removal is expected to follow.

Labour accused the Prime Minister of trying to distract from the partygate scandal with the "unworkable, unethical and extortionate" migration scheme.

Charities condemned them as "cruel and nasty" plans that will fail to address the issue and cause more "suffering and chaos", while criticising Rwanda's human rights track record.

And protesters wielding signs with the message "refugees welcome here" gathered outside the Home Office, declaring their intention to "fight back" against the move.

Battling to remain in power after being fined by police for breaching coronavirus laws, Mr Johnson tasked the Navy with ensuring "no boat makes it to the UK undetected".

Officials expect thousands of migrants who entered by means deemed illegal, such as through the perilous Channel crossings, would be removed to Rwanda in the coming years.

Giving a major speech in Kent, Mr Johnson said the agreement is "uncapped" and Rwanda will have the "capacity to resettle tens of thousands of people in the years ahead".

He said the partnership will be "fully compliant with our international legal obligations", while insisting Rwanda is "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".

He said they have "made it their business to thwart removals and frustrate the Government" and have caused the UK to be "seen as a soft touch for illegal migration by some of our partners".

"So I know this system will not take effect overnight," Mr Johnson added.

I Stephanie Boyce, the president of the Law Society of England and Wales that represents solicitors, warned there are "serious questions" about whether the plans comply with international law.

"It is particularly disappointing - this week of all weeks - the [*Government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/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."

During a visit to the Rwandan capital of Kigali, Ms Patel was confident that she would be able to fend off legal challenges after coming under pressure to tackle Channel crossings.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) actually said this will never happen and look at the work that has taken place to achieve this," she said.

She said that the "vast majority" of those who arrive in the UK "illegally" will be detained and considered for relocation to Rwanda but declined to share specific details after it was reported it would only apply to male migrants.

The number of people who can be relocated will be "unlimited", with the first due to receive formal notifications within weeks, and the first flights expected to take place in the coming months.

Meanwhile, fresh arrivals reached the shore in Dover on Thursday, in what officials acknowledged was a busy day for crossings. It is thought the total number of migrants to have arrived on small boats so far this year has passed 5,000.

Mr Johnson accepted the Rwanda deal is not a "magic bullet" that will solve the crossings alone.

But he hopes it will break the business model of the "vile people smugglers" who risk turning the Channel into a "watery graveyard".

British Red Cross executive director Zoe Abrams said the humanitarian network was "profoundly concerned" about the plans to "send traumatised people halfway round the world to Rwanda".

"We are not convinced this drastic measure will deter desperate people from attempting to cross the Channel either. People come here for reasons we can all understand, like wanting to be reunited with loved ones, or because they speak the language. Making it harsher may do little to stop them risking their lives," she said.

Refugee Council chief executive Enver Solomon urged the Government to "immediately rethink" the "cruel and nasty" plans, warning they could cost up to £1.4 billion a year.

"Treating people like human cargo by using the force of military to repel vulnerable people who have already endured extreme human suffering, and expelling them to centres in Rwanda, a country with a questionable record on human rights, is dangerous, cruel and inhumane."

The policies will "do little to deter desperate people from seeking protection or stop the smugglers but only lead to more human suffering, chaos and at huge expense to the UK", he added.

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 agree that you know, 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 coronavirus laws.

Ms Patel insisted the agreement with Rwanda does not hinge on the Nationality and Borders Bill, which is facing opposition in the House of Lords.

Asked by the PA news agency, she said: "No, no, it's not. It's not.

"So the whole principle of this agreement partnership that we have is not hinged on the Nationality and Borders Bill, let me be clear about that."

She said the Home Office is prepared for legal challenges, as she accused lawyers of "fleecing the British taxpayer".

"A lot of this is legal aid money that goes into the merry-go-round of claim after claim after claim," she added.

But the costs of the Rwandan programme remained uncertain.

The Home Office said the taxpayer would pay per person relocated, but would not say how much.

As well as chartered flights for removal, it will pay for caseworkers, legal advice, translators, accommodation, food and healthcare for every person relocated.

For those who successfully claim asylum in Rwanda, it will fund an integration package to help them put down roots.

Mr Johnson pledged £50 million in new funding for boats, aerial surveillance and military personnel to help ensure the measures are a "very considerable deterrent" to crossings.

And he said the individuals who succeed in making it to the UK "will be taken not to hotels at vast public expense" and instead will be housed in Greek-style detention centres, with the first opening at a former RAF barracks in North Yorkshire "shortly".

Around 250 to 300 military personnel will be dedicated to police migrants in the English Channel on busy days, it is understood. They will work on ships and aircraft and will include Army personnel, freeing up Border Force staff for processing.

**Load-Date:** April 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Greece steps off the sidelines to support Ukraine but faces balancing act with an unconvinced public*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:657B-HP41-JBNF-W1SJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 15, 2022 Friday 11:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** WORLD,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:2

**Length:** 1328 words

**Byline:** Moira Lavelle

**Highlight:** The Greek response to Russia's war is unprecedented from a foreign policy perspective, yet the country's political opposition and many of its citizens are against Athens getting too involved, writes Moira Lavelle

**Body**

When Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) delivered a speech via teleconference to [*Greece*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greece) 's parliament last week, in which he made allusions to the political, cultural and religious ties between the two countries, it was greeted with hearty applause.

But the mood changed after Mr Zelensky gave the floor - virtually speaking - to two Ukrainian fighters with Greek roots.

When one of the soldiers mentioned that he was a member of the Azov battalion, a far-right militia with neo-Nazi roots, three members of Greece's opposition party stood up and walked out. For days, the Greek media covered the incident with varying degrees of outrage, regret, condemnation, and understanding.

The mixed reaction to the video address to parliament reflects the divided response within Greece following Vladimir Putin's invasion.

On the one hand, Greece has become more involved in the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) than it has in other conflicts abroad. The country has sent arms, military equipment and supplies; its foreign minister went on a humanitarian mission to Odesa; and the government has stated that it will request an international investigation into alleged war crimes in the besieged city of Mariupol.

But looking at Greece's largest leftist opposition party, Syriza - and at public opinion - reveals a different perspective: there is opposition to the country's involvement in the conflict, and even pro-Russian sentiment in some quarters.

Just a few days after the war began in Ukraine on 24 February, [*Athens*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/athens) announced that it would be sending military equipment to Ukraine - two planes filled with ammunition, Kalashnikov rifles and anti-tank missiles - as well as humanitarian aid. This marked a huge departure from Greece's response to other global conflicts, where it has remained largely on the sidelines.

"Because we have always been on the right side of history, we do the same now," said Greek prime minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis in a debate in parliament on 1 March. "We belong to the west."

The day before, the government had announced that ten Greek nationals had been killed in Mariupol, which has endured some of the war's heaviest bombardment and worst suffering.

There are some 150,000 ethnic Greeks across Ukraine, with especially large communities in Odesa and Mariupol - a fact that has featured heavily in Greece's actions and rhetoric during the war.

As the bombing of Mariupol raged on, the consul general of Greece stayed in place from 28 February until mid-March, and was the last EU diplomat to leave the besieged city.

When the city's maternity hospital was bombed, Mr Mitsotakis offered support: "Greece is ready to rebuild the maternity hospital in Mariupol, the center of the Greek minority in Ukraine, a city dear to our hearts and symbol of the barbarity of the war," he tweeted.

At the beginning of April, Greece's foreign minister Nikos Dendias visited Odesa to deliver humanitarian aid, meet with members of the Greek diaspora, and reopen the country's consulate in the city. He had initially planned to go to Mariupol, but the intense fighting scuppered that idea.

Just a few days later, Athens announced it would request an investigation by the International Court of Justice into possible war crimes in Mariupol, and ordered 12 Russian diplomats to leave Greece, declaring them "personae non gratae".

"The killing of many ethnic Greeks by Russian bombardments in Mariupol and other cities has poisoned relations between Athens and Moscow, possibly for many years," Dr Emmanuel Karagiannis, a global security expert at King's College London, told The Independent.

But Greece's support for Ukraine also touches on the country's own defence concerns. Both Russian and Greek politicians have made comparisons between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war in Ukraine and Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974.

The Turkish military invaded Cyprus in 1974 in response to a coup that had been staged with support from Athens. Turkey occupied a large portion of the northern part of the island and declared it a new republic, Northern Cyprus, which is recognised neither by Greece nor by much of the world.

The island is still divided by a UN-patrolled demilitarised zone, and is a point of great tension between Greece and Turkey.

In late February, Russia's foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, suggested that Russians in the Donbas region of Ukraine should be treated like the ethnic Turks are in northern Cyprus.

Mr Mitsotakis has made similar comparisons. "With what moral status and stature would we ask for such help if we are in the same situation?" he said, referring to the arms sent to Ukraine.

Mr Karagiannis said Russia's invasion has many parallels with Turkey's invasion of Cyprus. "Both Moscow and Ankara have claimed that they seek to protect compatriots who have supposedly suffered by discrimination or even 'genocide'," he said. "In reality, both Russia and Turkey have weaponised minorities to undermine the sovereignty of independent states for geopolitical and ideological reasons. Greece supports Ukraine like it supports Cyprus in this regard."

However, most Greeks are not so pleased with the country's involvement in the war.

In a March poll conducted by public opinion research institute Public Issue, 68 per cent of 1,000 respondents said they were dissatisfied generally with the Greek government's position regarding the situation in Ukraine, and 54 per cent said they completely disagree with the provision of military aid to Kyiv.

The poll showed that though the majority of Greeks are opposed to the invasion, many believe the country should remain neutral during the conflict.

While there have been dozens of pro-Ukraine demonstrations in Athens, there has been at least one rally support of Russia

Greece's main opposition party, Syriza, has said it is against supplying arms to Ukraine.

"What is the expediency of turning Greece, a country constantly involved in peace initiatives, into a country involved in the war?" its head and former PM Alexis Tsipras asked in parliament on 1 March.

He instead pushed for sanctions on Russia, the delivery of humanitarian aid, and the welcoming of refugees, warning that any military involvement could prove dangerous for Greece.

Greece has so far welcomed more than 19,200 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, who have arrived in the country through a variety of border crossings. Greece immediately activated a temporary protection regime for the displaced Ukrainians, and began registering applications.

Asylum-seekers from other countries are often illegally pushed back from Greece's borders, and if they are able to enter are faced with years-long wait times for similar procedures, and are regularly forced to wait for these processes in camps or detention centers.

At the end of April, a concert with the slogan "No to war -No to Russian invasion -The only option is peace" was organized with dozens of Greece's biggest stars, and attended by thousands of people.

Leaders from Syriza attended the concert, and cited it as proof of support for their position, calling on the current New Democracy government to "acknowledge its mistake in making Greece part of the war by sending weapons to Ukraine instead of humanitarian aid."

When Mr Zelensky spoke before the Greek parliament last week, he was welcomed by speaker Costas Tassoulas, who talked about the importance of the Greeks in Mariupol, and the similarities with the invasion of Cyprus.

Ukraine's president picked up on these threads, opening with plaintive descriptions of Mariupol, calling Odesa a "great center of Hellenism" and saying that: "We, Greeks and Ukrainians together, must not allow them to destroy our common cultural heritage".

But the speech from the fighter from the Azov battalion almost overshadowed Mr Zelensky in local media, and offered Greece's opposition another opportunity to critique the government's stance on the conflict -with opposition leader Tsipras stating: "Solidarity with the Ukrainian people is a given. But the Nazis cannot have a say in Parliament."

**Load-Date:** April 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Seeing the Ukrainians... it just hits so close to home'; The hopes of thousands of Japanese islanders of seeing their homelands again have been lost after relations with Russia broke down, write Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654R-NPB1-JCS0-D3TH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 3, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** THE NEW REVIEW; Pg. 46

**Length:** 1358 words

**Byline:** MICHELLE YE HEE LEE AND JULIA MIO INUMA

**Body**

Soviet soldiers barged into Hirotoshi Kawata's home on 4 September 1945, searching for hidden Japanese soldiers and valuables. Kawata, then 11, remembers understanding only two words they said: tokei, or wristwatch; and sake, which they went on to loot from the home.

It was the beginning of the Soviet takeover of a resource-rich chain of islands in northern Japan, to the terror of families who had thought that the worst of the war was over after Japan's surrender. Japanese citizens were soon forbidden from working or moving freely, and women and children were detained for forced labour.

Many families fled on boats in the middle of the night, rowing at first until they were far enough from the coast to turn on their engines. Kawata's family was among thousands displaced during that time. "All these years later, I still can't forget everything I saw right before my eyes," Kawata, 87, says. Now, "seeing the Ukrainians... it just hits so close to home. It doesn't seem like something happening in the distance."

Thousands of miles from Ukraine, in this city in the far northeast of Japan where many of the roughly 17,200 former residents of the Northern Territories resettled, the Russian invasion and the plight of millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** resonate deeply. The war has crushed their hopes of ever seeing their homeland again after Russia broke off the negotiations over the islands in response to Japan's sanctions on Russia for invading Ukraine.

For these former residents, whose average age is nearly 87, the hope of returning home in their lifetimes has vanished.

"The only ones left to tell these stories are just the recollections of some fifth-graders. The rest have all passed away, unable to share their stories," says Hiroshi Tokuno, 88, who fled Shikotan island at the age of 13.

For years, under former prime minister Shinzo Abe, Japan sought to improve relations with Russia and to prioritise the peace treaty and territorial settlement in an effort to make Moscow a strategic partner and keep it from drawing closer to China. When Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014, concern over negotiations for the islands shaped Abe's tepid response.

But in a dramatic turn away from its years of pursuing rapprochement with Russia, Japan has imposed wide-reaching economic sanctions in response to the invasion of Ukraine. Although negotiations had stalled since 2020, Moscow said last week that it had no intention of returning to talks and planned to end visa-free trips by Japanese citizens to the islands. It also threatened to withdraw from joint economic projects there.

What Japan calls the Northern Territories - the islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai and Shikotan - lie off the coast of Hokkaido, and some of them are visible from Nemuro on a clear day. They were part of Japan before the Second World War, but soon after the country surrendered in August 1945, the Soviet Union claimed the islands, which it called the Kuril Islands.

These volcanic islands southeast of Russia's Sakhalin Island separate the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean, and are at the heart of post-war Russo-Japanese relations. The two countries made a joint declaration in 1956 ending the state of war between them, but have not signed a peace treaty. That has been awaiting a resolution of the dispute over the islands.

From Japan's perspective, the Soviet seizure of the islands was a betrayal, because Japan had already surrendered, and the islands had been Japanese territory since the first treaty between the Russian empire and the empire of Japan in 1855, says James Brown, an expert in Russo-Japanese relations at Temple University's campus in Tokyo.

For Russia, the islands are its rightful territories, obtained in exchange for joining the United States against Japan in the Second World War. Giving up the islands is considered a betrayal of Soviet soldiers and citizens as well as Russia's Second World War legacy, Brown says. The islands are also of strategic interest to Russia, because they make it easier for Moscow to get its ships into the Pacific Ocean from the Sea of Okhotsk, and have valuable natural resources, including a rare-earth metal used in aerospace construction.

Tokyo and Moscow have held peace negotiations on and off since the 1956 declaration, but there has not been any significant movement. Unlike Japan's territorial disputes with China and South Korea over largely uninhabited islands, the scale of the dispute with Russia is different, because the islands are bigger (Etorofu is nearly 2,000 square miles) and thousands of people's lives are directly affected.

In Nemuro, it's hard to travel a few blocks without seeing a massive statue or sign demanding, in uncharacteristically forceful Japanese language: "The Northern Territories, give it back!" Road signs and street names are written in Japanese and Russian, for the benefit of the Russian fishermen who do business in Nemuro.

Here, Russia's announcement of its withdrawal from negotiations carries consequences. It prevents the former residents from visiting the graves of relatives on the islands. It also ends cultural visits between the islands' Russian residents and Japanese citizens, who hoped that the two populations could one day co-exist if the dispute were ever resolved.

"It is extremely unfair and unacceptable, undermining the efforts of the residents of both countries who have been working hard to promote an exchange," said Hokkaido governor Naomichi Suzuki in response to Russia's announcement.

With Russia considering shutting down its economic agreement with Japan, the fishing industry is also on edge, because it relies on the waters between Japan and Russia. This area, where 3 million tonnes of fish and other seafood are caught annually, is considered one of the best places on the planet for fishing.

Fewer than 5,500 former residents of the Northern Territories are still alive. They are clear-eyed about what Japan's tougher response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine means for the future of the negotiations over the islands, but some still support Japan's standing up to Russia. At the museum in Nemuro dedicated to the dispute, residents and visitors have left messages attacking Russian president Vladimir Putin and expressing solidarity with Ukraine.

Some residents say they hope to see prime minister Fumio Kishida take a tougher approach with Russia to resolve the Northern Territories dispute.

"What Russia is doing in Ukraine, trying to change the status quo by force, can never be justified," says Yasuji Tsunoka, 84, who was 8 when Soviet forces took over the tiny island of Yuri, a part of the cluster of Habomai islets on which there were 70 homes.

"Kishida made strong sanctions, and we understand this. But we want now, more than ever, for negotiations to be direct and strong, without trying to constantly be sensitive of Russia," he says. "The situation in Ukraine is once again an issue of territory, just like the northern islands with Japan."

After the Soviets took over the islands, some Japanese families remained for a few years, living alongside the Soviet families that had moved there. Tokuno recalls attending school with Soviet children, and his experience was later turned into an animated film for children called Giovanni's Island.

But eventually, to make room for Soviet citizens, Japanese residents were displaced from their homes and pushed into sheds and horse stables. By October 1947, all Japanese remaining in the Northern Territories were taken off the islands in Soviet ships. That group included Tokuno, who recalls that they first withstood gruelling conditions in Sakhalin before making it to Nemuro. Some died on the journey.

It wasn't until 1964 that Russia and Japan agreed to allow limited numbers of humanitarian trips to the islands so that former residents could visit their relatives' burial sites. The former residents say they hope future Japanese generations, as well as US leaders, will take up the fight.

"We will continue sharing the movement with the next generation to keep it going for as long as it takes," Tsunoka says. "Japan must never stop."

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**Load-Date:** April 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The stark reality of the Ukrainian refugee crisis at the Romanian-Hungarian border*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:653R-HTD1-DY4H-K317-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 29, 2022 Tuesday 2:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1294 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL: David Cohen travelled to Csengersima on the Romanian-Hungarian border to help with the Red Cross's relief effort for the ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing civilian bombings

**Body**

The queue was three hours long. A logjam of cars, bumper to bumper, packed with women and children who had fled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) into Moldova or Romania, now waited to enter the Schengen area at Csengersima on the Romanian-Hungarian border.

The refugees looked shattered after travelling for days, but as a man in a red jacket approached on foot, eyes lit up, windows rolled down and hands reached out.

The red jacket belonged to Peter Turi, 37, a Hungarian Red Cross volunteer, who carried a tray laden with refreshments -water, juice, ham sandwiches, snacks and energy bars - as well as baby products and bubbles which he offered to grateful mothers and children in their cars.

Peter and his Red Cross team of four were the only charity workers operating at this border crossing which, in the first weeks of the conflict, had filled with cars stretching 10km all the way back to Satu Mare in Romania.

I, too, had donned the Red Cross livery. For one day I was to be Peter's helper, crossing the checkpoint into no-man's land to offer help to waiting refugees in their vehicles.

"Thank you for your care," said Marja Nesterova, a professor from a university in Kyiv accompanied by her four children.

"We have been travelling four days and now we are waiting here hours with no water, no toilet, no café, so we really appreciate you being here." She added: 'In Kyiv, we were sleeping mostly in the basement, but in the last week, the bombs got closer and louder - and we got frightened." She smiled ruefully.

"According to Ukrainian law, a mother who drives across bombed-out country with four kids can be awarded Mother of the Year. I save my children. We go to Italy."

In the adjacent lane, Natalia, a pharmacist, sat in her Porsche alongside her 10-year-old son, tears streaking down her cheeks as she choked up about the husband she left behind in embattled Kharkiv three days ago.

She said: "My son is worried about his father. I try to comfort him, but I am worried too."

A few cars behind, we gave water and a sandwich to Luba Grihovna, an elderly lady in a colourful head scarf who had travelled from her village near Kherson in the south.

"We have been on the road four days," she said. "My legs are aching, my heart is aching, my village is destroyed. I didn't want to leave my beautiful garden but my daughter took me and my grandchildren to save us from the bombs and here we are."

They had crossed at the Ukrainian Moldovan border and were now seeking to enter Hungary on route to Poland. More than 900,000 of the 3.6 million people who have fled Ukraine have done so through Moldova or Romania, but most refugees use these countries as a transit zone on their way to the Schengen area, where they can access free movement in Europe for 90 days.

Many Ukrainians do not have modern biometric passports and have to be processed for temporary visas, part of the reason for the long delays.

Peter said: "Many people have not come prepared for such a long car ride. They arrive short of baby food and nappies and can be thirsty, hungry and exhausted."

Peter had been here since the start of the conflict, leaving behind his job is as a theatre sound engineer and his family who live 120km away in Debrecen. "I had a call from somebody at the border who told me people were queuing for 11 hours with no help. I have twin girls aged five and an eight-month-old baby and my heart went out to these parents. I spoke to my wife, whose parents were able to help with our kids, and came a month ago."

For two and a half weeks, Peter operated on his own with a friend, just the two of them, independent volunteers sourcing free food, drink and baby supplies and handing them out to desperate refugees in cars. "You couldn't see the end of the queue," he said. "Everybody was extremely grateful."

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) .

Ten days ago, the Red Cross joined the operation, setting up a roadside tent and bringing in supplies, and Peter was signed up as a Red Cross volunteer. Red Cross team leader Emese Martini Sabo paid tribute to Peter. "What he did was a true citizen humanitarian effort," she said.

The Red Cross is one of 13 member charities of the Disasters Emergency Committee, which is the beneficiary of our Refugees Welcome appeal and which, together with the appeal of our sister paper, The Evening Standard, has now raised more than £400,000.

One woman, Hester Berg, a South African living in Austria was returning from the Ukrainian-Romanian border having dropped off a car-load of personal hygiene products, nappies and dog food at the border. Why had she come?

"When the fighting started, it dawned on me that the distance from Vienna where I live to the Ukrainian border is less than that from Johannesburg where I grew up to Cape Town and there is no way I could sit in Johannesburg while Cape Town got bombed, so I got involved."

Hester has done four trips of nine hours each way to the Polish, Hungarian and Romanian borders with Ukraine, but the situation was ever changing, she said.

"In the beginning, it was mainly people with means and money who were fleeing, but now you've got people with nothing and who are really struggling." Anastasia, 30, and her mother, Natalia, 61, got out of their car to tell us about fleeing Kyiv. "It's a lottery," said Anastasia. "Bombs can land on your house at any time. One bomb was so close, it made our house shake and that was the signal for us to leave. We are headed to Germany because my mum is a psychologist and I speak German and together we can be of use to fellow refugees."

There was even the occasional father, such as Ruslan, who had come with his wife and three young sons from Odessa, a beneficiary of the Ukrainian law that allowed men to leave if they are financially supporting three or more children under 18.

On the whole, though, the refugees we saw in their cars at Csengersima seemed in better shape than those we had met walking across the Polish-Ukrainian border at Kroscienko two weeks ago, or arriving by train the day before at Zahony on the Hungarian-Ukrainian border.

A car, it seemed, afforded at least a modicum of comfort and control. As we walked the line of vehicles, people asked our Ukrainian-Hungarian speaking interpreter, Georgina Ruszinko: where can we get free SIM cards? Does anyone have crayons for my children? Where are toilets?

They were relieved to find someone who could speak their language, as was a Hungarian policewoman who ran up in a panic asking us for "urgent nappies" for a crying one-month-old baby. All around, as cars inched forward, there was a sense of relief to have made it this far - but also of steeling themselves. The ordeal of these brave, dignified, resilient refugees was far from over.

Additional reporting and translating by Georgina Ruszinko

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 29, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Biden receives briefing on refugee situation in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-B5B1-DY4H-K35P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 5:10 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 82 words

**Body**

Watch live as [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) receives a briefing on the humanitarian response to the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) -[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) conflict and the growing flow of [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) into [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

The US president will be joined by Polish President Andrzej Duda. Mr Andrzej has said at present over 2 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have sought safety in Poland and thanked citizens for taking in those in need of housing.

Mr Biden will head to Warsaw to meet refugees in person on Saturday (March 26).

Sign up to our US evening newsletter [*here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnewsletters%3Fitm_channel%3Dnative%26itm_campaign%3Dnewsletters%26itm_content%3Dvideo-articles&data=04%7C01%7CJulia.Saqui%40independent.co.uk%7Ceab1acfb46df4a56764c08d98c9c40e3%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637695425011134847%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=2lSGo18PTw%2FWZf3DLmyoNSYJv3e7YfuTxKKhoGaxRV4%3D&reserved=0)

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ireland's hundred thousand welcomes for war victims*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-PG01-JCS0-D08R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 12

**Length:** 1263 words

**Byline:** JOYCE FEGAN IN DUBLIN

**Body**

At the arrivals hall in Dublin airport a grandmother won't let go of her newborn grandson. Older generations of one family gather to welcome the next one home.

Friends and lovers rugby-tackle embrace over trolleys laden with suitcases. Someone drops an AirPod. A stranger alerts its owner, nodding to the tiled stone floor.

In the background, a pianist plays David Gray's "This Year's Love" on a nearby piano.

In the midst of all this, a silent group of about a dozen women and children file through, guided by airport officials. Phone chargers and cables stuff their back pockets. They carry only backpacks. No one in arrivals notices the passing refugees.

Never before has Ireland's cead mile failte - a hundred thousand welcomes - been more robustly tested than it has in the last two weeks as millions flee Ukraine for safety in Europe.

With the European Union passing a temporary protective directive to allow Ukrainian citizens and others escaping the war to move through the bloc as EU citizens, how hospitable has the state of Ireland, and its people, been?

"My mum when was she was coming through to Poland, slept in a school gym and they put some mattresses on the floor. Then when we come to Ireland, we're welcomed to a four-star hotel. We almost cried," says Viktor, 49.

A Ukrainian citizen and father of four, Viktor had been living in Moscow where he worked as an interpreter. He decided to flee Russia after he was followed by a police officer having attended an anti-war protest. He was threatened with prison.

Viktor also wanted to rescue his mother from Ukraine. Their journey to Ireland included crossing international borders by foot and being held in an open field for 26 hours in temperatures of -10C. They eventually flew from the Latvian capital Riga and landed in Dublin in the early hours of 8 March.

"I had read the situation in every country regarding receiving refugees, and you have to understand I am taking my elderly mum so it had to be carefully considered. I never imagined being in this situation in my life," explains Viktor.

"We have been welcomed. It was a really warm reception. The custom officers helped us and gave us printouts with information, bottles of water, asked us if we needed accommodation and then personally escorted us to a taxi outside to get to the hotel," says Viktor. Upon hearing they were ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the taxi driver would not accept money for the fare.

Hanna, 36, a family lawyer from Kyiv, landed in Dublin on 9 March, after a 13-day journey with her 11-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son. She left her police officer husband behind in Ukraine to "fight for freedom". The story of her entry into Ireland is identical to Viktor's.

"We just followed the security corridor to passport control. They immediately asked us if we needed somewhere to stay. Then we were given water, and an immigration officer personally took us outside to a taxi driver who took us to the hotel," says Hanna. "I offered money to the taxi driver but he refused - that was really touching," she adds.

On arriving at the hotel, the staff "immediately apologised" for having only one large bed in her family room. "Even though we were really happy, the next day they gave us an extra bed," says Hanna.

Airport and hotel welcomes aside, what about concrete things such as access to the social welfare and healthcare systems? Ukrainian citizens will be able to work in Ireland and access social services and the full range of social welfare supports.

Neither Hanna nor Viktor were able to apply for their Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers in Dublin airport, but a dedicated room in their hotel soon popped up to process their applications.

A "welcome room" has now been established in the airport for people fleeing Ukraine. This reception centre includes everything from toys and travel cots to services where people can start their application process to access state support. Ukrainian nationals will also be entitled to apply for a medical card to access primary care services.

As of yesterday, 5,500 Ukrainians have landed at Dublin airport since the war began.

And separate to the state's response, there is the response of the Irish public. In just two weeks, a population of five million people has raised Euro 17.5m for the Irish Red Cross alone, and 17,000 people have pledged accommodation through the charity too.

The current hotel bill for those arriving from Ukraine is paid for by the state via Ipas, the International Protection Accommodation Services, an arm of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Yesterday, prime minister Micheal Martin said Dublin was looking at using unspent monies from the Covid contingency fund (Euro 3bn left ofEuro 4bn) on housing refugees and the provision of other services.

Michael Baskin, a Ukrainian who has long called Ireland home, is at the forefront of this wave of support. He and 14 friends set up IamUkrainian.ie, the Ukrainian Crisis Centre in Ireland, a few short weeks ago.

"The phone doesn't stop ringing. The Irish public's response is amazing. It's open arms. They just keep offering everything. A lot of phonecalls are like: 'I have a house, I have a spare bedroom, please store my number'. We get hundreds of phonecalls from across the country, from Donegal to Kerry," says Michael.

And what about the state's response? "The Irish government is definitely behind this, but the solutions [to emerging issues] have to be implemented fast," says Michael.

There are now weekly meetings of government departments taking place, as well as focused sub-groups to monitor developments and coordinate necessary actions. Some emerging issues include accommodation plans in the medium- to long-term.

Dublin city councillor Hazel Chu, who, in 2020, became the first lord mayor of the capital born to migrant parents, commends the outpouring of support but accommodation is on her mind.

"Because we already have a housing crisis, we need to deal with this issue and ensure that Ukrainians and other refugees coming in, the ones who need our help, support and protection don't get the blame for the shortcomings of successive failed housing policies," says Ms Chu, chair of the city's homeless task force and who is currently running for a Trinity College seat in the country's Senate.

Politics aside, mothers are mobilising too. Nicole Le Saout and her friend, Ollwyn Moran, felt compelled to take action after seeing the maternity hospital in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol being bombed. They made contact with immigration services in Dublin airport.

"There was one mother who came through with a two-month-old baby and just a roller suitcase, so they need things like buggies, prams and bundles of baby clothes," says Nicole. In the space of a matter of hours on Friday night she had collected 25 prams from mothers around Dublin.

For Ukrainian mother Hanna, already in Dublin, all she wants now is to express "gratitude" to every Irish person who "just keep smiling at us". Her kids however, just want to be in school or out playing football.

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

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[*'I have forgotten who I was before the war in Ukraine'; The thousands of Russians who fled after Putin's invasion and crackdown at home are unsure if they will ever return*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651B-P481-F072-40WV-00000-00&context=1519360)

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First Edition

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**Section:** WORLD; Pg. 22

**Length:** 1258 words

**Byline:** BORZOU DARAGAHI IN ISTANBUL

**Body**

Kseniya could see the harbingers of war. There was the ramped-up propaganda on state television, the armoured vehicles and tanks heading from the Moscow area towards the Ukrainian frontier, and the ominous reports from international media that she closely followed.

The 27-year-old warned her family and boyfriend, who laughed off her concerns. The Russian psychologist, an activist and opposition supporter, had joined in the 2013-14 Maidan protests in Kyiv. She had many friends in Ukraine, and grew afraid. So in the weeks before Vladimir Putin launched his invasion, Kseniya left Russia, ending up in Istanbul before it began.

The war that ensued has cost her once-cherished relationships with friends and family, as well as her career, her home, her nation as she knew it, and much of what she believed about herself and her future. She is an exile.

"The war has broken many people, not just Ukrainians," she tells The Independent during an interview. "I have forgotten who I was before this. My work, psychology, is all about making people feel better. But now we are in a situation where people should feel ashamed, and I don't want to help Russians feel better about themselves."

Tens of thousands of Russians have fled the country in the wake of the war. They are paying exorbitant prices to get on the few flights out of the country. They cross land borders to former Soviet Republics somewhat beyond Mr Putin's wrath, such as Armenia, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

In the Turkish resort city of Antalya, a popular eastern European tourist destination, rental prices have tripled as wealthier Russians and Ukrainians rent and buy properties.

More often, the exiles sleep on couches or in spare rooms with old friends, or stay at cheap hotels. Most are highly educated but arrive with little money and perhaps even less hope, having given up the country that has rejected them and even tacitly encouraged them to leave.

"Any nation, especially the Russian nation, can always distinguish true patriots from bastards and traitors, and spit them out like a fly that accidentally got into their mouth," Putin said in a speech on Wednesday. "I am convinced that such natural and essential self-cleansing of the society will only strengthen our country."

The exiles are often in a state of shock, and in interviews, social media posts and conversations on the messaging app Telegram, they speak of feeling stigmatised over the actions of their government and their nationality.

"Right now I don't like being Russian, honestly," says Veronika, a 30-year-old Saint Petersburg native who is planning on flying to Istanbul today. "I feel like I should be able to accept all the hate directed at me because of my passport. I do feel shame. I pay their stupid taxes, and at some level I participated in what's going on."

Veronika, an activist who has participated in repeated street protests over the years, booked a ticket weeks earlier and carefully planned her departure. Others flee under duress.

Dima Varlamov, a correspondent for Dozhd TV, an independent Russian television station, was at work on 1 March when his employer began receiving texts on his phone warning that the police were about to raid their offices. They quickly fled into the streets, and standing outside a bar, pondered their choices. Anton decided right then and there to flee the country. "We got the message," says the 32-year-old Moscow native.

His bank accounts were blocked, but friends bought him a ticket to Istanbul online. He went home and packed a single bag. He had just moved into a new apartment and installed the curtain rods, but the curtains still lay on his bed. His girlfriend remained behind, perhaps to join him later.

Within hours, he was on a red-eye flight to Istanbul, where he is staying for now at the home of another journalist. Still dazed and attempting to adjust, he recalls stories of the Russians who escaped to Paris, London, and Istanbul after Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik Revolution of 1917. Those Russians a century ago told themselves they would be home in a few months, only to remain abroad forever, and he has to acknowledge that the odds of him returning home are bleak.

Days after his arrival, Putin passed a law making the voicing of anti-war views punishable by up to 15 years in jail; even referring to the Ukraine invasion as a war is illegal. The Kremlin calls it a "special military operation".

"If Putin has a quick win I can't go back," Mr Varlamov says. "If Putin loses but he stays in power, I cannot go back." He reflects on the war in Ukraine, and questions whether he and his fellow Russians did enough to try to stop it, asking soul-searing questions.

"With this war, Russia made the biggest mistake of my generation, and I don't want to be responsible for it," he says. "I tried to be a good journalist. A journalist tries to do good for society. We didn't succeed. So maybe it's time to start a life somewhere else - not in Russia."

More than 5 million Russians already emigrated from Putin's Russia during his 22-year rule and many predict the wave will continue.

Anton, a British-educated 33-year-old microbiologist in Moscow, is seeking a way out of the country. He recently booked an apartment through Airbnb abroad as a precondition for a visa out of Russia, and felt compelled to tell the hosts of the flat in a private message that he opposed the war in Ukraine.

"The war provided a situation for us where it is no longer hopeful, it brought us to a situation where it is difficult to hope for a democratic future for Russia," he said. "We can only rely at this point on an outside event that may turn the country around and stop the country from progressing toward autocracy or a totalitarian regime. Russians traded their freedom for an ability to have enough food the next day."

Among those Russians abroad, some are organising politically. A protest takes place every weekend in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul.

Miron Yanovich Fyodorov, or Oxxxymiron, one of Russia's most famous rap stars, arrived in Istanbul after cancelling concerts in Moscow and Saint Petersburg to protest the war. He has now held the first of what he described as a series of "Russians Against War" live-streamed benefit shows he is organising to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"There are tens of millions of Russians who categorically disagree with this war," he said in a video posted to YouTube. "And I think this should be said as loudly as possible."

On Tuesday, at a small crowded club in Istanbul's Kadikoy neighbourhood, several hundred came to see Oxxxymiron and raise money for the displaced. During a break in the show, he spoke to the audience and urged them not to cut off ties with their pro-war family and friends.

"The people who are for this war are in fact against this war," he said. "They just believe that this is really a special operation to bomb military facilities. 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".

Outside the venue, Russians held up signs to protest the war. "My friends are in prison and I can be the next one," says Anna, a 26-year-old art historian from Saint Petersburg, holding up a poster that said, "No to war, no to silence" in Russian.

"I decided to go to Turkey instead of Russian prison because here I can do more against the war," she says. "I really want to go home, but now is not the time. I feel guilty for the actions of my government, but I am not my government."

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin’s warplanes ‘drop bombs’ on civilian shipping lanes as Kyiv troops advance*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HT-2P01-JBNF-W45D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:17

**Length:** 6354 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Arpan Rai

**Highlight:** There were three ‘explosive objects’ dropped on the shipping lanes in the last day, Ukrainian officials said

**Body**

Vladimir [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) ’s warplanes have dropped “explosive objects” into the paths of civilian shipping lanes in the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) , the region’s military command said.

“The occupiers are continuing to terrorise the paths of civilian shipping in the Black Sea with tactical aviation, dropping explosive objects into the likely paths of civilian vessel traffic,” it said.

“There were three such drops registered in the last 24 hours. However, the navigation corridor continues to function under the watch of the defence forces.”

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is trying to build up a new shipping lane without Russian approval to revive its vital seaborne exports. But [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) said it would consider any vessel a potential military target after it quit UN-brokered deal allowing [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) goods to pass through.

It comes as Ukrainian troops have made confirmed advances against Russia on two fronts, according to the Institute for the Study of War.

“Geolocated footage posted on 30 October shows that Ukrainian forces have advanced northeast of Kurdyumivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut),” it said.

Ukrainian forces have also “marginally advanced” west of Robotyne, Zaporizhzhia, according to geolocated footage seen by the think tank.

Key Points

Ukraine preparing for ‘new wave’ of attacks on Avdiivka Russia attacks oil refinery, Kyiv says Ukraine ‘successfully’ hits Russia’s air defence system in Crimea Belarus leader Lukashenko says Ukraine and Russia are locked in a ‘stalemate’ US says executing own soldiers is ‘barbaric' Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive

Russia ‘regrouping for new attacks at Avdiivka’

Russian forces are trying to regroup and recover their losses near the eastern Ukrainian city of Avdiivka before trying to press on with attacks to try to encircle the besieged settlement, Ukraine’s military said on Thursday.

“The enemy continues to try to encircle Avdiivka, but now not so actively -the enemy is trying to regroup and recover losses in order to attack further,” said Oleksandr Shtupun, spokesman for Ukraine’s Tavria military command.

Russia renewed a push to encircle the embattled town in mid-October, trying to overwhelm Ukrainian positions with constant barrages of artillery and waves of troops and fighting vehicles, according to local and military authorities in Ukraine.

North Korea has sent unspecified number of missiles to Russia

North Korea has likely supplied several types of missiles to Russia to support its war in Ukraine, along with its widely reported shipments of ammunition and shells, South Korea’s military said Thursday.

In a background briefing for local journalists, South Korea’s military said that North Korea is suspected of sending an unspecified number of short-range ballistic missiles, anti-tank missiles and portable anti-air missiles to Russia, in addition to rifles, rocket launchers, mortars and shells.

North Korea has been pushing to expand cooperation with Russia and China in the face of protracted security tensions with the United States and pandemic-caused domestic hardships. In an apparent sign of its economic troubles, the country is moving to close some of its overseas diplomatic missions.

Giorgia Meloni says European leaders are ‘tired of Ukraine war’ in prank call

Italian prime minister Giorgia Meloni said European leaders are tired of the war in Ukraine and want to broker a deal with the Kremlin to end it, in a prank call with Russians posing as African diplomats.

She made the remarks during a call she believed she was having with a senior African Union official when she was in fact speaking with two prolific Russian pranksters and suspected Kremlin agents.

During the conversation with “Vovan and Lexus”, she said European leaders wanted a “way out” of the 20-month war in Ukraine.

Ukraine suffers most intense bombardment of Russian shelling in a single day this year, Kyiv says

Ukraine has suffered its most intense bombardment of Russian shelling so far this year as Vladimir Putin’s troops hit 118 settlements in just 24 hours, [*Ukraine’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) interior minister has said.

[*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) fired millions of shells on cities, towns and villages on Wednesday – more than on any single day so far this year – reducing some to rubble across the eastern and southern parts of the country, Ihor Klymenko said in a post on social media.

“Over the last 24 hours, the enemy shelled [*118 settlements in 10 regions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/european-commission-ap-bosnia-ursula-von-der-leyen-sarajevo-b2439709.html). This is the highest [*number of cities and villages*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-losses-putin-counter-offensive-latest-b2439478.html) that have come under attack since the start of the year,” he wrote on Telegram.

Read the full story here

[*Ukraine suffers most intense bombardment of Russian shelling this year, Kyiv says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine-war-death-toll-b2440212.html)

ICYMI -Nato chief says Russia must not be allowed ‘to take pieces of Ukraine’

[*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) secretary general [*Jens Stoltenberg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jens-stoltenberg) said [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) must not be allowed to “continue to take pieces of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ” as he backed arming [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) to give it an upperhand during negotiations.

“The [*stronger Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-ukraine-nato-chief-war-stoltenberg-b2421420.html) is on the battlefield, the stronger they will be at the negotiating table. And when the war does end, we must ensure that history does not repeat itself. That Russia does not continue to take [*pieces of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-map-latest-b2374524.html) ,” the Nato chief said on Tuesday [*at the 75th Nordic Council in Oslo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/jens-stoltenberg-ap-nato-russia-viktor-sokolov-b2420281.html).

“Russia has lost. It has lost tens of thousands of soldiers. It has lost large amounts of military material. And it has lost political influence and is increasingly isolated,” Mr Stoltenberg said.

[*Nato chief says Russia must not be allowed ‘to take pieces of Ukraine’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-nato-chief-stoltenberg-latest-b2439536.html)

Mapped -The front lines and counteroffences

Bulgaria expels Russian journalist

Bulgaria has expelled a Russian journalist for allegedly engaging in activities that pose a threat to the country’s national security, authorities said.

The State Agency for National Security said Alexander Gatsak, a correspondent for Russian state-run newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta, was stripped of his residency rights and barred from entering Bulgaria and other European Union member nation.

The agency said Gatsak was summoned Sept. 29 to receive the expulsion order at the Interior Ministry migration office, but he did not show up and instead took refuge inside the Russian Embassy in Bulgaria’s capital, Sofia.

ICYMI -South Korea’s spy agency says North Korea shipped more than a million artillery shells to Russia

South Korea’s top spy agency believes [*North Korea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-korea) sent more than a million artillery shells to Russia since August to help fuel Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine, according to a lawmaker who attended a closed-door briefing Wednesday with intelligence officials.

North Korea and Russia have been actively boosting the visibility of their partnership in the face of separate, deepening confrontations with the United States.

[*South Korea's spy agency says North Korea shipped more than a million artillery shells to Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/north-korea-ap-kim-jong-un-south-korea-vladimir-putin-b2439624.html)

Kyiv -‘Ukraine suffers most intense bombardment of Russian shelling in single day this year'

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The bombardments came as[*Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-avdiivka-black-sea-b2439481.html) lamented the world’s expectation of a speedy victory on the battlefield.

[*Ukraine suffers most intense bombardment of Russian shelling this year, Kyiv says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-airstrikes-putin-b2440004.html)

ICYMI -Russian soldiers accused of killing family of nine as they slept in Russia-occupied Ukrainian town

Russian forces allegedly gunned down an entire family of nine, including two young children, as they slept in their beds in [*the Russia-occupied town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-mariupol-humanitarian-corridors-b2029181.html) of Volnovakha in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) , officials in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said.

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said [*Russian soldiers killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) all members of the Kapkanets family on 27 October after the civilians refused to give them control of their house.

According to the Ukrainian prosecutor’s office in Donetsk, the attackers were in army uniforms and had demanded the family house be vacated, leading to an argument.

“According to preliminary information, the occupiers have [*killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) the whole of the Kapkanets family, who were celebrating a birthday and who had refused to hand their own house over to occupiers from Chechnya,” he said on his official Telegram channel.

[*Family of nine shot dead as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-soliders-family-ukraine-donetsk-b2439496.html)

Moldovan president accuses Russia of 'buying' voters in local election

Moldova's pro-European president, Maia Sandu, accused Russia on Wednesday of "buying" voters in this weekend's local elections by funnelling money to pro-Moscow political parties.

Sandu, who has denounced Russia's invasion of Ukraine and accused Russia of trying to oust her in a coup, said Moscow had channelled 90 million Moldovan lei (about $4.9 million) in two months in financing for "criminal groups". These include a banned party led by fugitive businessman Ilan Shor.

"Russia previously bought those people who were running Moldova," Sandu said in an interview with Jurnal TV, referring to corruption scandals in the ex-Soviet state before her 2020 landslide election.

"It no longer has that possibility. Now it is buying Moldovan citizens. The Kremlin uses various categories of people ... There are people who work for the Kremlin and they are going to Moscow to fetch money."

Russian officials could not immediately be reached for comment on Sandu's allegations.

Soros university in Vienna declared 'undesirable' in Russia

Russian has designated the Central European University (CEU) in Vienna, founded by billionaire financier and civil society activist George Soros, as an “undesirable organisation”, according to a list on its website.

Prosecutors had accused the CEU of discrediting Russia’s political leadership and the Russian forces that have invaded Ukraine in what Moscow calls a “special military operation”, and of recruiting staff to formulate a global anti-Russian agenda in the media, the Russian daily Vedomosti reported.

Since its foundation in 1991, CEU has been a gateway to the West for thousands of students from eastern Europe, offering U.S.-accredited graduate degree programs in an academic climate that celebrates free thought.

The university, which does not have a branch in Russia, rejected the accusations and said it was committed to academic excellence and critical independent inquiry.

It said the move would restrict its freedom to cooperate with Russian institutions and individuals, prevent Russian citizens from cooperating with it, and put its Russian students and employees at risk of political persecution.

It has therefore ceased cooperating with Russian partners and promoting its degree programmes in Russia.

CEU in 2019 moved the bulk of its courses from Budapest, Soros’s birthplace, to Austria after a long struggle with Hungary’s right-wing leader Viktor Orban, who accused it of encouraging mass immigration to Europe.

Russia's Kuzmichev put under formal investigation in France

French investigative judges on Wednesday put Russian tycoon Alexey Kuzmichev under formal investigation, a source at the financial prosecutor’s office said.

Kuzmichev has been held for questioning since Monday and was put under formal investigation over allegations of laundering of tax evasion proceeds, money laundering and concealed work, the source said.

A lawyer for Kuzmichev declined to comment.

Ukraine needs new military capabilities as war moves to attritional fighting says army chief

Ukraine‘s commander-in-chief said on Wednesday the war with Russia was moving to a new stage of positional warfare involving static and attritional fighting, a phase he warned could benefit Moscow and allow it to rebuild its military power.

In an article for The Economist, top general Valery Zaluzhnyi said the Ukrainian army needed key new military capabilities and technology, including air power, to break out of that kind of war.

He also called for Ukraine to build up its army reserves and expand the categories of Ukrainian citizens who can be called up for training or to be mobilised.

Wednesday 1 November 2023 21:00 , Lydia Patrick More than 260 civilians have been killed in Ukraine after stepping on landmines or other explosives during the 20-month-old war with Russia, Ukraine‘s military said.

Kyiv estimates that 174,000 sq km of the country -about a third of its territory -is potentially strewn with mines or dangerous war detritus.

At least 571 people have received injuries during more than 560 incidents involving mines or explosive objects left behind by the fighting, the General Staff said on Telegram messenger.

Almost a quarter of the incidents occurred in fields, it added.

Some farmers take risks trying to work in areas thought to be contaminated with mines. On Wednesday, a tractor hit an unidentified explosive in southern Mykolaiv region, leaving two men wounded, the Interior Ministry said.

“One of them had two legs amputated, the other refused to be taken to hospital after being examined,” it added on Telegram.

Ukraine is in critical need of sappers. It now has about 3,000 specialists operating, but it needs 7,000 more to fully clear all the mines, Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal was quoted as saying by Suspilne media.

That process would require around $37 billion in funding, a sum Kyiv is seeking to raise with the help of international partners.

ICYMI -Zelensky says Ukraine’s Black Sea assault ‘will go down in history’

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said Ukraine’s success in [*the battle for the Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-black-sea-putin-troops-war-b2415584.html) “will go down in history books”, as he rallied troops in his nightly video address.

“[*Ukraine’s success in the battle for the Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-black-sea-fleet-ukraine-defeat-b2424347.html) will go down in history books, although it’s not being discussed much today,” he added.

Mr Zelensky also warned against expecting instant success in[*Ukraine’s counter-offensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-live-putin-counter-offensive-b2438857.html) campaign as Russian forces showed signs of amping up fresh attacks on different sections of the frontline.

“We live in a world that gets used to success too quickly. When the [*full-scale invasion began*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-defence-russia-war-b2418519.html) , many people around the world did not believe that Ukraine would survive,” the war-time president said in his nightly video address.

He added: “Glory to all those who do not retreat, who do not burn out, who believe in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) just as they did on February 24, and who have been fighting unwaveringly.”

Read the full report by Arpan Rai here...

[*Zelensky says Ukraine’s Black Sea assault ‘will go down in history’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-avdiivka-black-sea-b2439481.html)

ICYMI -Russian oligarch arrested in France in money laundering probe

A Russian tycoon has been arrested in France in connection with alleged tax evasion and money laundering and for violating international sanctions, prosecutors have said.

Searches took place on Monday at Kuzmichev’s Paris home and in the Mediterranean Var region as part of the investigation, the French Financial Prosecutors office said, confirming a report in the French daily newspaper Le Monde.

The search was carried out during a dramatic raid involving 60 officers.

Kuzmichev was still being held in custody on Tuesday but has not yet been charged in the case.

French customs agents last year seized the oligarch’s 27-metre yacht “La Petite Ourse”, as part of sanctions by the European Union for his ties to president Vladimir Putin.

Read the full report by Tom Watling here...

[*Russian oligarch arrested in France in money laundering probe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oligarch-ukraine-kremlin-b2438950.html)

Bulgaria expels Russian journalist

Bulgaria has expelled a Russian journalist for allegedly engaging in activities that pose a threat to the country’s national security, authorities said.The State Agency for National Security said Alexander Gatsak, a correspondent for Russian state-run newspaper Rossiyskaya Gazeta, was stripped of his residency rights and barred from entering Bulgaria and other European Union member nation.The agency said Gatsak was summoned Sept. 29 to receive the expulsion order at the Interior Ministry migration office, but he did not show up and instead took refuge inside the Russian Embassy in Bulgaria’s capital, Sofia.

Wagner group resumes recruitment under Prigozhin’s son

The mercenary group Wagner may have resumed recruiting soldiers under the leadership of Yevgeny Prigozhin’s son, Pavel Prigozhin, according to reports.

The organisation has become a unit of the Russian National Guard, hiring soldiers from Perm and Novosibirsk, Ukrainska Pravda said.

It quoted the Novosibirsk office of the Wagner Group as saying recruitment had been taking place for two or three days.

Russia shells over 100 settlements in 24 hours, Kyiv says

Russia has shelled over 100 settlements within the last 24 hours, more than in any single day so far this year, Ukraine said.

“Over the last 24 hours, the enemy shelled 118 settlements in 10 regions,” Ukraine’s interior minister, Igor Klymenko, said on social media.

“This is the highest number of cities and villages that have come under attack since the start of the year,” he added.

Corruption is biggest problem second to war, survey finds

The second largest problem in Ukraine after Russia’s invasion is corruption, according to research.

“The war is definitely the biggest problem of Ukraine and Ukrainians. However, if you ask what problems outside of the war are the most worrying for Ukrainians, then among the specified list, 63 per cent talk about corruption,” the research’s authors said.

The third largest problem is low salaries and pensions at 46 per cent, the Kyiv International Institute of Sociology said.

North Korea sent ‘more than one million artillery shells’ to Russia

North Korea has sent more than a million artillery shells to Russia since August, according to South Korea’s national security agency.

Politician Yoo Sang-bum said the South Korean National Intelligence Service (NIS) believes roughly two months of supplies were transported via ships and other means, accompanied by a North Korean weapons expert.

The US, South Korea and Japan issued a joint statement on Thursday condemning what they described as North Korea’s supply of munitions and military equipment to Russia.

Russian warplanes drop explosives on Black Sea shipping lanes, Kyiv says

Russian warplanes dropped “explosive objects” into paths of civilian vessels in the Black Sea three times in the last 24 hours, Ukraine said.

“There were three such drops registered in the last 24 hours. However, the navigation corridor continues to function under the watch of the defence forces,” the southern military command said.

Ukraine is trying to build up a new shipping lane without Russian approval to revive its vital seaborne exports. Russia said it would consider any vessel a potential military target after it quit a UN-brokered deal in July that allowed some food exports to flow despite the war.

Pictured: ‘Shark drone’ launch

Uzbek man sentenced for serving in Russian forces

An Uzbek man has been found guilty of serving in the Donetsk People’s Republic military between 2014 and 2015, a court heard.

Relatives of the convicted man claimed he did not participate in the war in Ukraine and was in Russia during over the period, the ISW said.

According to the Institute for the Study of War, the sentencing may heighten tensions between Russian and Central Asian authorities as Moscow seeks to coerce migrants into joining the war effort.

Russian attacks kill 3, injure 15 over past day

Russian forces carried out attacks against 13 of Ukraine’s oblasts over the past day, killing at least three people and injuring at least 15 others, local officials reported.

In Donetsk, one person was killed and two were wounded during Russian attacks on the region, according to the local military administration.

In Kharkiv, a Russian strike killed a man aged around 50 and injured a 52-year-old woman, its governor reported.

Another person was killed and eight others were injured in Russian attacks on Kherson, according to the region’s governor.

Russia fails to regain lost ground on two fronts

Russian forces failed to regain lost ground near Klishchiivka and Andriivka south of Bakhmut, and near Robotyne in Zaporizhzhia Oblast, the General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces said.

There were also 68 skirmishes with Russian forces recorded over the past day, according to the General Staff.

It comes as Ukraine is preparing for a new wave of attacks near the besieged town of Avdiivka, the head of the region’s military administration said.

Russian officials concerned with maintaining authoritarian rule, think tank says

Russian officials are “concerned” with maintaining authoritarian rule following antisemitic riots which were blamed on Western inteference, a think tank said.

“Chechen Republic Head Ramzan Kadyrov’s reactions to the riots in Dagestan suggest that he is first and foremost concerned with maintaining the perception of his unwavering support of Putin,” the Institute for the study of War said.

“And secondly, he is concerned with demonstrating the strength of his authoritarian rule over Chechnya by threatening a violent response to potential future riots.”

Biden threatens to veto Israel-only aid bill

US President Joe Biden has threatened to veto a Republican bill which would provide aid to Israel but not Ukraine.

“In contrast to the President’s national security package, this bill provides no aid whatsoever to Ukraine. This is an urgent requirement,” the White House’s Office of Management and Budget said.

It comes as Mr Biden wants Congress to provide $106bn in funding to both Israel and Ukraine. But Republican speaker Mike Johnson, who was elected by the House last week, is sceptical about funding Ukraine’s war effort and said he would not back the president’s efforts.

Ukraine preparing for ‘new wave’ of attacks on Avdiivka

Ukraine is preparing for a new wave of attacks near the besieged town of Avdiivka, the head of the region’s military administration said.

“Our boys are preparing for a new wave,” military chief Vitaliy Barabash said. On Monday, Kyiv claimed Russia was preparing to conduct “meat assaults” by throwing troops at the front line without artillery cover.

The Storm-Z units, made up of penal convicts, are often destroyed after a few days and on average lose between 40 to 70 per cent of their personnel, according to a Russian milblogger.

One-way-attack systems most effective weapon used by Russia, MoD says

Russia’s small one-way attack weapons have been one of the “most effective” military capabilites Putin has used on the battlefield this year, the UK Ministry of Defence said.

“Russia’s Lancet small one-way-attack uncrewed aerial systems (OWA UAVs) have highly likely been one of the most effective new capabilities Russia has fielded in Ukraine over the last 12 months,” the ministry said.

“Russia deploys Lancets to attack priority targets and they have become increasingly prominent in the key counter-battery fight, striking enemy artillery.”

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 01 November 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/OZliNVlcZr*](https://t.co/OZliNVlcZr) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/3clDjWJvob*](https://t.co/3clDjWJvob) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*November 1, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1719621502121775113?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) World expects success ‘too quickly’, Zelensky says Wednesday 1 November 2023 08:04 , Alexander Butler The world expects success on the battlefield “too quickly”, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.In response to growing criticism Kyiv’s counteroffensive has been a failure, Mr Zelensky said: “The modern world is set up in such a way that it becomes accustomed to success too quickly. When the full-scale aggression began, many in the world did not think Ukraine would endure.”Ukraine’s military said Russian forces were gearing up for fresh attacks in different sections of the front, but there has been little movement along the 1,000km frontline in recent months.Russia attacks oil refinery, Kyiv saysWednesday 1 November 2023 07:38 , Alexander Butler Russia struck a Ukrainian oil refinery after launching scores of drones and a missile overnight, according to military officials.The Kremenchuk oil refinery in Poltava, was set ablaze amid a broader attack which targeted military and critical infrastructure, Filip Pronin, head of the region’s military administration, said.“The fire has been extinguished. The situation is under control,” he said on Telegram, adding that there were no reports yet of casualties as officials sought to gather more details of the destruction.The air force said 18 of the 20 Russian-launched kamikaze Shahed drones were destroyed before reaching their targets, as was the missile.ICYMI -US dismisses Putin’s claim that anti-Israel riot at Dagestan was organised by Ukraine and WestWednesday 1 November 2023 07:00 , Lydia Patrick The [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) has rejected [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s claim that the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and the West were behind [*a riot in Russia’s Dagestan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/dagestan-makhachkala-airport-timeline-russia-b2438321.html) where thousands of people stormed an airport to target a flight landing from Israel.Mr Putin on Monday, without presenting any evidence, accused unnamed Ukrainian agents of Western spy agencies of “trying to inspire” [*the rampage at the airport late on Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/israel-russia-dagestan-airport-makhachkala-b2438248.html) which injured more than 20 people.The Russian president claimed the chaos was part of America’s efforts to weaken Russia.None of those injured in the attack were Israeli nationals, reported The Associated Press.State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller answered a question on [*Russia publicly blaming outsiders*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/dagestan-airport-israel-biden-pogrom-b2438679.html) for the attack.Ukraine received £2.3bn from international partners this monthWednesday 1 November 2023 06:00 , Lydia Patrick Ukraine has received about £2.3bn from international partners including the US and EU this month, according to its finance ministry.The total sum included a $1.15bn grant from the US and 1.5bn euro as part of a macro-financial assistance package from the EU.Overall, Ukraine has received £29bn in external funding so far in 2023. The World Bank estimated in December 2022 that Ukraine’s reconstruction could cost more than £518bn.ICYMI -Ukraine bombards Russian forces with drones as Putin suffers losses in fight for AvdiivkaWednesday 1 November 2023 05:00 , Lydia Patrick Ukrainian forces fired more than 30 drones in a [*renewed assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) over the weekend as Russian forces [*lost at least an entire brigade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-news-putin-weapons-latest-b2437508.html?page=6) in their push for the [*eastern town of Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-avdiivka-putin-zelensky-war-b2437290.html) , officials said.The Russian air defence systems destroyed 36 [*Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-soviet-bakhmut-kyiv-b2417807.html) over the Black Sea and the northwestern part of the Crimean peninsula, its defence ministry wrote on Telegram on Sunday, accusing Kyiv of carrying out a “terrorist attack”.In a separate incident, local officials in southern Russia’s Krasnodar region near the Black Sea said an oil refinery was hit and set ablaze in the early hours of Sunday but did not explain what caused the fire. Several local media outlets said that the fire was caused by a drone strike or a crashed drone’s debris.Officials in Kyiv have not issued a comment on the Russian defence ministry’s claims. The war-hit nation rarely acknowledges responsibility for attacks on Russia and Russian-occupied territories but has admitted that striking targets there helps its counteroffensive.[*Ukraine bombards Russia with drones as Putin suffers losses in fight for Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-avdiivka-drone-attacks-b2438181.html) Air raid alerts in Crimea’s port of Sevastopol – officialsWednesday 1 November 2023 04:40 , Arpan Rai An air raid alert has been declared in the Crimean port of Sevastopol and traffic on the Crimean Bridge as well as sea transport were suspended, Russian-installed officials in the Crimean Peninsula said in the early hours today.Sevastopol, where Russia parks it major naval fleet, has come under heavy attacks from Ukraine since September this year.The Sevastopol shipyard attack in September was[*one of the biggest in recent weeks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-drone-attack-b2413345.html) , even though the Crimean peninsula, illegally annexed from Ukraine by Russia in 2014, has been a frequent target in the 18-month old war.Mapped -The Ukraine -Russia WarWednesday 1 November 2023 04:00 , Lydia PatrickWatch -Mike Johnson says Congress will pass 'stand-alone Israel funding bill' before supporting UkraineWednesday 1 November 2023 03:00 , Lydia PatrickZelensky speaks with Bulgarian PM to strengthen Black Sea securityWednesday 1 November 2023 02:00 , Lydia Patrick Zelensky spoke with Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolai Denkov on ways to further strengthen Black Sea security amid Russian military threats.He said: “Ukraine strengthens global food security with the alternative Black Sea export corridor. I appreciate the joint naval demining initiative by Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.”I spoke with Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolai Denkov on ways to further strengthen Black Sea security in the face of Russian militarization and threats to freedom of navigation.Ukraine strengthens global food security with the alternative Black Sea export corridor. I appreciate… [*pic.twitter.com/1vMWCnkoaH*](https://t.co/1vMWCnkoaH) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1719380442787221809?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ukraine urges EU to cancel European film festival in Russia

Ukraine has urged the European Union to cancel an upcoming film festival being held in Russia that was organised by the bloc’s Russian delegation.

“It is important to continue an effective sanctions policy not only in the economic sphere, but also in culture, in particular in cinema,” Ukraine’s Culture Ministry said.

The festival, which features over 20 films from across the continent, is set to be held online between 1 November and 15 November under the slogan of “Cinema Unites”.

US House Republicans' Israel-only aid bill faces opposition in Senate

U.S. senators from both parties expressed doubts on Tuesday about House of Representatives Republicans’ plan to provide $14.3 billion in aid to Israel by cutting funding for the Internal Revenue Service, without providing aid to Ukraine.

In the first major legislative action under new Speaker Mike Johnson, House Republicans unveiled a standalone supplemental spending bill only for Israel on Monday, despite President Joe Biden’s request for a $106 billion package that would include aid for Israel and Ukraine and funding to boost competition with China in the Indo-Pacific as well as security along the U.S. border with Mexico.

Republicans have a narrow majority in the House, but Biden’s fellow Democrats control the Senate. To become law, the bill would have to pass both the House and Senate and be signed by Biden.

Democrats said the Republican bill would be dead on arrival in the Senate, even if it passed the House.

“The bottom line is it’s not a serious proposal,” Senate Democratic Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, told reporters.

Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader in the Senate said he felt the four issues needed to be addressed.

“We need to treat all four of these areas, all four of them, Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan and the border,” McConnell told reporters.

Republicans are expected to pass the legislation in the House as soon as this week.

ICYMI -Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine war

[*Russia and Ukraine were locked*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-health-b2438201.html) in a serious stalemate in [*Moscow’s continuing invasion of the country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/russia-moscow-war-ukraine-lgbt-b2258581.html) and needed to sit down for [*peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/china-ceasefire-ukraine-russia-war-b2302823.html) , Belarusian president and Vladimir Putin’s close ally [*Alexander Lukashenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-belarus-prigozhin-lukashenko-b2399543.html) said.

“There are enough problems on both sides and in general the situation is now seriously stalemate: no one can do anything and substantively strengthen or advance their position,” Mr Lukashenko said.

“They’re there head-to-head, to the death, entrenched. People are dying,” he said over the weekend.

This marks the first time the Belarusian president has come forward seeking truce in the conflict and called for a “stop” command.

“We need to sit down at the negotiating table and come to an agreement,” Mr Lukashenko said in a question and answer video posted on the website of the Belarusian state news agency BelTA.

[*Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-lukashenko-ukraine-russia-war-peace-talks-b2438217.html)

Irish Prime Minister addresses whether social welfare payments will be cut for Ukrainians

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said that if social welfare payments were to be cut for Ukrainians arriving in Ireland, it would be done via a joint memo.

He said: “The procedure for anything would be would be joint memo. So a memo that would be coordinated by my office, the Department of the Taoiseach, but will be brought forward by a number of ministers because we have to look at the whole thing in the round, how it impacts on schools, healthcare, on the housing situation as well.”

Asked when the memo would be brought to Cabinet, Mr Varadkar said: “I actually can’t say that. There have been some draft proposals brought forward by Minister (for Integration Roderic) O’Gorman, but they only related to accommodation and we’ve formed the view that we have to see it all in the round and take into account social protection, education, healthcare, housing, all of those things.

“So certainly not this week. Maybe in the next couple of weeks, but we don’t have a timeline as of yet.”

Ireland to ‘change offering’ to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

Leo Varadkar has said that a joint proposal would be brought to Cabinet in the coming weeks to change the offering to Ukrainians arriving into the country.

The Taoiseach said Ireland was not going to refuse ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** or other asylum seekers, but that the Government “can’t be blind to (the) reality” that Ireland is seen as more attractive than other EU countries.

“We’re not going to turn anyone away,” he said on Tuesday as he opened a new road in Athy, Co Kildare.

“No Ukrainian who comes to Ireland is going to be told ‘you’re not welcome here’. Nobody coming from other parts of the world seeking international protection is going to be told to go away. They’ll have their application processed.

“But what we are saying is that we’re seeing increasing numbers of what are called secondary movements, Ukrainians who had been living in other parts of Western Europe for a number of months or even over a year, people seeking international protection, who may have fled a country where they weren’t safe but have actually been living in other parts of Western Europe for a number of months or a number of years, and that is different.

“And we do believe that part of the reason why we’re seeing those secondary movements is because the offering that we have in Ireland is different to that of other countries.”

He said that Ireland had accepted an “unprecedented” number of people from overseas from the war in Ukraine and others seeking international protection, compared to 3,000 or 4,000 in previous years.

“So you can see how much the situation has changed and we can’t be blind to that reality.”

As of October, 96,338 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had arrived in Ireland since the start of the war in February 2022.

The Government has said that as a further 30,000 to 50,000 were expected to arrive in the next year, it must change the open-ended accommodation it was offering, and potentially reduce entitlements to social welfare supports.

Russian soldiers accused of killing family of nine as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian town

Russian forces allegedly gunned down an entire family of nine, including two young children, as they slept in their beds in [*the Russia-occupied town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-mariupol-humanitarian-corridors-b2029181.html) of Volnovakha in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) , officials in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said.

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said [*Russian soldiers killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) all members of the Kapkanets family on 27 October after the civilians refused to give them control of their house.

According to the Ukrainian prosecutor’s office in Donetsk, the attackers were in army uniforms and had demanded the family house be vacated, leading to an argument.

“According to preliminary information, the occupiers have [*killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) the whole of the Kapkanets family, who were celebrating a birthday and who had refused to hand their own house over to occupiers from Chechnya,” he said on his official Telegram channel.

The suspects came back later as the family slept and gunned down the members, as per media reports.

[*Family of nine shot dead as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-family-in-russia-occupied-town-b2438863.html)

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[*Fox News correspondent Benjamin Hall 'lost part of his leg' in Ukraine attack that killed cameraman*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-M6T1-DY4H-K29Y-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1341 words

**Byline:** Megan Sheets

**Highlight:** Ukraine's Ministry of Defence offered the grim new detail about Hall's injuries on Tuesday

**Body**

[*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) correspondent Benjamin Hall lost part of his leg after coming under an attack in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) that killed his cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski and one other [*journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/journalist).

Ukraine's Ministry of Defence offered the grim new detail about Mr Hall's injuries via Twitter on Tuesday, writing: "The truth is the target. Russian troops fired at Fox News camera crew near Kyiv. Cameraman Pierre Zakrevsky and producer Oleksandra Kurshynova were killed. Journalist Benjamin Hall survived, but lost part of his leg."

[*Ukraine news -live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html)

The tweet followed [*Fox News' confirmation of Mr Zakrzewski's death*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/benjamin-hall-ukraine-fox-cameraman-b2036292.html) aged 55.

"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," Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott said in a statement Tuesday morning.

Ms Scott had previously [*announced the hospitalisation of Mr Hall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/benjamin-hall-fox-ukraine-injured-b2035663.html) -a British-American journalist serving as the network's State Department correspondent who has previously [*written for The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/benjamin-hall) -in a memo to staff on Monday, without offering any details about the extent of his injuries.

The truth is the target. Russian troops fired at Fox News camera crew near Kyiv. Cameraman Pierre Zakrevsky and producer Oleksandra Kurshynova were killed. Journalist Benjamin Hall survived, but lost part of his leg. [*#RussianWarCrimesinUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/RussianWarCrimesinUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - Defence of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1503761148952432646?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) "Earlier today, our correspondent Benjamin Hall was injured while news gathering outside of Kyiv in Ukraine," the Monday memo read. "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."Revealing Mr Zakrzewski's involvement in the attack on Tuesday, Ms Scott wrote: "Pierre was a war zone photographer who covered nearly every international story for FOX News from Iraq to Afghanistan to Syria during his long tenure with us. His passion and talent as a journalist were unmatched. Based in London, Pierre had been working in Ukraine since February. His talents were fast and there wasn't a role that he didn't jump in to help with in the field -from photographer to engineer to editor to producer -and he did it all under immense pressure with tremendous skill. The statement continued: "He was profoundly committed to telling the store and his bravery, professionalism and work ethic were renowned among journalists at every media outlet. He was wildly popular -everyone in the media industry who has covered a foreign story knew and respected Pierre."We extend our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife Michelle and family -please keep them all in your prayers. And please continue to pray for Benjamin Hall, who remains hospitalized in Ukraine. We will continue to be in touch with any further updates as needed."The attack on Mr Hall and Mr Zakrzewski came just a day after American journalist Brett Renaud was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin while on an assignment for TIME magazine.Mr Renaud 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. A second American journalist was also wounded and taken to hospital.[*White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/fox-reporter-ukraine-benjamin-hall-psaki-b2035713.html) Joe Biden was thinking of the wounded journalist when asked about the situation and the president's previous pledge to "respond forcefully" if any Americans were harmed in Ukraine."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 in Monday's press briefing.She added that Mr Biden has been "leading the world" in putting "consequences" and "repercussions" in place in the form of crippling economic sanctions.Tributes to Mr Zakrzewski poured in following the announcement of his death.Fox News anchor Bill Hemmer shared the news live on air, calling Mr Zakrzewski "an absolute legend" whose loss is "devastating"."He was a professional, he was a journalist, and he was a friend," Mr Hemmer said. "We here at the Fox News Channel want to offer our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife, Michelle, and his entire family. Pierre Zakrzewski was only 55 years old, and we miss him already."Fellow anchor John Roberts tweeted: "I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family.""I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you," Fox News correspondent Trey Yingst tweeted.Horrible news to report: Fox cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski was killed in the same attack that wounded correspondent Benjamin Hall. I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family.- John Roberts (@johnrobertsFox) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/johnrobertsFox/status/1503748493004972032?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you. [*pic.twitter.com/IvxlPWGDAl*](https://t.co/IvxlPWGDAl) - Trey Yingst (@TreyYingst) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TreyYingst/status/1503750514869211149?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Everyone in the industry knew of, admired and adored Fox News war zone photographer Pierre Zakrzewski. May he Rest In Peace. My thoughts and prayers to his wife and family. [*https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb*](https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb) - Bryan Llenas (@BryanLlenas) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BryanLlenas/status/1503749571217928195?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

As the Fox News community mourns the loss of Mr Zakrzewski and prays for Mr Hall's recovery, some of the networks own hosts have come under fire for promotive misleading narratives about the Russia-Ukraine conflict that increasingly flatter the Kremlin's version of events.

The most controversial host is [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) , whose show is reliably among the most-watched pundit on cable news. Having often questioned before the conflict why anyone in the US should root for Ukraine (a well-established American ally) against Russia (an authoritarian adversary), he has lately helped introduce a [*conspiracy theory*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/ukraine-russia-kremlin-qanon-white-house-b2034074.html) about US-funded and operated biolabs in Ukraine that have supposedly been developing bioweapons.

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**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine war: Key things to know about the conflict*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651T-HVV1-JBNF-W19W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 20, 2022 Sunday 10:05 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1276 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russian troops have stepped up their bombardment of the besieged port city of Mariupol, with Ukrainian officials saying a strike flattened an art school used as a shelter by hundreds of civilians

**Body**

[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) troops stepped up their bombardment of the besieged port city of Mariupol on Sunday, with Ukrainian officials saying a strike flattened an art school used as a shelter by hundreds of civilians.

Mariupol has borne some of the war's greatest suffering. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy early Sunday accused Russia of war crimes over its siege, describing the attack on the city of 430,000 as "a terror that will be remembered for centuries to come."

In his nightly address to the nation, Zelenskyy said [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is interested in peace, and that ongoing talks with Russia are "not simple or pleasant, but they are necessary." He has requested to meet directly with Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , to no avail.

Here are some key things to know about the conflict:

WHAT'S [*HAPPENING*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) IN MARIUPOL?

Mariupol, a strategic port on the [*Azov Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/azov-sea) , has been encircled by Russian troops, cut off from energy, food and water supplies, and has faced a relentless bombardment.

It has been cut off since the early days of Putin's invasion of Ukraine launched on Feb. 24, with civilian life relegated to bomb shelters since then and aid groups saying it faces a humanitarian crisis. Russian forces have also cut off its access to the sea of Azov.

An adviser to Ukraine's president said there was no immediate military help for Mariupol, saying the nearest forces able to assist were already struggling against Russian forces at least 100 kilometers (60 miles) away. Pitched battles continue around the Azovstal steel plant, one of the largest in Europe.

In a video post from a rubble-strewn street that was authenticated by The Associated Press, Mariupol police officer Michail Vershnin pleaded to Western leaders for help, saying: "Children, elderly people are dying. The city is destroyed and it has been wiped off the face of the earth."

In a statement, the Mariupol city council said Russian soldiers have forced several thousand residents - mostly women and children - to leave and be relocated to Russia. It didn't say where in Russia and the AP could not immediately confirm the claim.

WHAT OF THE ART SCHOOL?

Details remain few in the immediate aftermath, but Ukrainian authorities said Sunday that the Russian military bombed an art school in Mariupol where about 400 people had taken refuge.

Local authorities said the school building was destroyed and people could remain under the rubble. There was no immediate word on casualties.

The strike would follow a pattern of attacks on civilian refuges, after Russian forces on Wednesday also bombed a theater in Mariupol where civilians took shelter. The authorities said 130 people were rescued but many more could remain under the debris.

WHAT IS HAPPENING IN OTHER CITIES IN UKRAINE?

Authorities in the eastern city of Kharkiv say at least five civilians were killed in the latest Russian shelling, with the victims including a nine-year-old boy. Kharkiv has been under siege since the start of the Russian invasion and faced relentless Russian artilery.

In Mykolaiv, rescuers on Saturday searched the rubble of a marine barracks that was destroyed in an apparent missile attack a day earlier. It isn't clear how many marines were inside at the time.

Around Kyiv, the northwestern suburbs of Bucha, Hostomel, Irpin and Moshchun were under fire Saturday, according to the Kyiv regional administration. It said Slavutich, 165 kilometers (103 miles) north of the capital, was "completely isolated."

More than 6,000 people were able to evacuate along eight of 10 humanitarian corridors Saturday, said Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk. That figure included 4,128 people from Mariupol, who were taken to the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia.

In Zaporizhzhia, a 38-hour curfew was in effect until 6 a.m. Monday, after two missile strikes on the city's suburbs killed nine people. Local authorities say they continue to evacuate people from areas occupied by Russian troops.

Meanwhile, Zelenskyy said Russia is not recovering the bodies of its dead soldiers, saying that corpses "simply pile up along our line of defense."

He said Russian commanders keep sending in new units to keep up the offense. He cited a battle in Chornobayivka in the south, saying Ukrainian forces beat back the Russians six times, but the Russians kept "sending their people to slaughter."

ARE THERE NEW MILITARY DEVELOPMENTS?

The Russian military reported Sunday that it has carried out a new series of strikes on Ukrainian military facilities with long-range hypersonic and cruise missiles, a day after announcing it had used its latest hypersonic missile for the first time in combat.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said that the Kinzhal hypersonic missile hit a Ukrainian fuel depot in Kostiantynivka near the Black Sea port of Mykolaiv. The strike marked the second day in a row that Russia used the Kinzhal, a weapon capable of striking targets 2,000 kilometers (1,250 miles) away at a speed 10 times the speed of sound.

Meanwhile, the British defense ministry said the Ukrainian Air Force and air defense forces are "continuing to effectively defend Ukrainian airspace" and Russia has failed to get control of the air, which was one of the Kremlin's key objectives.

ARE RUSSIA AND UKRAINE TALKING?

The two countries have held several rounds of negotiations, but remain divided over key issues. Moscow wants Ukraine's demilitarization and Kyiv is demanding security guarantees.

British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss accused Putin of using the talks as a "smokescreen" while his forces regroup. "We don't see any serious withdrawal of Russian troops or any serious proposals on the table," she told the Times of London.

HOW ARE ***UKRAINIAN*** ***REFUGEES*** FARING?

Thousands of refugees from Ukraine waited in long lines in the Polish capital of Warsaw to receive local identification papers that will allow them to move on with their lives.

Refugees started lining up by Warsaw's National Stadium overnight to get the coveted PESEL identity cards that will allow them to work, go to school and get medical care or social benefits for the next 18 months.

By mid-morning Saturday, many were told to come back another day because the demand was so high.

Poland has taken in more than 2 million refugees from Ukraine - the bulk of more than 3.3 million people that the U.N. says have fled since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24. Hundreds of thousands have streamed into Hungary, Slovakia, Moldova and Romania.

A bipartisan delegation of U.S. lawmakers visiting Poland stopped by reception centers Saturday. The seven-member group led by Rep. Stephen Lynch, a Massachusetts Democrat, complimented the willingness of the Polish people to accept refugees. Some Poles have welcomed refugees into their homes.

HOW MANY CIVILIANS HAVE DIED IN UKRAINE?

That's hard to say, with full casualty figures difficult to confirm during wartime. The U.N. human rights office says it has recorded a total of 816 civilian deaths and 1,333 civilian injuries since the war began, though it believes the figures are actually much higher. Ukrainian officials say thousands of civilians have been killed.

The office of Ukraine's Prosecutor General reported Saturday that 112 children have been killed since the fighting started. More than 140 children have been wounded.

Dozens of civilians were killed and injured as a result of attacks over the past 24 hours in the eastern Donetsk region alone, Ukrainian police said Saturday. At least 37 residential buildings and infrastructure facilities were damaged in attacks on eight cities and villages.

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Follow the AP's coverage of the war between Russia and Ukraine: [*http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine*](http://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine)

**Load-Date:** March 20, 2022

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[*Fox News cameraman and Ukrainian journalist killed in vehicle attack that injured correspondent Benjamin Hall*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-FT41-JBNF-W49P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 4:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:7

**Length:** 1299 words

**Byline:** Megan Sheets

**Highlight:** Fox News announced the death of Pierre Zakrzewski in a statement on Tuesday morning

**Body**

A cameraman who was injured alongside [*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) correspondent Benjamin Hall when their vehicle was attacked in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has died.

The network announced the death of Pierre Zakrzewski in a statement on Tuesday 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.

[*Ukraine news -live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html)

"Pierre was a war zone photographer who covered nearly every international story for FOX News from Iraq to Afghanistan to Syria during his long tenure with us. His passion and talent as a journalist were unmatched. Based in London, Pierre had been working in Ukraine since February. His talents were fast and there wasn't a role that he didn't jump in to help with in the field -from photographer to engineer to editor to producer -and he did it all under immense pressure with tremendous skill.

"He was profoundly committed to telling the store and his bravery, professionalism and work ethic were renowned among journalists at every media outlet. He was wildly popular -everyone in the media industry who has covered a foreign story knew and respected Pierre."

"We extend our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife Michelle and family -please keep them all in your prayers. And please continue to pray for Benjamin Hall, who remains hospitalized in Ukraine. We will continue to be in touch with any further updates as needed."

Ms Scott [*announced the hospitalisation of Mr Hall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/benjamin-hall-fox-ukraine-injured-b2035663.html) -a British-American journalist serving as the network's State Department correspondent who has previously [*written for The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/benjamin-hall) -in a memo to colleagues on Monday afternoon which did not reveal what had happened, the extent of his injuries or that Mr Zakrzewski was also injured in the same attack.

"Earlier today, our correspondent Benjamin Hall was injured while news gathering outside of Kyiv in Ukraine," the Monday memo read. "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."

On Tuesday, Ukraine's Ministry of Defence said Mr Hall had [*lost part of his leg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/benjamin-hall-fox-ukraine-injured-b2036434.html).

The truth is the target. Russian troops fired at Fox News camera crew near Kyiv. Cameraman Pierre Zakrevsky and producer Oleksandra Kurshynova were killed. Journalist Benjamin Hall survived, but lost part of his leg. [*#RussianWarCrimesinUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/RussianWarCrimesinUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) - Defence of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1503761148952432646?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The attack on Mr Hall and Mr Zakrzewski came just a day after American journalist Brett Renaud was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin while on an assignment for TIME magazine.Mr Renaud 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. A second American journalist was also wounded and taken to hospital.[*White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/fox-reporter-ukraine-benjamin-hall-psaki-b2035713.html) Joe Biden was thinking of Mr Hall when asked about the situation and the president's previous pledge to "respond forcefully" if any Americans were harmed in Ukraine."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 in Monday's press briefing.She added that Mr Biden has been "leading the world" in putting "consequences" and "repercussions" in place in the form of crippling economic sanctions.Tributes to Mr Zakrzewski poured in following the announcement of his death. Fox News anchor Bill Hemmer shared the news live on air, calling Mr Zakrzewski "an absolute legend" whose loss is "devastating"."He was a professional, he was a journalist, and he was a friend," Mr Hemmer said. "We here at the Fox News Channel want to offer our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife, Michelle, and his entire family. Pierre Zakrzewski was only 55 years old, and we miss him already."Fellow anchor John Roberts tweeted: "I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family.""I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you," Fox News correspondent Trey Yingst tweeted. Horrible news to report: Fox cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski was killed in the same attack that wounded correspondent Benjamin Hall. I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family.- John Roberts (@johnrobertsFox) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/johnrobertsFox/status/1503748493004972032?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you. [*pic.twitter.com/IvxlPWGDAl*](https://t.co/IvxlPWGDAl) - Trey Yingst (@TreyYingst) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TreyYingst/status/1503750514869211149?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Everyone in the industry knew of, admired and adored Fox News war zone photographer Pierre Zakrzewski. May he Rest In Peace. My thoughts and prayers to his wife and family. [*https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb*](https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb) - Bryan Llenas (@BryanLlenas) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BryanLlenas/status/1503749571217928195?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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[*'The hardest part was that I could only take four people'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-HVV1-JCS0-D29C-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 10, 2022 Thursday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 1271 words

**Byline:** DAVID COHEN

**Body**

On the day that the number of refugees fleeing Ukraine officially passed 2 million, Maarten Roelofs from the Netherlands was focused on finding just one of them - a woman, 33-weeks pregnant, who could give birth at any moment.

At the thronging Medyka border-crossing into Poland, Maarten and his neighbour Hans van Wyk split up to cover the exits, holding up hand-made signs that said "Ellen" and peered urgently into the faces of the exhausted women streaming endlessly towards them.

The two men had driven 15 hours from Haarlem and had arrived at 9.30am on Tuesday morning. Hans, 47, an event manager, had never met Ellen and only had a photograph to rely on. But Maarten, 49, who owns a digital design company, knew Ellen as the wife of a former employee who had fled Donetsk and then Kyiv - and whose husband had desperately turned to him for help.

"Maarten sent out a WhatsApp to our street group and asked if someone could accompany him on a 15-hour drive to bring Ellen to safety," said Hans. "I thought, yes, I can do that and so I took off work. We have been here a few hours and it is dramatic and completely heartbreaking. I cannot imagine the stress of leaving homes and husbands and, in Ellen's, case being heavily pregnant with her first baby and having to flee bombing and shelling not once but twice."

They were just two of a growing but indeterminate number of people who have travelled across Europe "to lend a hand", often to save friends of friends or people they barely know. At Medyka and two other border points we visited, we spoke to people who had driven in from Switzerland, Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic and Portugal, some holding crude signs like Maarten and Hans, and many waiting up to 24 hours in the freezing cold to pick people up.

These were ordinary people doing extraordinary things - their heart-warming acts of kindness leavening an otherwise bleak and pitiful scene at the border.

Among these unsung heroes was Nick Horseman, 62, known by officials at the Korczowa border point as "the man from London" - even though he is from Hampshire. Nick, a semi-retired, self-made millionaire who lives in a £3m house in the village of Hook, took 30 hours to drive to the Polish Ukrainian border four days ago.

His aim was to bring in essential provisions and medical supplies, but he was so moved by the scale of the unfolding human disaster that he had stayed to help. He has since ferried 20 women and children (and the occasional dog) to safety, driving 14 hours a day and spending £3,000 of his own money to pay for their first night's accommodation in a hotel and hot meals on their way to wherever they ask to go.

We met Nick at the McDonald's over the road from a giant humanitarian aid centre that has been set up a few miles from the border in Przemysl where thousands of refugees waited in a massive, emptied out mall amid mountains of aid clothing and people dispensing hot food - and then later accompanied him to Przemysl station where 1,500 more Ukrainians arrived on the 6.15pm train from Lviv.

The destination showing at the front of the train, lit up in orange, had been changed from Przemysl to two words: "Putin Dickhead."

Nick said: "When I arrived on Saturday, it was much more chaotic at the Medyka and Korczowa reception centres than it is now and you had a real sense of women and children in peril. People were exhausted and desperate. You would tell the official where you were driving and he would shout "Krakow" and point to you and suddenly you would have women and children surging towards you. The hardest part was that I could only take four people in my car and so I had to choose."

Nick, a divorced father of two who is dyslexic and left school at 14, said he was moved to come because he found himself glued to TV coverage for days and decided he could no longer stand idly by.

"My father was a war hero, he fought with the Desert Rats and was held in a POW camp in Poland for three years after being captured in north Africa," he said. "He survived the death marches at the end of the war but he was skeletal and weighed just six-and-a-half stone."

None of his family background was uppermost as he drove to a coffee shop in Folkestone where they had been collecting aid for Ukrainians. "We loaded my car to the gunnels with blankets, sleeping bags, chocolate, non-prescription medicines and toothpaste, and I headed for Poland," he said.

Nick's intention was to drop off the goods and bring a refugee family back to the UK to put up in his home, hoping the regulations regarding ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would have been eased. But when that didn't happen - the UK have taken just 300 Ukrainians compared to 2,200 in Ireland and more than 1 million entering Poland - he decided to pitch in as he could. The first family he took, two sisters and their children, asked to go to an address three-and-a-half hours away in Krakow.

"They had been queuing for 30 hours at the border and as soon as they got in the car, the children immediately collapsed and fell asleep," he said. "I will never forget how the mothers looked around at their sleeping children and tears just rolled down their cheeks."

He added: "When I dropped them in Krakow, the one mother said to me, 'I didn't realise there were people like you in the world'. It made me feel so inadequate to receive such extreme gratitude for such a small gesture." He got back in his car and drove back to the border and loaded up with four more women and children.

"Some of them had horrific video footage they told me they had taken themselves on their phones. One woman showed me an animal rescue RSPCA officer being shot dead by Russian soldiers while trying to feed the growing number of stray dogs foraging for food across the city. Another showed me her block of flats with huge chunks missing. All had stories of husbands left behind to fight in Kyiv and Kharkiv, or wherever they came from."

Nick was aware, too, of dark rumours circulating that some men picking up women at the border could be people traffickers masquerading as helpers. Signs at the reception centres gave women advice on how to protect themselves.

"It is a major concern," said Nick. "There are no checks on the drivers by the authorities at all. I was very worried about it, but then I decided it's not a good enough reason to stop helping. I was supposed to be walking the Camino de Santiago across northern Spain this week, but I have decided to stay a week or two more, as long as I can make a difference."

Meanwhile, Maarten had news to report. "Ellen has come through the border, we have got her and five other refugees including another pregnant woman and her child who needs to go to hospital," he texted yesterday afternoon. Late last night I got another text. "Arrived in Dresden. Have sent the family of 5 (2 kids + pregnant woman + grandmother) to a refugee home." Ellen, he added, was "dead tired" and resting in a hotel. "It's so sad. She didn't want to leave her husband and is afraid she won't see him again. Tomorrow we will take her to a relative in Holland."

Additional reporting, translating, by Sofiia Sas

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**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*How one man from Ukraine fled war for a second time*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-408T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 7

**Length:** 1280 words

**Byline:** BORZOU DARAGAHI

**Body**

He had hoped he could spare his three kids the traumatic childhood he had suffered, displaced by a war, fleeing shelling and gunfire. But earlier this month, after sheltering in the basement of his home for nearly 10 days as Russian bombs pounded Kharkiv in northeast Ukraine, Malkhiz Razgoyev loaded his wife, children, relatives and several neighbours into a three-car convoy and made a desperate dash for safety.

They zigzagged across the country for days, not knowing where they would end up. Eventually they reached Ukraine's southwestern border with Moldova, and after hours of waiting in the queue of cars that stretched for up to 10 miles, they crossed the frontier. Then came the struggle to find shelter, secure money, and figure out schooling for Mr Razgoyev's children.

Just like 30 years ago, when he was forced to flee war in his native Georgia, Mr Razgoyev found his life once again shattered by conflict. "It's the 21st century, and I am living this life. I would never have imagined it," he tells The Independent, standing outside on a bleak, cold winter's day near the border crossing at Palanka. "I was already once a refugee. Now for the second time I am a refugee."

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and more than 3 million turned into refugees by Russia's war against Ukraine, with 335,000 crossing into Moldova, which is among the poorest nations in Europe. Many in the west are shocked and appalled by what they regard as a major war on the European continent. But for many citizens in the former communist nations, war has shaped their lives.

In addition to a decade of overlapping wars in the Balkans, there have been Russian-backed wars in Moldova, as well as the 2014 land grab by pro-Kremlin gunmen in eastern Ukraine.

In Georgia, where Mr Razgoyev was born, Russian-backed separatist Abkhazian and South Ossetian forces fought against the government of the newly independent former Soviet republic for months, in a 1991-93 civil war that left up to 10,000 dead and 250,000 displaced. At the same time, Georgians were convulsed in a violent political struggle that left more than 100 people dead.

Mr Razgoyev was eight years old at the time. He struggled to understand the hushed, heated conversations among the adults around him. Then one day, his mother packed up some belongings and took him and his brother away, settling the family with an uncle in Kharkiv. There, in Ukraine, he and his brother struggled to adjust, but eventually made a life for themselves. He launched a business in 2006, assembling and selling couches and tables for children's rooms.

Mr Razgoyev met Olga, a Ukrainian native, on an online dating app. She loved animals, and worked at a store selling pet supplies. He loved children, and they would eventually have three: Artyom, now aged 10, and twins Anna and Bella, aged 8. His career was a success. He was shipping furniture to the Donbas. In 2014, war engulfed eastern Ukraine, and a bomb struck one of his shops - but his business continued to expand, as did his family's prospects.

"I suffered a bit because of what happened there, but not as much as I am suffering now," he says. The kids were growing up fast. Mr Razgoyev bought a late model SUV, and then a nine-seat Mercedes minivan that he uses to take his family back to Georgia once a year to see relatives. "I had a nice life and a nice job," he says. "I used to go to Turkey on holiday once a year."

Life in Ukraine was improving. After years of stagnation and downturn during the 2014 war, the country's economy was picking up steam, despite the Covid pandemic and the ongoing war in the Donbas.

Under pressure from the US and the European Union it sought to enter, as well as its own bustling civil society, Ukraine had put a damper on rampant corruption. Razgoyev voted in 2019 for Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian, actor and producer who won the presidency with an unprecedented 73 per cent of the vote.

"I think he's the best president we've had," says Mr Razgoyev. "He built some roads. And he's done things that I've never seen with my own eyes any Ukrainian president do. He's also young and has a very active presence that we never had."

Mr Razgoyev did not believe that Russian president Vladimir Putin would attack Ukraine, and stayed put, even after the fighting started, thinking it would soon be over. When the bombs started to land, he and his family scampered down into the basement of their home in Kharkiv. After Russia failed to secure a quick victory, Mr Putin's armed forces began hitting civilian buildings, and that's when the horror began.

"They started to bomb the schools and kindergartens," says Nina, 44, a Ukrainian refugee, who arrived in Moldova with her 10-year-old son a day ago, and is sheltering inside an exposition centre turned dormitory for refugees. Mr Razgoyev's family decided to leave Kharkiv after a 13 year-old-boy, a friend of his son, was killed while his family was escaping an airstrike that destroyed their apartment building.

"They used to play football together," he says. Now it was Mr Razgoyev's own children who were struggling to understand what was happening. He withdrew all the cash he could from the bank. They gathered blankets and hastily packed suitcases. The road trip was tough. Getting fuel was a challenge. They stopped frequently, scoured the internet for clues, and picked up tips, warnings, and guidance from others on the road.

As the father of three children, Mr Razgoyev is exempt from martial law restrictions that bar any military-age male citizen from leaving Ukraine. But after the initial relief of crossing the border at Palanka, reality set in. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are directed first to a temporary tent encampment near the frontier, but 90 per cent manage to find families to host them. The already fragile Moldovan government is struggling to meet their needs.

"We have many children and women," says Ala Volentik, a volunteer helping run the refugee dormitory at the expo centre. "There are people with disabilities and medical conditions."

The majority of Ukrainians and other refugees who arrive in Moldova then head to Poland or other parts of Europe. Mr Razgoyev's neighbours, who had joined his family's escape, departed to stay with relatives who lived in Germany. But he, his wife and their children, along with his brother's family, stayed in Moldova.

He searched on the web and found a reasonably priced house - more like a cabin - in Ivancea, a remote village in a sparsely populated rural area north of the capital Chisinau, and they managed to rent it from the sympathetic owner. The house is freezing, and he and his brother spend endless hours chopping wood for the fireplace. But it is a roof over their heads.

Next came worries about money. They had stacks of Ukrainian cash. But banks and currency exchanges in Moldova suddenly refused to exchange any more. Someone would have to go back into Ukraine and redeposit the money onto a debit card so it could be withdrawn abroad.

Mr Razgoyev worried that, if he returned, he would not be allowed to leave and bring the card back. So Olga headed back into Ukraine, and he waited nervously for hours in the harsh cold at the Palanka frontier for her to return safely. A health issue exempts him from being a soldier, but once his children are settled, he hopes to go back to Ukraine.

"When I know that my kids and my wife are safe here, I would go back to fight for Ukraine," he says. "Because it is my home."

Despite everything that has happened, he harbours no anger for Russians or even for Russia, a country he knows well. "It's not their fault," he says. "They're suffering too. I blame one little man who has the devil inside him."

**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*A Hamptons pastry chef, a new bride and a father who won the green card lottery: The Ukrainians returning home from US to fight for their country*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y9-91J1-DY4H-K0BV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 8:31 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 1269 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** WAR IN UKRAINE: While more than two million refugees have evacuated Ukraine to escape Russia's violent assault on troops and civilians alike, a growing number of Ukrainians living in the US are making the opposite journey to return to their homes and fight. Rachel Sharp reports

**Body**

More than two million Ukrainians have been forced to flee their homes since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its full-scale attack on the country 13 days ago, according to the latest figures from the UN.

In what has become the fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War Two, women, children, and men who are not of fighting age are crossing the border into neighbouring countries -many bringing with them little more than the clothes on their backs.

Poland has welcomed in around 1.2 million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) so far, while some have traveled on to support networks in other parts of Europe and the US.

On Thursday, the Biden administration announced that it would offer temporary protected status for Ukrainians, meaning that thousands of people already temporarily living or studying in the US can stay and work legally for 18 months rather than being forced to return to the war zone they used to call home.

US Census estimates reveal that around 350,000 Ukrainian immigrants currently live in the US and this move could apply to around 75,000 of this group.

White House Press Secretary said the US was willing to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and around $54m has been given in aid to help those displaced by the war.

But, while evacuations out of Ukraine continue and the US vows to take steps to support refugees, a growing number of Ukrainians are instead choosing to make the opposite journey with several waving goodbye to their lives in America to return home and fight for their country.

Since the start of the war, over 140,000 Ukrainian citizens have made the journey back to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to volunteer in the fight against Russian forces, the State Guard Border Service said on Monday.

While it is not clear how many of those traveled from the US, a pastry chef who worked in the Hamptons, a newlywed bride living in Chicago and a father who relocated to America to create a better life for his daughters are among those returning to Ukraine.

The Hamptons pastry chef

A pastry chef who runs a coffee shop in an affluent Hamptons community in New York state swapped his chef's whites for full body armour and crossed the border from Poland into Ukraine this week.

Kristofer Kalas, owner of Hello Oma in East Hampton, told CBS News he has no military experience but is willing to die for his daughter's country.

"I want my child to have a Ukraine to go back to when she's grown up," he told the outlet as he walked along the border checkpoint dressed in full body armour.

Mr Kalas is a US citizen who sees himself as a Ukrainian by marriage after marrying a Ukrainian woman.

Before the war, the couple and their infant daughter used to split their time between New York and Ukraine.

Mr Kalas said the family evacuated to Portugal where he left his wife and baby safe before returning to Ukraine alone.

"I am absolutely worried yes. But I am more worried for the people there who are not able to leave," he said.

He added that Russia's threat that foreign fighters would not be protected under "international humanitarian law" did not concern him, because Russia has also disregarded humanitarian law in its treatment of Ukrainian civilians.

"As far as I can tell, they don't protect civilians under humanitarian law, so I don't put much credence in anything they say," he said.

Mr Kalas grew up and went to school in East Hampton, where many of America's rich and famous including Alec Baldwin and Beyoncé have homes.

After training as a private chef, Mr Kalas began producing his own chocolate before he opened Hello Oma in the area near where he grew up, according to a 2019 profile by local magazine Edible East End.

His vision was for a coffee shop with baked goods, homemade chocolate and handmade pizza that had a focus on reducing waste.

Now, he hopes not to engage in combat but to help out in Ukraine's defence where he can.

The new bride

A new bride who was born in Ukraine and has lived in Chicago for the last two decades boarded a flight to Europe two days after her wedding to join the fight for her home country.

Maria married her husband David at a small ceremony in Oak Park on Saturday, where the roughly 20 guests were asked to donate medical supplies and other essential items for her to take to Ukraine instead of more traditional wedding gifts.

On Monday, she planned to fly to Poland, before traveling on to the Ukrainian border where she will volunteer to fight for the country.

"I have to go. I can't do protests or fundraising or wave flags," she told the Associated Press.

"We've done this since 2015, Ukrainians, and I just can't do it anymore."

Her new husband David also plans to join her as soon as his passport is approved, as he said he wants to try to keep his wife safe and feels that "complacency and compliance are pretty much the same thing".

"You can only turn a blind eye to people being bullied for so long. And if it happens to them, it might be you next," he said.

Maria grew up in the Ukrainian capital Kyiv until 1991 before her family moved to Poland.

She then moved to Austria to study music, where she met her ex-husband who was from Chicago.

She said they moved to his home town and she has lived there for the last 20 years, staying after they divorced.

Maria and David met last year and became engaged in October.

A local venue offered them a last-minute ceremony so they could wed before flying to Ukraine. It was a poignant date for their nuptials, marking her Ukrainian grandmother's birthday.

Maria doesn't have any medical or military experience but is determined to support her country in whatever way she can if she is turned down from joining combat.

The father who won the green card lottery

A Ukrainian father who relocated to America to create a better life for his family after winning the green card lottery waved goodbye to his two daughters at Portland international airport in Oregon on Thursday to head to Ukraine.

Sergey Korenev told The Guardian that he had been closely watching Russia's escalation on his country for months and decided he had to return to help within hours of the launch of the full-scale attack.

"When it became a total invasion, I felt like I needed to do something. I could not watch it from afar," he said.

The 44-year-old was first heading to New York to collect donations and supplies from the Ukrainian community, then onto Poland to head to the border.

He planned to rescue his mother from her home near Kyiv and evacuate her to safety in Poland before returning to join many of his friends who are already working as volunteers in the territorial defence force.

The father-of-two spent his last day in the country they had made their home watching his youngest daughter Anna, 11, skateboard in a local park along with his eldest daughter Maria, 17.

They then went with him to the airport where they had a tearful goodbye before their father boarded his plane -a small Ukrainian flag sticking out of his backpack.

Back in 2014, Mr Korenev and his ex-wife Valentina launched a foundation to help Ukrainians fighting in Donetsk.

Since moving to the US, he has worked as a driver for Uber and Doordash and has been enjoying America's craft beer scene, his brother told The Guardian.

Despite winning the green card lottery, meaning the US can now be his permanent home, the 44-year-old was determined to head back to Ukraine in his country's hour of need.

He said: "I'm going there to help my friends, they are my brothers in arms."

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russian invasion reorders West's calculations on cost of war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XM-WT71-JBNF-W1YY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 5:57 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 1277 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Not long after winding down 20 years of war, President Joe Biden now finds the United States entrenched in a conflict in Ukraine

**Body**

Not longer after winding down 20 years of war, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) now finds the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) entrenched in a conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , even without sending in U.S. troops, that could have a more far-reaching effect on a larger cross section of Americans than [*Afghanistan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/afghanistan) or Iraq ever did.

Fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq cost the lives of more than 6,900 U.S. troops and more than 7,500 U.S. contractors, and American spending topped $2.3 trillion. But those wars had little impact on how the vast majority of Americans lived their daily lives. It was a 20-year period where people experienced both the Great Recession and the longest U.S. economic expansion, touchstones that were little influenced by the two grinding conflicts.

Now, five months after the end of the war in Afghanistan, the longest in U.S. history, Americans are entering complicated terrain with the Russian invasion in Ukraine. While Biden promises there will be no American forces on the ground there, he acknowledged the war waged by Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) could have real impact on Americans' pocketbooks.

"A Russian dictator, invading a foreign country, has costs around the world," Biden told Americans in his State of the Union address on Tuesday night.

The financial tumult of the most significant military campaign in Europe since World War II is already being felt.

This past week saw U.S. crude oil prices surge about 13% to roughly $113 per barrel and the cost of natural gas reached a record in Europe as the war stoked market fears about a supply shock.

Key stock market indices, volatile for weeks, saw further losses as French President Emmanuel Macron warned "the worst is yet to come" after a lengthy phone call on Thursday with Putin.

Yet, in Washington --as well as in European capitals --there are signs of growing resolve to confront Putin and of a willingness to take on some economic pain in the process.

It's a markedly different tone than in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks that spurred the Afghanistan War. Then-President George W. Bush implored Americans then to "stand against terror by going back to work" and suggested Americans "get down to Disney World" as his administration tried to restore faith in the U.S. airline industry. Over the next 20 years, U.S. servicemembers, including more than 52,000 wounded in action, and their families would largely carry the burden.

In Washington, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif, got ahead of the White House in recent days in pushing for sanctions directly targeting Russia's energy sector, the lifeblood of Putin's economy. The administration has been hesitant to target Russian oil out of concern such a move would also imperil the economies of the U.S. and Western allies.

"Ban it," Pelosi said of Russian oil imports.

Sens. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, introduced a bipartisan bill to do just that. The legislation would halt Russian oil imports to the U.S. by declaring a national emergency, something Biden could also do on his own.

"If there was a poll being taken and they say, 'Joe, would you support 10 cents more a gallon for the people of Ukraine?' ... I would gladly," Manchin said.

Whether that view is widely held in the United States could go a long way to determine if Biden's popularity will rebound after sinking to dismal levels.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said the sanctions on Russia could raise interest rates, slow the economy and drive up inflation and gas prices. He suggested Americans were prepared to sacrifice.

"This comes at cost," Romney said. "Nowhere near the cost of blood that would be involved if we let (Putin) run amok but it is not without sacrifice."

Public polling suggests Americans increasingly believe that the U.S. may have to do more to help Ukraine. Forty-five percent of Americans said in the days after Russia invaded that the U.S. was doing too little to help Ukraine. Another 37% said the U.S. was doing the right amount; just 7% said efforts were too much, according to a Quinnipiac poll this past week.

American politicians have shown greater resolve about what lies ahead as Ukrainians have demonstrated, in Biden's words, "pure courage" in intense fighting against Russian forces. There's also been a substantial change in European attitudes as the Russian military has pummeled Ukraine's biggest cities.

In Germany, Chancellor Olaf Scholz was quick to put Nord Stream 2, a recently completed $11 billion Russia-to-Germany gas pipeline, on indefinite hold once Russia invaded, a reversal of Germany's previous position.

The German government also reversed its long-held policy of not sending weaponry to a conflict zone and announced it would send anti-tank and stinger weapons to Ukraine. The German government - one of several European nations that have been laggard in meeting NATO countries' pledge to spend 2% of GDP on defense by 2024 - said it would about triple its defense budget in 2022.

German Economy Minister Robert Habeck even called on his country to take on Putin in another way.

"If you want to hurt Putin a bit, then save energy," he said

Even Hungary, whose pro-Russian strongman President Viktor Orban resisted speaking out against Russia in the leadup to the war, has condemned Russian military action, expressed support for sanctions, and agreed to give temporary protection to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** entering Hungary.

At the White House, officials say the stiffening of European allies' resolve came after many had showed some wariness about confronting the Russians. U.S. national security officials released a steady drip of intelligence for more than two months before the war that suggested Putin was intent on a full-scale invasion.

But even so, in talks with Biden's national security team, some European allies seemed convinced - until right before Putin acted - that he would do something less than a full invasion.

Talk of reacting with half measures quickly melted away - even among some of the most reluctant European allies - once it became clear Putin had put his sights went far beyond disputed territories in eastern Ukraine.

Now, as the costs to Western economies mount, Biden and allied leaders' pain threshold will be tested further. Asked about the administration's confidence in unity as the costs of the war rise, White House press secretary sought to turn the focus back on Putin.

"We are taking steps to stand up for democracy, stand up for democracy versus autocracy stand up to the actions of a brutal dictator," Psaki said. "It is because of his actions that we are in this circumstance."

Edward Frantz, a historian at the University of Indianapolis, said Biden appeared to be headed toward a foreign policy "sweet spot" after the chaotic ending of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. In the final days of that war, 13 U.S. service members were killed in a suicide bomb attack as they assisted evacuation efforts at the Kabul airport.

As tangled and heart-wrenching as the withdrawal was, Biden had completed a campaign promise of ending the war, something his three predecessors failed to do. It also allowed him to more fully turn Washington's attention to what Biden sees as America's central foreign policy challenge: confronting the rise of economic and military adversary China.

"Now, instead, we're back to the Cold War," Frantz said. "If this is a long project - and it certainly seems it will be - the president now faces the challenge of selling to Americans why enduring some impact to our economy for Ukraine matters. That is not going to be easy."

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Associated Press writers Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City, and Lisa Mascaro, Hannah Fingerhut and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

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[*A hundred thousand welcomes: How Ireland has embraced Ukrainians fleeing war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-8K01-DY4H-K0NB-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 9:13 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1318 words

**Byline:** Joyce Fegan

**Highlight:** As the UK comes under criticism about receiving people fleeing Ukraine, Ireland's approach has been far warmer, reports Joyce Fegan from Dublin

**Body**

At the arrivals hall in [*Dublin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dublin) airport a grandmother won't let go of her newborn grandson. Older generations of one [*family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/family) gather to welcome the next one home.

Friends and lovers rugby-tackle embrace over trolleys laden with suitcases. Someone drops an AirPod. A stranger alerts its owner, nodding to the tiled stone floor.

In the background, a pianist plays David Gray's "This Year's Love" on a nearby piano.

In the midst of all this, a silent group of about a dozen women and children file through, guided by airport officials. Phone chargers and cables stuff their back pockets. They carry only backpacks. No one in arrivals notices the passing refugees.

Never before has Ireland's céad míle filte - a hundred thousand welcomes - been more robustly tested than it has in the last two weeks as millions flee [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for safety in Europe.

With the European Union passing a temporary protective directive to allow Ukrainian citizens and others escaping the war to move through the bloc as EU citizens, how hospitable has the state of Ireland, and its people, been?

"My mum when was she was coming through to Poland, slept in a school gym and they put some mattresses on the floor. Then when we come to Ireland, we're welcomed to a four-star hotel. We almost cried," says Viktor, 49.

A Ukrainian citizen and father of four, Viktor had been living in Moscow where he worked as an interpreter. He decided to flee [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) after he was followed by a police officer having attended an anti-war protest. He was threatened with prison.

Viktor also wanted to rescue his mother from Ukraine. Their journey to Ireland included crossing international borders by foot and being held in an open field for 26 hours in temperatures of -10C.

They eventually flew from the Latvian capital Riga and landed in Dublin in the early hours of 8 March.

"I had read the situation in every country regarding receiving refugees, and you have to understand I am taking my elderly mum so it had to be carefully considered. I never imagined being in this situation in my life," explains Viktor.

"We have been welcomed. It was a really warm reception. The custom officers helped us and gave us printouts with information, bottles of water, asked us if we needed accommodation and then personally escorted us to a taxi outside to get to the hotel," says Viktor.

Upon hearing they were ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the taxi driver would not accept money for the fare.

Hanna, 36, a family lawyer from Kyiv, landed in Dublin on 9 March, after a 13-day journey with her 11-year-old daughter and 8-year-old son. She left her police officer husband behind in Ukraine to "fight for freedom". The story of her entry into Ireland is identical to Viktor's.

"We just followed the security corridor to passport control. They immediately asked us if we needed somewhere to stay. Then we were given water, and an immigration officer personally took us outside to a taxi driver who took us to the hotel," says Hanna.

"I offered money to the taxi driver but he refused - that was really touching," she adds.

On arriving at the hotel, the staff "immediately apologised" for having only one large bed in her family room.

"Even though we were really happy, the next day they gave us an extra bed," says Hanna.

Airport and hotel welcomes aside, what about concrete things such as access to the social welfare and healthcare systems?

The Irish public's response is amazing. It's open arms. They just keep offering everything

Michael Baskin, a Ukrainian living in Ireland

Ukrainian citizens will be able to work in Ireland and access social services and the full range of social welfare supports.

Neither Hanna nor Viktor were able to apply for their Personal Public Service (PPS) numbers in Dublin airport, but a dedicated room in their hotel soon popped up to process their applications.

A "welcome room" has now been established in the airport for people fleeing Ukraine. This reception centre includes everything from toys and travel cots to services where people can start their application process to access state support.

Ukrainian nationals will also be entitled to apply for a medical card to access primary care services.

As of Monday, 5,500 Ukrainians have landed at Dublin airport since the war began.

And separate to the state's response, there is the response of the Irish public. In just two weeks, a population of five million people has raised 17.5m for the Irish Red Cross alone, and 17,000 people have pledged accommodation through the charity too.

The current hotel bill for those arriving from Ukraine is paid for by the state via Ipas, the International Protection Accommodation Services, an arm of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

On Monday, prime minister Micheal Martin said Dublin was looking at using unspent monies from the Covid contingency fund (3bn left of 4bn) on housing refugees and the provision of other services.

Michael Baskin, a Ukrainian who has long called Ireland home, is at the forefront of this wave of support. He and 14 friends set up IamUkrainian.ie, the Ukrainian Crisis Centre in Ireland, a few short weeks ago.

"The phone doesn't stop ringing. The Irish public's response is amazing. It's open arms. They just keep offering everything.

"A lot of phonecalls are like: 'I have a house, I have a spare bedroom, please store my number'. We get hundreds of phonecalls from across the country, from Donegal to Kerry," says Michael.

And what about the state's response?

"The Irish government is definitely behind this, but the solutions [to emerging issues] have to be implemented fast," says Michael.

There are now weekly meetings of government departments taking place, as well as focused sub-groups to monitor developments and coordinate necessary actions.

Some emerging issues include accommodation plans in the medium-to long-term.

Dublin city councillor Hazel Chu, who, in 2020, became the first lord mayor of the capital born to migrant parents, commends the outpouring of support but accommodation is on her mind.

"Because we already have a housing crisis, we need to deal with this issue and ensure that Ukrainians and other refugees coming in, the ones who need our help, support and protection don't get the blame for the shortcomings of successive failed housing policies," says Ms Chu, chair of the city's homeless task force and who is currently running for a Trinity College seat in the country's Senate.

Politics aside, mothers are mobilising too. Nicole Le Saout and her friend, Ollwyn Moran, felt compelled to take action after seeing the maternity hospital in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol being bombed. They made contact with immigration services in Dublin airport.

"There was one mother who came through with a two-month-old baby and just a roller suitcase, so they need things like buggies, prams and bundles of baby clothes," says Nicole.

In the space of a matter of hours on Friday night she had collected 25 prams from mothers around Dublin.

For Ukrainian mother Hanna, already in Dublin, all she wants now is to express "gratitude" to every Irish person who "just keep smiling at us". Her kids however, just want to be in school or out playing football.

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**



[*Ireland's hundred thousand welcomes for war victims*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650P-PG01-JCS0-D07F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 15, 2022 Tuesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 11

**Length:** 1263 words

**Byline:** JOYCE FEGAN IN DUBLIN

**Body**

At the arrivals hall in Dublin airport a grandmother won't let go of her newborn grandson. Older generations of one family gather to welcome the next one home.

Friends and lovers rugby-tackle embrace over trolleys laden with suitcases. Someone drops an AirPod. A stranger alerts its owner, nodding to the tiled stone floor.

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And separate to the state's response, there is the response of the Irish public. In just two weeks, a population of five million people has raised Euro 17.5m for the Irish Red Cross alone, and 17,000 people have pledged accommodation through the charity too.

The current hotel bill for those arriving from Ukraine is paid for by the state via Ipas, the International Protection Accommodation Services, an arm of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

Yesterday, prime minister Micheal Martin said Dublin was looking at using unspent monies from the Covid contingency fund (Euro 3bn left ofEuro 4bn) on housing refugees and the provision of other services.

Michael Baskin, a Ukrainian who has long called Ireland home, is at the forefront of this wave of support. He and 14 friends set up IamUkrainian.ie, the Ukrainian Crisis Centre in Ireland, a few short weeks ago.

"The phone doesn't stop ringing. The Irish public's response is amazing. It's open arms. They just keep offering everything. A lot of phonecalls are like: 'I have a house, I have a spare bedroom, please store my number'. We get hundreds of phonecalls from across the country, from Donegal to Kerry," says Michael.

And what about the state's response? "The Irish government is definitely behind this, but the solutions [to emerging issues] have to be implemented fast," says Michael.

There are now weekly meetings of government departments taking place, as well as focused sub-groups to monitor developments and coordinate necessary actions. Some emerging issues include accommodation plans in the medium- to long-term.

Dublin city councillor Hazel Chu, who, in 2020, became the first lord mayor of the capital born to migrant parents, commends the outpouring of support but accommodation is on her mind.

"Because we already have a housing crisis, we need to deal with this issue and ensure that Ukrainians and other refugees coming in, the ones who need our help, support and protection don't get the blame for the shortcomings of successive failed housing policies," says Ms Chu, chair of the city's homeless task force and who is currently running for a Trinity College seat in the country's Senate.

Politics aside, mothers are mobilising too. Nicole Le Saout and her friend, Ollwyn Moran, felt compelled to take action after seeing the maternity hospital in the Ukrainian city of Mariupol being bombed. They made contact with immigration services in Dublin airport.

"There was one mother who came through with a two-month-old baby and just a roller suitcase, so they need things like buggies, prams and bundles of baby clothes," says Nicole. In the space of a matter of hours on Friday night she had collected 25 prams from mothers around Dublin.

For Ukrainian mother Hanna, already in Dublin, all she wants now is to express "gratitude" to every Irish person who "just keep smiling at us". Her kids however, just want to be in school or out playing football.

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**



[*Russia-Ukraine War: What to know on Russia's war in Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y1-1V91-JBNF-W3GW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 6:47 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1330 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Russia's invasion of Ukraine entered its 12th day following what Ukrainian authorities described as increased shelling of encircled cities and another failed attempt to evacuate civilians from the besieged port of Mariupol

**Body**

Russia's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) entered its 12th day following what Ukrainian authorities described as increased shelling of encircled cities and another failed attempt to start evacuating hundreds of thousands of civilians from the besieged southern port of Mariupol.

[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and Ukrainian forces had agreed to an 11-hour cease-fire Sunday, but Ukrainian officials said Russian attacks quickly closed the safe-passage corridor.

A third round of talks between Russian and Ukrainian leaders was planned for Monday.

More than 1.5 million Ukrainians had been forced from the country. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy urged his people to keep resisting, and Ukraine's foreign minister said more than 20,000 people from 52 countries had volunteered to fight in Ukraine's newly created international legion.

Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) likened the West's sanctions on Russia to "declaring war."

Here's a look at key things to know about the conflict:

VIOLENCE STOPS PLANNED CIVILIAN EVACUATIONS AGAIN

Ukrainian Interior Ministry adviser Anton Gerashchenko blamed Russian artillery fire for halting a second attempt in as many days to evacuate an estimated 200,000 civilians from Mariupol, where food, water and medicine are scarce.

A day earlier, Ukrainian officials similarly said Russian artillery fire and airstrikes had prevented residents from leaving. Putin accused Ukraine of sabotaging the effort.

Russia has sought to cut off Ukraine's access to the Sea of Azov in the south. Capturing Mariupol could allow Russia to establish a land corridor to [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) , which it annexed in 2014.

WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING ON THE GROUND?

Russian forces launched hundreds of missiles and artillery attacks across the country, including powerful bombs dropped 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 miles-long Russian armored column threatening the capital remained stalled outside Kyiv.

Sunday evening, heavy shelling also came to Mykolaiv in the south and Kharkiv, the country's second-largest city. Efforts to evacuate residents from the Kyiv suburbs of Bucha, Hostomel and Irpin on Sunday were mostly unsuccessful.

A senior American defense official said Sunday the U.S. believes that about 95% of the Russian forces that had been arrayed around Ukraine are now inside the country. Ukrainian air and missile defenses remain effective and in use, and the Ukrainian military continues to fly aircraft and to employ air defense assets, the official said.

Ukrainian forces were also defending Odesa, Ukraine's largest port city, from Russian ships, Ukrainian presidential adviser Oleksiy Arestovich said.

The Russian Defense Ministry on Sunday announced plans to strike Ukraine's military-industrial complex, and it alleged that Ukrainian forces were plotting to blow up an experimental nuclear reactor in Kharkiv and to blame it on Russia. The ministry offered no evidence to back its claims, which could not be independently verified.

ZELENSKYY PUSHES CALL FOR NO-FLY ZONE

Zelenskyy pushed his call for foreign countries to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine. Establishing a no-fly zone would risk escalating the conflict by involving foreign militaries directly. Although the United States and many Western countries have backed Ukraine with weapons shipments, they have sent no troops.

Zelenskyy said in a video address on Sunday that "the world is strong enough to close our skies" and over the weekend he urged U.S. officials help his country obtain warplanes to fight the invasion and retain control of its airspace.

Russian Defense Ministry spokesman Igor Konashenkov said Sunday that some Ukrainian combat planes had redeployed to Romania and other Ukraine neighbors he didn't identify. He warned an attack from planes operating out of those nations could be deemed an engagement by them in the conflict.

DIRECTLY WITNESSED OR CONFIRMED BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Onlookers in Chernihiv cheered as a Russian military plane fell from the sky and crashed, according to video released by the Ukrainian government. In Kherson, hundreds of protesters waved blue and yellow Ukrainian flags and shouted, "Go home."

In Mariupol, Associated Press journalists saw doctors make futile attempts to save 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

Intense diplomatic efforts continued, with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken 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.

Blinken says the United States and its allies are having a "very active discussion" about banning the import of Russian oil and natural gas.

In a call with Putin that lasted nearly two hours on Sunday, French President Emmanuel Macron repeated calls for Russia to halt military operations, protect civilians and allow humanitarian aid. A French official reported that Putin said he does not intend to attack nuclear plants.

The director general of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, said Sunday that Ukrainian staff at the country's largest nuclear plant are now required to seek approval for any operation, even maintenance, from the Russians. The Zaporizhzhya plant was seized by the Russians last week.

Putin continued to blame the war on the Ukrainian leadership, saying, "They are calling into question the future of Ukrainian statehood." In a call with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Sunday, Putin said the invasion could be halted only "only if Kyiv ceases hostilities," according to a Kremlin account.

Israel's prime minister spoke with Putin on Sunday, a day after they met directly in Russia. Israel is one of the few countries that has good working relations with both Russia and Ukraine.

THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The death toll of the conflict has been difficult to measure. The U.N. human rights office said at least 364 civilians have been confirmed killed since the Feb. 24 invasion, but the true number is probably much higher.

The World Health Organization said it verified at least six attacks that have killed six health care workers and injured 11 others.

The U.N. World Food Program says millions of people inside Ukraine, a major global wheat supplier, need food aid "immediately."

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** continued to pour into neighboring countries, including Poland, Romania and Moldova. The number of people who have left since fighting began has now reached 1.5 million, according to U.N. refugee agency.

BUSINESS IN RUSSIA

A growing number of multinational businesses have cut off Russia from vital financial services, technology and a variety of consumer products in response to Western economic sanctions and global outrage over the war.

Two of the so-called Big Four accounting firms - KPMG and PricewaterhouseCoopers - said Sunday they were pulling out of Russia, ending relationships with member firms based in the country.

TikTok said users won't be able to post new videos in Russia in response to the government's crackdown on what people can say on social media about the invasion, and American Express announced it was suspending all operations in Russia and Belarus.

Netflix also announced it was suspending its service in Russia.

\_\_\_

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 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Refugees trying to flee Ukraine targeted by people smugglers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X7-G1G1-JBNF-W28N-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 8:23 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1332 words

**Byline:** Nadine White and May Bulman

**Highlight:** Students stranded in the northeast of the country have said they are being offered safe passage to Poland by smugglers in trucks in exchange for $500

**Body**

[*Refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) trying to flee the conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) say they have been targeted by [*people smugglers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people-smugglers) offering transport across the border for extortionate prices, amid fears of a surge in [*human trafficking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/human-trafficking) on the country's border.

Students stranded in the northeast of the country have said they are being offered safe passage to Poland by smugglers in trucks in exchange for $500 (£375), which they are unable to pay.

In other cases, refugees said they have witnessed apparent volunteers colluding with Ukraine immigration officials to prioritise the entry of those who are willing to pay a fee to flee the country at border points.

NGOs said they were urgently working to implement "critically important anti-trafficking measures", as concern mounts that hundreds of Ukrainians are at risk of exploitation from traffickers.

More than 1 million Ukrainians have already crossed the border, and the EU has said that 7 million people are likely to be displaced as a result of the conflict.

Many others have crossed the border and are now in surrounding countries such as Poland, Romania, Hungary, Moldova, and Slovakia, while some remain trapped within the Ukraine's borders struggling to leave due to a lack of available transport to reach the border as violence escalates.

One 23-year-old student who is currently stranded in Sumy, a city in northeast Ukraine, told The Independent he had been targeted by smugglers offering safe passage to Poland in exchange for $500.

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 .

The man, who studies medicine, said he was currently sleeping in a shelter along with around 100 other refugees, and that he was desperate to return to his family in the UK.

"There's a group of seven smugglers here and they leave with a truck every night - the more fortunate of us are on it - and the last truck will be gone soon," he said.

"I really want to leave but haven't got the money to pay the smugglers. But if I miss this opportunity then I have no hope other than walking for days after that - my phone battery is at 15 per cent, I'm scared for my safety and I wouldn't be sure of where exactly to go.

"Some Black refugees with commodities bargain their way onto these trucks; food is worth more than money here and even toothpaste."

More than 1,000 students are currently said to be stuck in Sumy, many of whom are believed to be of Indian, Chinese, Caribbean and African origin. They are contending with shortages in food and water and, while Russia lays siege to the area, there are few safe routes out of the city.

In another case, a young man told The Independent that volunteers, claiming to be a part of the Red Cross, were colluding with Ukraine immigration officials to prioritise the entry of refugees who are willing to pay a fee to flee the country at border points.

The refugee, in his early twenties, said he witnessed this happening on Wednesday afternoon at the Chop border crossing into Hungary, where he said those fleeing Ukraine without passports were targeted.

The people claiming to be volunteers announced that refugees who don't have a hard copy of their passports should make themselves known in order to be "sorted" before reaching the stamp point and they were then placed into a separate line, the witness said.

They said they saw at least seven refugees, all Black, pay a bribe and be fast-tracked through.

"They segregated us and kept us there for a couple hours. A guy whose girlfriend was amongst us started talking to one of the immigration officers and, towards the end of the discussion, he handed over dollars and they then allowed him, his girlfriend and two other of his friends to pass.

"After that, the immigration guy chose a few Red Cross volunteers working with him to collect bribes from people who are desperate to leave. It's saddening.

"A few hours later, about four other guys followed the same process. They are not students and they don't have a valid passport, not even a picture of it, but they allowed them to cross after bribery."

Luke Tredget, head of emergencies at the British Red Cross, said he was "appalled" to hear the reports and that he had been in touch with his colleagues in the region to raise it "as a matter of urgency" and ensure that it was investigated.

"The British Red Cross strongly rejects discrimination and corruption of any kind, and we are very concerned about these allegations being made against members of the Red Cross Movement," he added.

It comes as NGOs bolster efforts to prevent and tackle an [*anticipated surge*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-trafficking-exploitation-b2027025.html) in smuggling and human trafficking on the Ukrainian border, as refugees fall prey to criminal gangs and opportunists "waiting to traffic people across Europe and into the hands of exploitative industries".

The International Justice Mission (IJM), an NGO focused on protecting vulnerable people form violence, said it was urgently working with local authorities and partners to implement "critically important anti-trafficking measures" on the border.

One member of staff at the IJM, who is working close to the Ukraine-Romania border in shelters housing refugees, told The Independent that people smugglers were known to be targeting people, including women and children, once they have crossed the border.

"From the border to where the houses start there is about another 5km walk, most of it on an A-road. Women and children wait for long hours to cross the border. If someone offers you a warm car you're going to take it. You want your children to be warm," she said.

"There are charities and the authorities offering lifts, but some people want to offer lifts which are not done through official channels. There are going to be opportunists who hang around there offering to give lifts or accommodation and things like that."

The staff member added that many of those arriving in the shelters had reported that they were forced to pay bribes by Ukrainian border guards to cross. "We've been told they've been asked to pay by the border authorities. For men crossing it's 2,000, for women and children around 30," she said.

A Romanian police source told The Independent thatthe authorities were concerned about the risk, and that they were already seeing "signs" of human trafficking at the border.

"There are some signs of this happening. We haven't opened any investigations into cases yet, but experience tells us that exploiters will usually first try to gain trust of the victim. This means staying with them for days or even a month, and make an interdependence with them," they said.

"We don't except them to be very visible at this stage. The problems will appear in time."

A spokesperson for the Polish government said its Centre for Missing Persons had launched a "special hotline" for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and their families staying in Poland to report cases of human trafficking, sex crimes or the disappearance of refugees.

"Police officers are watching over the safety of residents and people who have come to us from Ukraine. Police patrols are on the streets so that everyone can feel safe [...] In Przemysl alone, there are 300 additional officers," they added.

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 4, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Boris Johnson meets with Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WR-VDM1-JBNF-W2CX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 10:44 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 84 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has headed out to Poland in order to meet with prime minister [*Mateusz Morawiecki*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mateusz-morawiecki).

The British PM is visiting both Poland and [*Estonia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/estonia) for crisis talks amid the ongoing attacks in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

On Thursday, 24 February, president [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , announced [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) would start a "military operation" on Ukraine, leading to hundreds of thousands of terrified Ukrainians fleeing the country.

The UK is currently in "urgent" talks in regard to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters) to sign up to our newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Liz Truss is right - Putin will be the biggest loser of a war with Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64SJ-SMT1-JBNF-W37R-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 14, 2022 Monday 1:03 PM GMT

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**Section:** VOICES; Version:1

**Length:** 1287 words

**Byline:** Sean O'Grady

**Highlight:** A full-on, conventional, old-school, tank-driven Russian invasion of Ukraine would be a bloody and costly affair

**Body**

It's deeply unfashionable to praise [*Liz Truss*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-truss). She used her recent trip to Russia as if it were a promotion for Instagram. She was under-briefed and [*ritually humiliated*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-liz-truss-uk-ukraine-putin-b2012896.html) by the Russians during her faux fur-trimmed visit to Moscow.

She seems to lack the confidence, authority and nuance to suggest any diplomatic solutions to the crisis, or some imaginative move to throw the Russians off-guard. New in post, she was maybe too cautious, too worried about making an error that would wreck her career, so she played safe with the simple messages. Maybe she just knows that it's all up to Joe Biden anyhow. Brexit or not, Europe is too divided to make a difference.

Yet, all that said, she was right. A war would be bad for Russia. A full-on, conventional, old-school, tank-driven Russian invasion of Ukraine would be a bloody and costly affair, quite apart from the effects of economic sanctions (which haven't made much impact on Russian foreign policy so far, and have rarely worked historically).

Truss declared that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) "has not learned the lessons of history". In what must have seemed an act of impertinence to Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, this supposedly dumb and mute woman informed him that his government was about to commit "a massive strategic mistake".

"Invasion will only lead to a terrible quagmire and loss of life, as we know from the Soviet-Afghan war and conflict in Chechnya," Truss said. To which the Russian response, unspoken, was: "Yeah, thanks for that, but we know our history, our people and our army better than you do."

Truss was only wrong, though, in the sense that she wasn't quite blunt enough. She should have said that this is a war that [*Russia cannot conceivably win*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/ukraine-russia-nato-volodymyr-zelenskiy-b2004207.html). What is Putin's end game? What will the future look like? Is there some notion in the Kremlin that, after a short lightning attack killing thousands of Ukrainian soldiers and civilians, Russian soldiers will be greeted in Kiev by tearful, grateful, joyful Ukrainians throwing flowers at them and hugging them with joy for their "liberation"? Is the Russian Air Force going to bomb schools and hospitals? Is its navy going to sink Ukrainian vessels? Is it going to paralyse the country's digital infrastructure? And then rebuild everything?

Does Putin seriously imagine that the present Ukrainian government will sign a humiliating "treaty of friendship", and accept, well, what? Puppet status and the permanent stationing of Russian troops in Ukraine, just like the old East Germany or the other satellite states of the eastern Bloc?

Perhaps, as often happened in the old "people's republics" of the eastern bloc, Putin will find some stray politician to become president of the new, ironically-named, People's Republic of Ukraine. It could be a newly Balkanised state, or dismembered, with the eastern regions joining the Russian Federation after a bogus referendum.

The nominal rulers of the rump Ukraine will try to follow anti-western, anti-EU, in fact anti-Ukrainian policies, making constant trouble with Poland. How will the Russians stop ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to the west? Build a huge wall? Border posts with dogs and machine gun posts? Barbed wire?

It cannot work. There will be long-term resistance in Ukraine, a vast country, covertly or openly supported by financial and military assistance from the west. Like the old eastern bloc in the Cold War, there can be no permanent peace between the west and Russia while it acts as an imperialist power, and detente will always be temporary.

Such will be the resistance to Russian rule and post-occupation chaos that the new Ukraine will be less like the old docile states of Eastern Europe, or even Chechnya or Russian sponsored-rule in Afghanistan, than Vietnam or post-2003 Iraq. It's obvious now that the Americans and their allies deposed Saddam Hussein (actually an unpopular leader, unlike Ukraine's democratic government), with no plan as to what to do with the country afterwards. It is doubtful that Russia will know what to do with Ukraine, either.

If Putin thinks he can replay the old Tsarist/Stalinist colonial playbook he is mistaken. It [*cannot work in the modern world*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/russia-ukraine-disinformation-iraq-war-b2012114.html) in a relatively large and advanced state the size of Ukraine. It would drain Russian resources, manpower and morale.

In nations such as East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the occasional uprising or attempts at liberalisation were usually met with a show of force by the Red Army and the removal of the dissident, counter-revolutionary elements, though the relative success of the Solidarity movement in Poland suggested that if a country is big enough and the movement substantial enough, and prepared to compromise, then the resistance can have some effect, even on a superpower.

On the whole, though, Russia kept the lid on dissent through brute force, massacres and imprisoning people, but the peoples of the occupied countries never accepted their domination and especially once they came to realise freedom was a possibility, along with democracy and rising prosperity. The ex-communist pro-Soviet/Russian parties barely survived into the new world. Every east European state that was once in the Warsaw Pact has joined the EU, Nato, or both, with the partial exception of Albania.

Ukraine has tasted its independence, and it likes it. It is determined to fight, to resist, to protect what it has. Unlike shattered nations after 1945, it has much more to lose, and it is a functioning modern democratic state. It is bigger and has more effective and better equipped armed forces than anything the Russians have faced since the end of the Second World War. [*Putin will get a run for his money*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/voices/russian-ukraine-invasion-putin-biden-b1997307.html).

Even if he wins his conventional war, he will lose the unconventional war that follows. He can only survive a long economic war with the west by relying on China, which is not an attractive thing for him. The economic sanctions won't prevent him from his aggression, but they can make life poorer for the average Russian, and that will be bad for his position. In the end he has to rule with the consent of the Russian people; as Tsar Nicolas II and the old Communists who ran the Soviet Union discovered, you should not take that for granted.

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Putin's Cold War with the west, including cultural, sporting and diplomatic isolation, will stretch for decades into the future. In the end, faced with a distressed people who'd rather have peace and a western standard of living, Putin himself may turn out to be the biggest casualty of this war.

The funny thing is that Putin was there, in East Berlin, the last time Russia tried and failed to subjugate free peoples by force. He managed to save the KGB files and send them back to Moscow before it was too late. Can he really want the successors to the KGB to open up in Kiev and run a police state in Ukraine, with Stasi-style collaborators? Does he think he has an alternative to the rule of Ukraine by force and fear?

Truss was right that the lessons of history and the tide of history is against this putative invasion. Putin should have a word with Mikhail Gorbachev, or preferably with himself.

Read More

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**Load-Date:** February 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: Thousands gather in London to march in solidarity with war-torn country*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6534-8DP1-JBNF-W3W5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 5:41 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 87 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

Thousands of people gathered in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on Saturday to march in solidarity with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

[*Sadiq Khan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadiq-khan) , the Mayor of London, joined in the demonstration and called for the UK to do "much more" to aid the war-torn country.

"Londoners over the last few weeks have shown that we're opening our arms to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , whether it's by donating money or opening our homes to those fleeing," he said.

"It's really important that in Ukraine's darkest hour, we show them our support."

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters?itm_channel=native&itm_campaign=newsletters&itm_content=video-articles) to sign up for our newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Michael Gove makes statement on 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-MN31-DY4H-K1YC-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 5:11 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 93 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) is making a statement to MPs on housing ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) as the "Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) " scheme is launched.

The new programme allows individuals, charities, community groups and businesses across the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) to offer a room or home rent-free to those escaping the war, regardless of whether they have ties to the country.

Mr Gove, the housing secretary, has described the scheme as a "national effort" on behalf of those in desperate need.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Activists break into French villa owned by Russian leader Vladimir Putin's daughter*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-Y2V1-JBNF-W164-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 1:21 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 108 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

An activist has been detained after breaking into a [*French*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/french) villa belonging to president [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's daughter.

The property, in Biarritz, was taken over and declared to be a shelter for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

Pierre Haffner, a former businessman, may face prosecution after leading a group of anti-[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) protesters into the seafront property owned by Katerina Tikhonova, 35, the youngest daughter of Putin.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome).

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters) to sign up to our free newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*‘Why is it different?’: Adil Ray clashes with GMB guest over Rwanda policy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65PJ-RW51-JBNF-W4WK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 16, 2022 Thursday 10:57 AM GMT

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**Section:** CULTURE,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 105 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Adil Ray*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/adil-ray) demanded to know why the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) government has not threatened to send ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to [*Rwanda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rwanda) , as they have with Afghanistan and Syrian asylum seekers.

The Good Morning Britain presenter clashed with Times political sketch writer [*Quentin Letts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/quentin-letts) during a fiery debate on Thursday morning (16 June).

“For Afghans and Syrians, the vast majority can’t apply [for visas online] like Ukrainians... why is it different?” Ray asked.

Letts replied by suggesting “Ukrainians aren’t washing up dead on the beaches of Dover” before complaining that the host didn’t let him answer questions.

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**Load-Date:** June 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*'Fear of the foreigner has defined debate in Denmark'; Hardline rhetoric around immigration has taken hold in a country known for broadly liberal values, says Emily Rauhala*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680G-SGN1-F072-40GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

April 12, 2023 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** SECTION 2; Pg. 25

**Length:** 1673 words

**Byline:** EMILY RAUHALA

**Body**

Zero asylum. Send them back to Syria. Claims should be sorted somewhere else.

It may sound like the rhetoric of the far right, but in this wealthy, Scandinavian welfare state, it has become the political centre.

Denmark, polite and progressive, is profoundly sceptical of asylum seekers. Prime minister Mette Frederiksen, of the centre-left Social Democrats, has touted a vision of "zero" people arriving to Denmark outside the United Nations resettlement system. A key priority for her government: working with European Union allies to set up claims-processing centres far away.

Even as the country touts its human rights record abroad, Danish authorities are threatening already settled refugees with deportation to Syria, claiming against considerable evidence that the Damascus area and two other regions are safe. They can't actually send people back - Denmark does not recognise the Syrian government - but many Syrians live in fear of being kicked out, and small numbers languish in deportation centres. The Kaershovedgaard centre is in fact a former prison.

The Danish case offers a vivid example of how far-right ideas are flourishing, even where the far right has struggled to gain power. For some, Denmark demonstrates how rich democracies are eroding refugee and asylum protections, shifting blame and shirking responsibility - all without meaningfully addressing root causes. And Denmark may preview where the EU is headed, as the 27-nation bloc warily watches rising migration numbers and mulls a more restrictive course.

Denmark's hardline stance does not apply to everyone seeking refuge. The country last year welcomed tens of thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, easing their path to school and work.

Nadia Hardman, a researcher in the refugee and migrant rights division of Human Rights Watch, called Denmark's policies "racist, duplicitous and hypocritical".

In a statement, Kaare Dybvad, Denmark's minister of immigration and integration, called that characterisation "offensive" and "lacking of the seriousness that is required when talking about the government's policies".

The government's goal is not zero asylum, he said, but zero people arriving through unofficial channels. "Refugees should come to Denmark through the UN resettlement system where they will be selected on the basis of humanitarian criteria," he said. In the past three years, the country of nearly 6 million has accepted fewer than 250 refugees through that programme, according to data from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

The UN refugee agency has been critical of Denmark's approach. "It was never the intention that refugees were to be subjected to constant reassessments once their protection needs had first been established," the UNHCR representation for the Nordic and Baltic countries said in recommendations from November.

Frederiksen, the prime minister, declined an interview with us, as well as a request for comment.

Because Denmark has opted out of many of the EU's immigration and asylum rules, not all its policies are replicable. But the country's hard-line rhetoric, its insistence on temporary protection and its focus on externalising responsibility have echoes across the continent.

"The Danish approach may become the European mainstream," said Kasper Sand Kjaer, a member of Denmark's parliament and the Social Democrats' spokesperson on immigration and integration.

Inside the high-walled Kaershovedgaard centre, deep in the Danish countryside, that is a chilling thought. Dounia Ibrahim Khalaf and Rangin Mohamed Belal, both Syrians from the Damascus area, are among those stuck here.

Neither would consider returning to Syria, and Denmark can't force them. But it can keep them in what the government calls a "return centre" while they wait for further word on their cases. They are not allowed to seek employment. They must be present for daily check-ins which, combined with a lack of transportation, restrict how far they can go. Worse than any of the particular restrictions, they say, is the surreal limbo. "When," Khalaf asked, "is this all going to end?"

\*\*\*

Denmark was not always like this.

Thirty years ago, the country was relatively open and welcoming, with strong protections for asylum seekers and refugees. But that started to change in the 1990s, as the anti-immigrant rhetoric of the far-right Danish People's Party proved politically potent.

Anti-immigrant voices sold the idea that Denmark's success was a result of its homogeneity - that protecting the welfare state required protecting "Danishness".

Political figures on the right started saying that refugees should eventually be sent back to their home countries, recalled Haifaa Awad, a doctor who serves as chair of the Danish aid organisation Mellemfolkeligt Samvirke. "This was a right-wing agenda, but it was widely accepted by other parties that if you want to get into power, you have to play with their discourse."

Europe's influx of refugees in 2015 and 2016 helped turn talking points into law. In 2015, the Danish parliament introduced a new temporary protection status that could be withdrawn when conditions in home countries improve even slightly. In 2016, the government granted authorities the right to confiscate the jewellery and valuables of new arrivals, supposedly to fund their stay. "Anti-ghetto laws" sought to limit the number of "non-Western" people living in certain neighbourhoods.

Denmark's political parties were "competing about being harder-line hard-liners", Awad said.

In 2019, the Danish Immigration Service began reviewing the residence permits of Syrian refugees from Damascus and the Rif Damascus province. Since then, more than 1,000 Syrians have had their residence permits reassessed, and more than 100 have had their permits revoked, according to the Danish Institute for Human Rights.

Human rights and legal experts note that the majority of revocations are overturned on appeal, meaning the policy has little impact beyond terrifying newcomers and sending small numbers of others to wait in dreary camps. The cruelty, critics argue, is the point.

The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, has condemned the idea of sending refugees back to Syria. UNHCR has also expressed concern. Nonetheless, the Danish Immigration Service recently announced that it considers two more areas of Syria safe, throwing more Syrians in Denmark into a panic.

"Based on considerable evidence, it is the Immigration Service's assessment that the general conditions in the Damascus, Rural Damascus, Tartous, and Latakia provinces no longer implies a general risk of being subjected to abuse" that would violate European rules, the Danish Immigration Service said in a statement emailed to us.

Raghdaa Janoudi, a Syrian from Latakia who has seen her case reopened after living, working and raising her children in Denmark for years, called the designation "shocking".

Mette Roerup, a retiree affiliated with Grandparents for Asylum, a coalition of activists who support refugees, said many Danes she meets remain unaware - or simply unwilling to accept - what is happening.

"When I tell them what we are doing, people don't believe me," she said. "They say, 'We Danes don't treat people like that'."

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Mohammad Rona, a newly elected lawmaker who serves as a spokesperson on immigration for the Moderates, one of three parties in the coalition government, objects to the tone of talk about immigration in Denmark.

"Fear of 'the foreigner' has defined the debate in Denmark for the past 20 years," he said. "It has won elections and created tunnel vision in political deliberations. The Moderates want to have a more nuanced debate."

Rona insists that immigrants can thrive in Denmark, if they embrace it. He offers his story as an example. He fled Afghanistan as a child in the 1990s and settled in Copenhagen with his family. They focused on integrating - a fact he plays up. "It's important for me to say, 'Hey, you have all opportunities to learn the language and to get a job and so on and be a part of the society'," he said.

But newcomers don't necessarily get that chance.

Abdullah Alsalloum fled Damascus as a child, trekking north to Denmark with his family. They did exactly what officials suggest: they settled in a smaller town, not the big city. Alsalloum started school, studied Danish and English, and joined the football team.

In his Danish classroom, he soaked up lessons on democracy and human rights. "Whatever you want to do, you can do it. Whatever you want to say, you can say it, and nobody can force you to do anything. That is what they taught us."

After years in Denmark, his family got called in for an interview with immigration officials. Not long after, authorities told them it was safe to return to Damascus. Abdullah figured he could appeal his case. But he worried about the prospects for his mother.

Rather than risk ending up in a deportation centre, they fled to Germany, where they were recently granted residence permits, he said. In September, he enrolled at school near the Denmark-Germany border - a moustachioed 19-year-old in the ninth grade, starting over yet again.

"Going through this whole process discourages integration, because you lose trust in authorities," said Marie Juul Petersen, a senior researcher at the Danish Institute for Human Rights. "People are met with such mixed signals: 'Should I prepare my children to leave tomorrow, or for integration?'"

Asked about Alsalloum's story, Rona of the Moderates said this kind of case is "very difficult, especially when there are children involved".

"As I mentioned," he said, "I don't know about this Syrian stuff yet."

Kjaer, the spokesperson on immigration for the ruling party, said the government was exploring whether young women from the Damascus area could stay in Denmark if they have the potential to fill in-demand jobs such as nursing. These young women "want to participate, have a job", he said, but are left in a "no man's land, or no woman's land".

"Maybe," he said, "we can find a solution for that limited group."

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**Load-Date:** April 11, 2023

**End of Document**



[*How progressive Denmark became the face of the anti-migration left*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680B-B881-DY4H-K4DX-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 11, 2023 Tuesday 12:00 PM GMT

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**Section:** LONG READS; Version:1

**Length:** 1687 words

**Byline:** Emily Rauhala

**Highlight:** Hardline rhetoric around immigration has taken hold in a country that is known for its broadly liberal values, writes Emily Rauhala

**Body**

Zero asylum. Send them back to [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria). Claims should be sorted somewhere else.

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**Load-Date:** April 11, 2023

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[*Joe Biden seeks to ‘make hope and history rhyme’ in Irish homecoming address*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:680T-SC81-DY4H-K1RD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 13, 2023 Thursday 8:49 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1572 words

**Byline:** Cillian Sherlock

**Highlight:** The US president’s wide-ranging speech lasted for more than 30 minutes.

**Body**

It was a trip to mark the 25th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement – but in his historic address to the Dail, US President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) did not want to just look into the past.

He wanted to outline a “conviction that better days lie ahead”.

He arrived two hours late, but the gathered politicians and dignitaries did not mind the delay as they greeted him with a raucous and extended standing ovation.

It was clearly an important and emotional moment for a president who has been so vocal about his love for his heritage.

He opened his would-be homecoming speech by looking upwards with his arms outstretched: “Well mom, you said it would happen…”

Speaking briefly in Irish before switching back to English, Mr Biden said: “I’m at home, I’m at home. I only wish I could stay longer.”

He paid tribute to his distant relatives – brought physically closer by their presence at the speech in Leinster House – who hail from around the island of Ireland, including Irish rugby players Rob and Dave Kearney.

But importantly, he called on an ancestral Irish lilt as he recited from the works of Irish Nobel Prize winning poet Seamus Heaney.

On what would have been the poet’s 84th birthday, Heaney’s widow Marie listened on beside the president’s son Hunter and sister Valerie Biden Owens as he read from his favourite poem, The Cure Of Troy.

“Don’t hope on this side of the grave,

“But then, once in a lifetime,

“The longed-for tidal wave

“Of justice can rise up

“And hope and history rhyme.”

This was the central message of the president’s address.

Mr Biden aimed to highlight the successes of the Good Friday Agreement while drawing on that optimism to offer a vision for a better future.

Among the dignitaries invited were former Irish president Mary McAleese and ex-taoiseach [*Enda Kenny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/enda-kenny) as well as two key Good Friday Agreement negotiators, former taoiseach [*Bertie Ahern*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bertie-ahern) and ex-Sinn Fein leader [*Gerry Adams*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gerry-adams) – who could be seen reminiscing before and after the speech.

The agreement saw the creation of new political institutions in [*Northern Ireland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland) based on a system of powersharing.

However, they have collapsed several times, most recently when the DUP exercised a veto and brought down devolution in protest at post-Brexit trading arrangements for Northern Ireland.

A President Biden Selfie. [*pic.twitter.com/4NiiiUWlvU*](https://t.co/4NiiiUWlvU) — Gerry Adams (@GerryAdamsSF) [*April 13, 2023*](https://twitter.com/GerryAdamsSF/status/1646579800377622545?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Leaders of other Northern Irish parties – Sinn Fein’s Michelle O’Neill, Alliance’s Naomi Long, and the SDLP’s Colum Eastwood – were very aware of this fact as they watched from the back rows.Mr Biden also looked back towards his own ancestors’ histories of leaving Co Louth and Co Mayo for the US.“These stories are the very heart of what binds Ireland and America together,” he said.“They speak to a history defined by our dreams, they speak to a present written by our shared responsibility, and they speak to a future poised for unlimited shared possibilities.”He added: “The journeys of our ancestors expanded our horizons, and literally excited our imaginations.”He spoke of values being passed down through generations.“This is about defending the values handed down to us by our ancestors, keeping the flame of freedom we inherited, the beacon that’s going to guide our children and grandchildren.”That generational message throughout the speech was perhaps best embodied in an ad-libbed moment of warmth.Mr Biden had just learned that Labour senator Rebecca Moynihan had brought her two-month-old daughter Margot into the chamber.“I apologise to you, little baby girl, the idea you’re subjected to hearing the president of the United States deliver a policy speech is as bad as what all my children had been put through,” he joked.Margot was our youngest guest at today's Joint Sitting address by US President Joe Biden. And also lucky enough to get a meet and greet with the President. [*#SeeForYourself*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SeeForYourself?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#OireachtasBiden*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/OireachtasBiden?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@RebeccaMoy*](https://twitter.com/RebeccaMoy?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Gallery -[*https://t.co/eBnpSGuDTL*](https://t.co/eBnpSGuDTL) [*pic.twitter.com/EkJo87nP7D*](https://t.co/EkJo87nP7D) — Houses of the Oireachtas -Tithe an Oireachtais (@OireachtasNews) [*April 13, 2023*](https://twitter.com/OireachtasNews/status/1646576121469698052?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Margot may one day look back and realise it was a fascinating and engaging speech in which Mr Biden set out a positive vision for the future.“The greatest peace dividend of the Good Friday Agreement is an entire generation of young people whose hearts have been shaped not by grievances of the past, but by confidence that there are no checkpoints on their dreams,” he said.Adding to his reflections on the agreement, Mr Biden said the US, the UK and the EU can work with Ireland to support the people of Northern Ireland.“I think that the United Kingdom should be working closer with Ireland on this endeavour,” he said.“Political violence must never again be allowed to take hold on this island.”As the fourth US president to address the parliament, Mr Biden’s words in the Dail echoed the themes of those previous speeches.He followed John F Kennedy, Ronald Reagan and Bill Clinton, adding to remarks towards peace on the island and a shared history between Ireland and the US.Attendees looked down from a freshly painted gallery, just one of the measures to spruce up Leinster House during a “hectic” two weeks of preparations by the Dail speaker.Mr Biden praised Ireland’s response to the crisis in Ukraine, in particular by welcoming 80,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.The comments were applauded, included by Ukrainian ambassador Larysa Gerasko.Overall, there were two key messages Mr Biden wanted to impress on those listening: dignity and possibilities.“Name another country, whatever their language is, that use the word ‘dignity’ as much as we Irish use the word ‘dignity’; it matters.”Emphasising the point, he turned from the lectern and pointed towards the politician’s benches.“My dad used to say, ‘Joey, everybody is entitled to be treated with dignity no matter who they are’.”Noticeably becoming more energised, Mr Biden emphasised: “Possibilities: We believe anything is possible if we set our mind to it, and we do it together.“This is United States of America and Ireland. There’s nothing beyond our capacity if we do it together.“And we’ve got to believe that, we’ve got to know that because that’s the history of both our countries.”Seemingly preoccupied with the idea this moment could be a foundation for a better future in the face of challenges like societal division and climate change, he recalled personal tragedy that shaped his perspective.“You know, I hadn’t planned on running for president again in 2020. My son Beau had just died of stage four glioblastoma after coming back from Iraq after a year.“He was the attorney general of Delaware. As a matter of fact, he should be the one standing here giving this speech.“But, you know, I started to write a book, talking about how technology has always changed the world – and we’re in an inflection point in the world.“Let’s harness what’s best in us. Our courage, our creativity, our loyalty, our tenacity and our loyalty again.“Let’s once more – for our generation and generations to come – strive to make open history rhyme.“Because I’ve never been more optimistic about the future than I am today. And I’m at the end of my career, not the beginning.”Clearly comfortable and feeling at home, Mr Biden appeared to go off script several other times with anecdotes that brought laughter across the chamber.Talking about an exchange with his Irish grandfather Owen Finnegan, Mr Biden made light of contentious Irish Civil War politics by referring to differing fates of faction leaders Michael Collins and Eamon DeValera: “I never understood what he meant when he said, ‘Joey, I worry about you’.“And I said, ‘Pop, what are you worried about?’“He said, ‘You’re too much like that guy who led the revolution instead of the guy who was the prime minister’.“He said, ‘You got to be less like the military guy, they shot him’.”Pausing for scattered chuckling, he added: “And more like De Valera!”There was widespread laughter among all political parties, albeit stifled with some sharp intakes of breaths from the benches descended from the Collins tradition.Mr Biden’s captive audience were in high spirits as they took photographs, videos and smiled widely during applause at the end of the speech.However, four TDs were notably absent as the People Before Profit boycotted the speech in protest over US foreign policy.Sinn Fein TD Chris Andrews took off his jumper shortly before the speech to reveal a Palestinian football jersey.“We need to see the US helping to build a genuine peace process in Palestine,” he said.Today, [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) visited Leinster House, and acknowledged the positive impact of the Peace Process in Ireland that the US helped build.We need to see the US helping to build a genuine Peace Process in [*#Palestine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Palestine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ireland has shown the possibility of building a lasting peace. [*pic.twitter.com/VpuMUrMMYh*](https://t.co/VpuMUrMMYh) — Chris Andrews TD #savemasaferyatta (@chrisandrews64) [*April 13, 2023*](https://twitter.com/chrisandrews64/status/1646577538854952961?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

However, Mr Andrews too applauded as the event closed.

On his way out of the Dail chamber, Mr Biden hugged Ms McAleese, before stopping to speak to Mr Ahern, Mr Adams and Mr Kenny.

Asked about the exchange by the PA news agency, Mr Kenny said they had a “little chat”.

“Biden is an old-style politician. He draws energy from people, he’s like myself: keep shaking hands and that’s it.”

Mr Biden will continue to shake hands and draw energy from the people – his people – as he wraps up his journey in Co Mayo on Friday.

**Load-Date:** April 13, 2023

**End of Document**



[*AP Week in Pictures: Europe and Africa*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6695-YF41-JBNF-W3Y7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 2, 2022 Friday 7:29 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 137 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

AUG. 26-SEPT. 1, 2022

This week's top photos include those documenting the death of former [*Soviet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet) President [*Mikhail Gorbachev*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mikhail-gorbachev) and the return to school of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Romania. Russian rockets were launched against a train station in the village of Chaplyne during Ukraine’s Independence Day, while revellers threw tomatoes at each other at the annual “Tomatina” fiesta in Spain. Migrants were rescued on the Mediterranean Sea near Lampedusa.

This gallery highlights some of the most compelling images made or published in the past week by The Associated Press from [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa). The selection was curated by Greek photographer Petros Giannakouris.

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**Load-Date:** September 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as MPs debate new powers to tackle Russian oligarchs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y2-P3C1-DY4H-K046-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 7, 2022 Monday 4:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 105 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

Ministers meet today at the [*Houses of Parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/houses-parliament) to discuss their efforts in tackling Russian [*oligarchs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oligarchs) , amid the war against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) attends after she was slammed yesterday for giving out 'only 50 [*visas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visas) ' to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

[*MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mps) are under pressure to accelerate efforts to sanction those closest to [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , and will introduce an Economic Crime Bill today.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome)

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters) to sign up to our free newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 7, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine refugee U-turn 'nowhere near enough'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YV-H211-JCS0-D2YH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 11, 2022 Friday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 89 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

**Body**

Priti Patel's changes to the UK's scheme for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** do not go "anywhere near far enough" to give proper support to those fleeing conflict, the government has been warned. In a move to simplify the system, the home secretary announced that those who have fled the Russian invasion and hold passports will no longer need to go to a visa centre before they come to the UK. But experts have said there are "still major gaps" in support, warning that people would still be required to go through a "chaotic" application process.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Climate at heart of Labour's foreign policy, says Lammy*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66G2-JV51-F072-4010-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

September 25, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1367 words

**Byline:** ANDREW WOODCOCK

**Body**

A Labour government would put the fight against climate change at the heart of its international relations, shadow foreign secretary David Lammy has told The Independent, ahead of a speech committing the party to "a foreign policy with a green dimension".

The pledge is a deliberate echo of Blair-era predecessor Robin Cook's "foreign policy with an ethical dimension", which marked a profound shift in UK priorities to include rights and values in assessments of the national interest. Mr Lammy's pledge will come in a speech to Labour's annual conference, where Sir Keir Starmer's party aims to set down clear dividing lines with Liz Truss's Conservatives ahead of a general election expected in little more than 18 months.

And it is a dividing line that he believes will resonate with voters across the political spectrum, concerned by Ms Truss's "backsliding" on the environment, following Tory cuts to aid for climate mitigation in the developing world and the revival of fracking and oil licensing in the UK.

The appointment of climate sceptic Jacob Rees-Mogg as business secretary with responsibility for energy policy sent "shudders down the spines" of many, with even Tory MPs seen frowning in concern on the backbenches as he declared the end of the fracking ban, said Mr Lammy.

"They know that we will pursue them very hard on fracking," he said. "There are seats in Yorkshire, in the red wall, in the Midlands, there are seats in the southwest where they know we will be going after them, and Conservative MPs are going to be turfed out of office if they go through with this."

He said the Tory administration appeared to be rowing against the tide of increasing public awareness that action on climate change - and the restoration of the 0.7 per cent target for international aid as a proportion of GDP, which Labour has also committed to - should not be seen as a financial drain on the UK, but as an essential part of preserving living standards at home.

The Ukraine war has driven home Britain's vulnerability to the whims of "fossil fuel autocrats" in countries such as Russia, massively bolstering the case for investment in home-grown, clean renewables, he said. And he said that concern about global warming was now firmly in the mainstream, as seen in the unprecedented interest at last year's COP26 climate summit in Glasgow.

"Ordinary British families, pensioners, fifty-somethings, digging in their gardens, planting vegetables can see the effects of climate in their communities," he said. "People recognise the connectivity between us having a hot summer and devastating floods in a country like Pakistan that are almost biblical in nature."

In his speech to the conference in Liverpool on Tuesday, Mr Lammy will promise to make the climate crisis a standing item on the agenda of the prime minister's National Security Council, to ensure that it is considered in any assessment of threats facing the UK. He will pledge to throw Britain's weight behind the drive for a new international law of "ecocide", which could see states or companies prosecuted at the International Criminal Court for "large-scale, wanton and unlawful" destruction of the environment.

And he will vow to use the UK's position as a permanent member of the Security Council to lead a push for climate action to be added as a fourth "pillar" to the United Nations' three fundamental goals of peace, human rights and development. "The climate crisis is the biggest challenge the world faces," Mr Lammy will tell delegates.

"It is not a distant threat. It is here today, devastating the lives of millions of people. From the horrific wildfires in Australia and California to the suffocating sandstorms of Baghdad and the horrendous floods in Pakistan. While Liz Truss tries to row back on our net-zero commitments, Labour's foreign policy will be green. Just as Robin Cook was right to introduce an 'ethical dimension' to our foreign policy in the 1990s, it is right that the next Labour government introduces a 'green dimension'."

Mr Lammy said that his visit to the UN general assembly last week drove home the extent to which international attention was focused on two subjects: the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis. Conversations with leaders from the global South reflected deep concern about the impact of cuts in UK aid on poorer countries' ability to fund programmes to reduce carbon emissions and to deal with extreme weather events.

"For them, the climate emergency remains the number one thing and they are really, really concerned about the UK cuts to aid and support for their climate plans," he said.

This was reflected not only in the reduction in overall aid to 0.5 per cent of GDP but in decisions to rebalance assistance away from international programmes and towards more transactional deals with individual countries, as well as taking the £3bn cost of resettling ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the aid budget.

"All of this has a significant effect on most of the global South because we have been global leaders in development for a generation," he said. It's hugely important at this time to double down on global commitments on the climate emergency, not retreat and suggest that there are now other global priorities."

Mr Lammy reiterated Labour's backing for Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky's resistance to the Russian invasion, and said UK support would continue unabated in the case of a change of government in Westminster. He roundly dismissed suggestions of talks with Russia's Vladimir Putin to seek a peace deal.

"What we've seen is an effective counter-offensive that has seen Putin losing ground in Ukraine and having to mobilise the Russian public," said Mr Lammy. "People are taking to the streets in Moscow and St Petersburg as a result of these actions. This is not the moment to capitulate."

It was for president Zelensky, and not Western leaders, to set out the acceptable terms for any peace deal, he said. But he added: "Peace is best garnered by Russia pulling out its troops, putting down its weapons and stepping back from this occupation of huge swathes of the country."

Ahead of a likely conference row with Labour's strong anti-Brexit contingent, Mr Lammy made clear the party leadership had no intention of reopening the row about UK membership of the EU. A Labour government would scrap Ms Truss's Northern Ireland Protocol Bill "on day one" and would not hesitate - as the PM did - to describe France as a "friend", he said.

Labour would be ready to negotiate positively with the EU on vexed areas such as veterinary agreements, mutual recognition of professional qualifications, equivalency of financial regulation and scientific cooperation. But on the question of rejoining the single market, the customs union or even the EU itself, he was blunt.

"The definition of madness is doing the same thing over and over again," he said. "I was very prominent in campaigns against exiting the European Union. I lost. You do have to accept when you lose.

"I don't think the British public would thank us for relitigating that very, very bitter period in our recent history. So we are outside of the European Union, we must make the most of the opportunities that gives us - and it does present opportunities - and, obviously, mitigate the bad deal that was struck by Boris Johnson."

Labour's conference will see the party, for the first time in years, joining in a rendition of the national anthem, in what many observers have seen as an attempt to shake off allegations of a lack of patriotism dating back to the Jeremy Corbyn years.

Mr Lammy told The Independent he would be singing along with gusto, and laughed off suggestions that Labour needed to prove its patriotism. "Of course we're a patriotic party," he said. "I'm a former cathedral chorister; I've been singing the national anthem all my life. I think the Queen's passing reminds us all of what unites us and I think that Keir feels that very keenly. I support him in that.

"We are the party that set up Nato after the Second World War. We are the party that gave the United Kingdom the National Health Service. I think it's great to sing the national anthem at our party conference, and I'll be singing wholeheartedly."

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*End row on protocol by using flexibility shown to Ukraine, Britain tells EU*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FX-DM41-F072-40VG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 16, 2022 Monday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 102 words

**Byline:** KATE DEVLIN WHITEHALL EDITOR

**Body**

The EU must display the same flexibility it has shown during the Ukraine crisis to resolve the standoff over the Northern Ireland protocol, government sources said, just days before the row is set to come to a head. They said the bloc had shown enormous agility when it took in huge numbers of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** almost overnight. But they added the UK would be forced to act if the same flexibility is not applied to the protocol, which ministers insist is threatening the Belfast peace process. Ministers are expected to push ahead and modify Boris Johnson's Brexit deal, despite the potential for a trade war.

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



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The Independent - Daily Edition

May 16, 2022 Monday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 102 words

**Byline:** KATE DEVLIN WHITEHALL EDITOR

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**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Biden calls Putin 'a butcher' during visit to Ukrainian refugee camp in Poland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-7VM1-DY4H-K3J8-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 8:24 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 90 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) called [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) "a butcher" as he met with refugees forced from their homes during a visit to [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland).

When asked what meeting the [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** made him think of what Vladimir Putin had done to them, the [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) president simply replied: "He's a butcher".

Mr Biden was visiting PGE Narodowy Stadium in Warsaw on Saturday, a venue that has been converted into a massive reception centre and shelter for many of those who have fled their war-torn country over the Polish border.

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**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Labour would put climate crisis at heart of foreign policy, David Lammy vows ahead of conference speech*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66G2-0N81-DY4H-K04J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 25, 2022 Sunday 12:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,CLIMATE; Version:1

**Length:** 1420 words

**Byline:** Andrew Woodcock

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Pledge is part of bid to lay down clear ‘dividing lines’ with Tories at crucial Liverpool conference

**Body**

A Labour government would put the fight against [*climate change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/climate-change) at the heart of its international relations, shadow foreign secretary [*David Lammy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-lammy) has told The Independent, ahead of a speech committing the party to “a [*foreign policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-policy) with a green dimension”.

The pledge is a deliberate echo of Blair-era predecessor Robin Cook’s “foreign policy with an ethical dimension”, which marked a profound shift in UK priorities to include rights and values in assessments of the national interest.

Mr Lammy’s pledge will come in a speech to Labour’s annual conference, where [*Sir Keir Starmer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sir-keir-starmer) ’s party aims to set down clear dividing lines with Liz Truss’s Conservatives ahead of a general election expected in little more than 18 months.

And it follows Sir [*Keir’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/keir-starmer) unveiling of a [*plan to counter the Tory government’s tax-cutting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/keir-starmer-green-energy-liz-truss-boost-economy-b2174661.html) agenda by slashing greenhouse gas emissions through doubling onshore wind energy, tripling solar power and more than quadrupling offshore wind production to create a net zero carbon, self-sufficient electricity network.

Mr Lammy’s pledge is a dividing line that he believes will resonate with voters across the political spectrum, concerned by Ms Truss’s “backsliding” on the environment, following Tory cuts to aid for climate mitigation in the developing world and the revival of fracking and oil licensing in the UK.

The appointment of climate sceptic Jacob Rees-Mogg as business secretary with responsibility for energy policy sent “shudders down the spines” of many, with even Tory MPs seen frowning in concern on the backbenches as he declared the end of the [*fracking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fracking) ban, said Mr Lammy.

“They know that we will pursue them very hard on fracking,” he said. “There are seats in Yorkshire, in the red wall, in the Midlands, there are seats in the southwest where they know we will be going after them, and Conservative MPs are going to be turfed out of office if they go through with this.”

He said the Tory administration appeared to be rowing against the tide of increasing public awareness that action on climate change – and the restoration of the 0.7 per cent target for international aid as a proportion of GDP, which Labour has also committed to – should not be seen as a financial drain on the UK, but as an essential part of preserving living standards at home.

The [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) war has driven home Britain’s vulnerability to the whims of “fossil fuel autocrats” in countries such as Russia, massively bolstering the case for investment in home-grown, clean renewables, he said.

And he said that concern about global warming was now firmly in the mainstream, as seen in the unprecedented interest at last year’s COP26 climate summit in Glasgow.

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“It is not a distant threat. It is here today, devastating the lives of millions of people. From the horrific wildfires in Australia and California to the suffocating sandstorms of Baghdad and the horrendous floods in Pakistan.

“While Liz Truss tries to row back on our net-zero commitments, Labour’s foreign policy will be green.

“Just as Robin Cook was right to introduce an ‘ethical dimension’ to our foreign policy in the 1990s, it is right that the next Labour government introduces a ‘green dimension’.”

Mr Lammy said that his visit to the UN general assembly last week drove home the extent to which international attention was focused on two subjects: the war in Ukraine and the climate crisis.

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“All of this has a significant effect on most of the global South because we have been global leaders in development for a generation,” he said.

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But on the question of rejoining the single market, the customs union or even the EU itself, he was blunt.

“The definition of madness is doing the same thing over and over again,” he said. “I was very prominent in campaigns against exiting the European Union. I lost. You do have to accept when you lose.

“I don’t think the British public would thank us for relitigating that very, very bitter period in our recent history. So we are outside of the European Union, we must make the most of the opportunities that gives us – and it does present opportunities – and, obviously, mitigate the bad deal that was struck by Boris Johnson.”

Labour’s conference will see the party, for the first time in years, joining in a rendition of the national anthem, in what many observers have seen as an attempt to shake off allegations of a lack of patriotism dating back to the Jeremy Corbyn years.

Mr Lammy told The Independent he would be singing along with gusto and laughed off suggestions that Labour needed to prove its patriotism.

“Of course, we’re a patriotic party,” he said. “I’m a former cathedral chorister; I’ve been singing the national anthem all my life.

“I think the Queen’s passing reminds us all of what unites us and I think that Keir feels that very keenly. I support him in that.

“We are the party that set up Nato after the Second World War. We are the party that gave the United Kingdom the National Health Service.

“I think it’s great to sing the national anthem at our party conference, and I’ll be singing wholeheartedly.”

**Load-Date:** September 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Squatters occupy London mansion 'owned by Russian oligarch' in protest of Ukraine war*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-4KS1-DY4H-K0S9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 2:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 114 words

**Byline:** Mared Parry

**Body**

Squatters have taken over a [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) mansion, allegedly owned by a Russian oligarch.

The bold takeover of the [*Belgravia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belgravia) property is in protest of Russian president [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

At least five squatters, thought to be from the activist group London Makhnovists, have claimed the property "belongs to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) ".

They hung a Ukrainian flag from a window and a banner reading: "this property has been liberated".

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here.*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome)

[*Click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/newsletters) to sign up to our free newsletters.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukrainian refugee breaks down in tears facing UK visa application that is 'too hard'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YP-S4J1-DY4H-K3M5-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 5:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 91 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** continue to face difficulties in applying for [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) visas after escaping war.

Tetiana Osadchuk spoke to Sky News about the process of applying for a [*visa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/visa) , describing it as "too hard" as she broke down in tears.

"Application is really hard because you need to do it for each person separately," she said.

"If you have a family of eight people, you need to do an application for everyone and it takes hours... it's too hard."

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome)

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Mila Kunis 'never been more proud' to be Ukrainian, starts fundraiser with Ashton Kutcher*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XK-JGS1-DY4H-K4X9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 5, 2022 Saturday 9:55 AM GMT

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**Section:** CULTURE,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 96 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Mila Kunis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mila-kunis) and [*Ashton Kutcher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ashton-kutcher) have set up a fundraiser to support [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees***, saying they will match donations of up to $3 million (£2.25m).

The actress, who was born in Chernivtsi in 1983 before moving to the [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) , says she has "never been more proud" to be Ukrainian.

Announcing their fundraiser, the Hollywood couple condemned [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion and said there was "no place in this world for this kind of unjust attack on humanity".

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees). To donate please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome).

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**Load-Date:** March 5, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia 'built itself a trap' in Ukraine and are 'getting desperate', Ben Wallace says*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-TGX1-JBNF-W52D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 11:43 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 119 words

**Byline:** Ross Martin-Pavitt

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is "way off timetable" with the indiscriminate shelling of civilians showing the military becoming increasingly "desperate", [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) has claimed.

Insisting the Kremlin had "built itself a trap" by waging a war and uniting the international community against Russia, Mr Wallace stressed the country's military were facing "real logistic problems".

The defence secretary also revealed the Ministry of Defence (MoD) would offer to support the Home Office process visas for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome)

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson announces Ukraine refugees scheme for Britons who want to offer their homes*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-8PN1-DY4H-K3M0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 2:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 90 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) has announced that the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) government is looking to create a scheme to allow people to offer their homes to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

"We've done more than any other [country] to resettle vulnerable people since 2015, but there is a huge opportunity now for us to do even more," the prime minister said.

He added that "a route by which everybody in this country can offer a home to people fleeing [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) " is being set out.,

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome)

**Load-Date:** March 9, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Boris Johnson faces Keir Starmer at PMQs*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X0-51S1-JBNF-W3BM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 2, 2022 Wednesday 12:51 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 98 words

**Byline:** Ross Martin-Pavitt

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) prepares to update MPs in the [*House of Commons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/house-of-commons-0) later today, where he will be grilled on further [*sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sanctions) to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) amid the continued invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The PM will also be questioned about the support package for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and the mounting pressure for the UK and US to enforce a no-fly zone over Ukraine.

Ben Wallace, the defence secretary, has warned that Vladimir Putin "doesn't really care" about the sanctions being imposed on him by the West, because he believes Russian people "could suffer greater" than others.

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**Load-Date:** March 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Surge in homeless refugees feared as Ukrainian scheme reaches a 'crisis point'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:669K-5YV1-F072-43C0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

September 4, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 5

**Length:** 1424 words

**Byline:** HOLLY BANCROFT

**Body**

Councils are bracing themselves for an influx of homeless refugees amid warnings that the government has "no plan" for the continuation of its flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme.

With hosts facing increased pressure from the rising cost of living, many local authorities are worried that Ukrainian families will be left homeless when the initial six-month arrangements end.

Refugees, hosts and councillors are also concerned about how Ukrainians will find independent accommodation in an increasingly competitive rental market.

In a snapshot survey of 64 councils, 61 per cent told The Independent that they were worried about an increasing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless or being at risk of homelessness in the coming months. That was compared to 14 per cent who weren't worried, and 25 per cent that didn't respond.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March, meaning that the first refugees to arrive will reach the six-month mark during September. Twenty-five per cent of sponsors said they only wanted to provide accommodation for six months or less, according to an ONS survey of 17,702 hosts. There are currently 86,100 Ukrainians in the UK under the scheme, 48,798 of whom arrived before the end of April.

"We're going to see building pressures over the next few months, and the government actually has no plan. There is zero plan or guidance coming out from the government," Nesil Caliskan, leader of Enfield Council, told The Independent.

"If we waited for the government to act, we would get to six months and we'd risk having loads of people homeless. So that's why we're planning our support now." Ms Caliskan said a "big concern" was the affordability and availability of private sector rentals, making it very hard for Ukrainian families to find accommodation.

James Jamieson, chair of the Local Government Association, which represents councils, urged the government to provide clarity on what happens next. "Councils, sponsors and Ukrainian guests all need to know what the options are at the end of the six-month initial placement period so they can start planning now. "There is a significant risk that - even if rematching is available - many Ukrainian families may need to present as homeless because of a lack of sponsors or other options," he said.

As of 29 July, 1335 households had presented as homeless to councils - 635 of whom were part of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Analysis by Barnados, Labour and the Liberal Democrats has predicted that between 15,000 and 21,000 Ukrainians could be homeless by winter, rising to more than 50,000 by the middle of next year.

"Homes for Ukraine is a really strong scheme, but the crisis point now is if we can't get the refugees into independent housing," Simone Schehtman, the lead pairer of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and hosts in Birmingham, said. "You go to the estate agent to try and get on the property ladder, and the computer will just say no; you will fail the credit check and you won't have a guarantor."

She urged ministers to allow local authorities to become guarantors of refugees' rent, and warned that if a plan was not put in place soon, "six months of hard graft and goodwill by the British public and the government will become meaningless, because we will have a haemorrhaging of homelessness".

Alistair Carmichael MP, the Liberal Democrats' home affairs spokesperson, said it would be "a tragedy" if any refugees were forced onto the streets, adding: "Ministers must act now."

Responding to the concerns, a government spokesperson said they disagreed that there was no plan for the future of the scheme. "The vast majority of sponsors want to provide support for longer than six months, and we are working closely with councils to ensure all those who have fled Putin's war have a safe place to live," they said. They emphasised that sponsors will continue to receive monthly £350 "thank you" payments for up to 12 months.

Inna Sukhoraba and her 16-year-old daughter Irynka are being sponsored by a host in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, and have had trouble finding a place to rent for when their placement ends. Their host, Pilar, told The Independent: "Inna had found a place and was happy to pay six months' rent in advance, but then suddenly two days later the landlord decided to take somebody else.

"It is very difficult for the Ukrainians who want to be independent and build their lives here. The government needs to give them support to move forward, because they cannot be permanent guests. As hosts, we feel that we have been sort of abandoned. They don't have a plan for us or our guests, and we are totally stuck."

Svitlana Stadnyk, who volunteers as a mediator between hosts and Ukrainians in partnership with National Family Mediation, said she expected to see more cases in the coming months.

"As the autumn comes, and as the six-month end approaches, there will be more and more people who need help resolving conflicts," she said. "There are varying sources of tension, and one is the rising cost of living. Many hosts did not receive their thank you payments in time, and they are seeing their utility prices go up going into the winter."

The government provides councils with a £10,500 support fund for each refugee on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. However, they have not yet committed to continuing the payments past 12 months - leaving local authorities unsure where the money will come from after the first year.

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council said it was worried about the six-month deadline, primarily because of the lack of affordable, available accommodation, while Hampshire County Council said it was seeing "increasing pressure" on its services because of the number of arrangements coming to an end.

East Suffolk Council said that it was concerned that the six-month mark would come at a time when families were facing challenges managing the increased cost of living, while Tandrige District Council said it was worried its homeless prevention service would not be able to cope with the increased demand.

A spokesperson for the Department for Levelling Up said: "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. All arrivals have access to benefits from day one, and we are giving councils an extra £10,500 per person to cover any extra costs."

'I simply could not survive the third night'

On the third night of the war, Inna decided that she and her daughter Irynka need to leave. They had been staying with Inna's parents in Berdychiv, in the Zhytomyr region, and sat listening to the Russian planes flying over their home, petrified that bombs would fall on them.

"The first two nights, Russian planes were flying over us and we didn't know if they were going to drop bombs on us or not. I realised I simply could not survive the third night, so my daughter and I got on the train to Poland," she said. While in Poland, she and her daughter found a placement under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but they always knew it would only be for six months.

"I like British people and British culture, and I am afraid to go back to Ukraine," she told The Independent. Now, four months into the arrangement, she is trying to find a place where she can live independently. "I was a project manager for the Bank of Ukraine, but now it is difficult for me here. For example, I found accommodation for my daughter, and I and the first landlord agreed that we could rent the place, but then something changed and she changed her mind."

"Where we live, rent is very expensive to start with," her host Pilar said. "The flats they are looking for, one day it comes on the market, the next it is gone. The thank you payments that the government gives to the host, why can't they give that to the Ukrainians who want to be independent?" she suggested.

Inna is keen to find work in the UK but has struggled because of the language barrier. "I'm working on improving my English and I'm starting a business," she said. "When I arrived in the UK, British people told me they liked my Ukrainian style and so I thought I could make Ukrainian dresses and sell them here."

She is financially supporting her sister and her parents back home in Ukraine, and still has to pay for utilities at her Kyiv flat. She is hoping that she will be able to support herself by selling clothes, and went to her first market last week.

"The main goal for my business is to support the Ukrainian economy, as well as preserve and spread our culture while I am abroad."

**Load-Date:** September 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*This is what a 50km-long refugee crisis looks like*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WB-X641-JBNF-W3J0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

February 27, 2022 Sunday 4:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 106 words

**Byline:** Ross Martin-Pavitt

**Body**

Exclusive footage for Independent TV from foreign correspondent Bel Trew shows [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) fleeing in the snow during the continued Russian invasion.

Tens of thousands of Ukrainians rushed to the borders as invading Russian troops pressed their advance into Ukraine and toward the country's capital on Saturday.

Some walked many miles through the night, pulling suitcases and carrying children, while others fled by train, car or bus, forming lines miles long at border crossings.

They were greeted by waiting relatives and friends or headed on their own to reception centres organized by governments.

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**Load-Date:** February 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Refugees crowd ferries at Danube River as thousands flee Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-8SH1-JBNF-W44F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 11:33 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 104 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

Hundreds of [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ***refugees*** are crowding ferries crossing the [*Danube River*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/danube-river) as they attempt to flee into [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) following the Russian invasion.

It is believed the number of people leaving the war-torn country will soon surpass four million, as the humanitarian impact of Vladimir Putin's war is laid bare.

Romania is not the only nation offering sanctuary to refugees, with hundreds of thousands reaching other European countries in recent weeks.

To find out more about our Refugees Welcome campaign, [*click here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees-welcome). 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/f/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine: Michael Gove unveils UK scheme for fleeing refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-T951-DY4H-K3BP-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 6:58 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 105 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) has unveiled the [*government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/government) 's "Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) " sponsorship scheme.

With the latest figures showing Britain has issued just 4,000 visas to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , the housing secretary said that individuals, charities, community groups and businesses in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) can now offer a room or home rent-free to anybody escaping the war, regardless of whether they have ties to the country.

The scheme will also offer those who provide a home for refugees fleeing Vladimir Putin's invasion a monthly payment of £350.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome)

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Dominic Raab tells Labour and Angela Rayner to get out of 'social media echo chamber'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6510-K621-JBNF-W13P-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 16, 2022 Wednesday 5:48 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 101 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Dominic Raab*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dominic-raab) told [*Angela Rayner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/angela-rayner) to get out of her "social media echo chamber" during a fiery exchange at [*PMQs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pmqs).

The deputy Labour leader had questioned if the government's sanctions on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) are enough, sparking Mr Raab to hit back by reeling off their impact.

"I'll tell you what this prime minister has done... the ruble plummeting, the Russian stock market at record-lows," the deputy PM said, before praising the UK public for signing up to house ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

"While she's in her social media echo chamber, that's what this government has been doing."

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**Load-Date:** March 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Watch live as Boris Johnson holds briefing on Ukraine crisis alongside Nato chief and Estonian PM*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64WS-W301-DY4H-K3VS-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 1, 2022 Tuesday 4:15 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 106 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

[*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) is holding a press conference alongside [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) secretary-general [*Jens Stoltenberg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jens-stoltenberg) and Estonian Prime Minister Kaja Kallas during a visit to Estonia's Tapa military base.

The British prime minister will be taking questions on the ongoing situation in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , following Russia's invasion last Thursday.

Mr Johnson is speaking hours after vowing to set up a scheme allowing British people and companies to sponsor ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to come to the UK.

He has also expanded visa eligibility to more Ukrainian family members, following pressure to expand help to those fleeing Ukraine.

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**Load-Date:** March 1, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine: British man living in Poland opens home to refugees escaping war-torn homeland*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64XV-HF71-DY4H-K510-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 6, 2022 Sunday 3:20 PM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,INDY TV; Version:1

**Length:** 101 words

**Byline:** Oliver Browning

**Body**

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) man living in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) has opened his home to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing their war-torn homeland.

The [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) have confirmed that over one million people have now fled the country since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion and many are crossing the border into Poland.

Patrick Ney, a British-born Polish national, has taken in three refugees off the street, providing them with shelter after their "exhausting" journey.

"They're welcome in my home," he said.

To sign our Refugees Welcome campaign petition [*click here*](https://www.change.org/p/10downingstreet-urgent-support-for-ukrainian-refugees) and if you are able to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/refugeeswelcome).

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**Load-Date:** March 6, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voters urge Johnson to ditch limits on refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-WJC1-JCS0-D4H1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 27, 2022 Sunday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 1

**Length:** 111 words

**Byline:** ANDREW WOODCOCK AND ADAM FORREST

**Body**

More than half of UK voters think the government should ditch visa requirements for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to allow unlimited numbers to seek sanctuary here, a new poll has found. Just 21 per cent said No 10 should stick to its demand for visas from those fleeing the Russian invasion, compared to 54 per cent who said the policy should be dropped, a change that <em>The Independent</em> is campaigning for ardently. Charities warn that the visa process for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, matching refugees with British sponsors, is too "slow and bureaucratic". The poll found that No 10's policy on refugees was souring public opinion on Boris Johnson's response to the war.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Voters urge Johnson to ditch limits on refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-WJC1-JCS0-D4HN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 27, 2022 Sunday

Second Edition

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**Load-Date:** March 28, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Plane carrying Polish president Andrzej Duda makes emergency landing in Warsaw*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-0CP1-DY4H-K4JD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 25, 2022 Friday 3:35 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 121 words

**Byline:** Chiara Giordano

**Body**

A plane carrying [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) president [*Andrzej Duda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andrzej-duda) to meet [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) was forced to make an emergency landing.

Mr Duda had been flying to meet his US counterpart in the southeastern city of Rzeszow on Friday afternoon when a defect caused the Polish Air Force aircraft to return to Warsaw.

The head of Duda's office, Pawel Szrot, said the Polish leader did not face any danger and he later boarded a different aircraft and headed back to Rzeszow.

Biden 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 speak to American troops bolstering Nato's eastern flank.

More follows

**Load-Date:** March 25, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP PHOTOS: Day 31: Biden visits Poland, rockets hit Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6537-98D1-DY4H-K52B-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 26, 2022 Saturday 11:21 PM GMT

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**Length:** 144 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

As President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) visited [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) on Saturday and called for Western unity against the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , rockets struck the western Ukrainian city of [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) , sending waves of fear across a place that had been a refuge for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing attacks on other parts of the country.

In Lviv, the closest major Ukrainian city to Poland, thick black smoke could be seen coming from the first blast site for hours before a second set of explosions was heard. [*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) sheltered underground after the explosions.

The explosions happened while Biden was in Poland's capital, Warsaw, about 340 kilometers (210 miles) away. The images of the American president visiting ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and humanitarian aid workers in Poland contrasted with images of flames shooting from blast sites and people huddled together in bomb shelters in Lviv.

**Load-Date:** March 26, 2022

**End of Document**



[*The war in Ukraine is crushing thousands of elderly Japanese people*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:654R-3JW1-DY4H-K0F1-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 3, 2022 Sunday 12:00 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1402 words

**Byline:** Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma

**Highlight:** In the disputed Northern Territories of Japan, the war has crushed people's hopes of ever seeing their homeland again after Russia broke off negotiations, write Michelle Ye Hee Lee and Julia Mio Inuma

**Body**

Soviet soldiers barged into Hirotoshi Kawata's home on 4 Sept 1945, searching for hidden [*Japanese*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japanese) soldiers and valuables. Kawata, then 11, remembers understanding only two words they said: tokei, or wristwatch; and sake, which they went on to loot from the home.

It was the beginning of the Soviet takeover of a resource-rich chain of islands in northern Japan, to the terror of families who had thought that the worst of the war was over after Japan's surrender. Japanese citizens were soon forbidden from working or moving freely, and women and children were detained for forced labour.

Many families fled on boats in the middle of the night, rowing at first until they were far enough from the coast to turn on their engines. Kawata's family was among thousands displaced during that time.

"All these years later, I still can't forget everything I saw right before my eyes," Kawata, 87, says. Now, "seeing the Ukrainians... it just hits so close to home. It doesn't seem like something happening in the distance."

Thousands of miles from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , in this city in the far northeast of Japan where many of the roughly 17,200 former residents of the Northern Territories resettled, the Russian invasion and the plight of millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** resonate deeply.

The war has crushed their hopes of ever seeing their homeland again after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) broke off the negotiations over the islands in response to Japan's sanctions on Russia for invading Ukraine.

For these former residents, whose average age is nearly 87, the hope of returning home in their lifetimes has vanished.

In Nemuro, it's hard to travel a few blocks without seeing a massive statue or sign demanding, in uncharacteristically forceful Japanese language: 'The Northern Territories, give it back!'

"The only ones left to tell these stories are just the recollections of some fifth-graders. The rest have all passed away, unable to share their stories," says Hiroshi Tokuno, 88, who fled Shikotan island at the age of 13.

For years, under former prime minister Shinzo Abe, Japan sought to improve relations with Russia and to prioritise the peace treaty and territorial settlement in an effort to make Moscow a strategic partner and keep it from drawing closer to China. When Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimea region in 2014, concern over negotiations for the islands shaped Abe's tepid response.

But in a dramatic turn away from its years of pursuing rapprochement with Russia, Japan has imposed wide-reaching economic sanctions in response to the invasion of Ukraine. Although negotiations had stalled since 2020, Moscow said last week that it had no intention of returning to talks and planned to end visa-free trips by Japanese citizens to the islands. It also threatened to withdraw from joint economic projects there.

What Japan calls the Northern Territories - the islands of Kunashiri, Etorofu, Habomai and Shikotan - lie off the coast of Hokkaido, and some of them are visible from Nemuro on a clear day. They were part of Japan before the Second World War, but soon after the country surrendered in August 1945, the Soviet Union claimed the islands, which it called the Kuril Islands.

These volcanic islands southeast of Russia's Sakhalin Island separate the Sea of Okhotsk and the Pacific Ocean, and are at the heart of post-war Russo-Japanese relations. The two countries made a joint declaration in 1956 ending the state of war between them, but have not signed a peace treaty. That has been awaiting a resolution of the dispute over the islands.

From Japan's perspective, the Soviet seizure of the islands was a betrayal, because Japan had already surrendered, and the islands had been Japanese territory since the first treaty between the Russian empire and the empire of Japan in 1855, says James Brown, an expert in Russo-Japanese relations at Temple University's campus in Tokyo.

For Russia, the islands are its rightful territories, obtained in exchange for joining the United States against Japan in the Second World War. Giving up the islands is considered a betrayal of Soviet soldiers and citizens as well as Russia's Second World War legacy, Brown says. The islands are also of strategic interest to Russia, because they make it easier for Moscow to get its ships into the Pacific Ocean from the Sea of Okhotsk, and have valuable natural resources, including a rare-earth metal used in aerospace construction.

Tokyo and Moscow have held peace negotiations on and off since the 1956 declaration, but there has not been any significant movement. Unlike Japan's territorial disputes with China and South Korea over largely uninhabited islands, the scale of the dispute with Russia is different, because the islands are bigger (Etorofu is nearly 2,000 square miles) and thousands of people's lives are directly affected.

In Nemuro, it's hard to travel a few blocks without seeing a massive statue or sign demanding, in uncharacteristically forceful Japanese language: "The Northern Territories, give it back!" Road signs and street names are written in Japanese and Russian, for the benefit of the Russian fishermen who do business in Nemuro.

Here, Russia's announcement of its withdrawal from negotiations carries consequences. It prevents the former residents from visiting the graves of relatives on the islands. It also ends cultural visits between the islands' Russian residents and Japanese citizens, who hoped that the two populations could one day co-exist if the dispute were ever resolved.

"It is extremely unfair and unacceptable, undermining the efforts of the residents of both countries who have been working hard to promote an exchange," said Hokkaido governor Naomichi Suzuki in response to Russia's announcement.

With Russia considering shutting down its economic agreement with Japan, the fishing industry is also on edge, because it relies on the waters between Japan and Russia. This area, where 3 million tonnes of fish and other seafood are caught annually, is considered one of the best places on the planet for fishing.

Fewer than 5,500 former residents of the Northern Territories are still alive. They are clear-eyed about what Japan's tougher response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine means for the future of the negotiations over the islands, but some still support Japan's standing up to Russia. At the museum in Nemuro dedicated to the dispute, residents and visitors have left messages attacking Russian president Vladimir Putin and expressing solidarity with Ukraine.

Some residents say they hope to see prime minister Fumio Kishida take a tougher approach with Russia to resolve the Northern Territories dispute.

"What Russia is doing in Ukraine, trying to change the status quo by force, can never be justified," says Yasuji Tsunoka, 84, who was 8 when Soviet forces took over the tiny island of Yuri, a part of the cluster of Habomai islets on which there were 70 homes.

"Kishida made strong sanctions, and we understand this. But we want now, more than ever, for negotiations to be direct and strong, without trying to constantly be sensitive of Russia," he says. "The situation in Ukraine is once again an issue of territory, just like the northern islands with Japan."

After the Soviets took over the islands, some Japanese families remained for a few years, living alongside the Soviet families that had moved there. Tokuno recalls attending school with Soviet children, and his experience was later turned into an animated film for children called Giovanni's Island.

But eventually, to make room for Soviet citizens, Japanese residents were displaced from their homes and pushed into sheds and horse stables. By October 1947, all Japanese remaining in the Northern Territories were taken off the islands in Soviet ships. That group included Tokuno, who recalls that they first withstood gruelling conditions in Sakhalin before making it to Nemuro. Some died on the journey.

It wasn't until 1964 that Russia and Japan agreed to allow limited numbers of humanitarian trips to the islands so that former residents could visit their relatives' burial sites.

The former residents say they hope future Japanese generations, as well as US leaders, will take up the fight.

"We will continue sharing the movement with the next generation to keep it going for as long as it takes," Tsunoka says. "Japan must never stop."

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**Load-Date:** April 2, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Live Updates | Russia acknowledges significant troop losses*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655V-7JW1-DY4H-K07W-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 8, 2022 Friday 7:57 AM GMT

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**Length:** 1490 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has acknowledged that Russia has suffered "significant losses of troops" during its military operation in Ukraine

**Body**

MOSCOW - Kremlin spokesman [*Dmitry Peskov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dmitry-peskov) has acknowledged that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has suffered "significant losses of troops" during its military operation in Ukraine.

Peskov said: "Yes, we have significant losses of troops and it is a huge tragedy for us."

Speaking in an exclusive interview with British broadcaster [*Sky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sky) on Thursday, Peskov also hinted that the operation might be over "in the foreseeable future." He said that Russian forces were "doing their best to bring an end to that operation."

He said: "And we do hope that in coming days, in the foreseeable future, this operation will reach its goals, or we'll finish it by the negotiations between Russian and Ukrainian delegation."

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Ukrainian leaders predict more gruesome discoveries ahead

- Congress votes to suspend Russia trade status, enact oil ban

- U.N. General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from UN rights council

- UN aid chief: 'I'm not optimistic' about Ukraine cease-fire

- Russia is moving troops and focus toward the east, but that strategy carries risks as well

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

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

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

CANBERRA, Australia - The first of 20 Bushmaster armored vehicles has left Australia for Ukraine, one week after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy specifically requested the Australian-manufactured four-wheel drives.

A Boeing C-17 Globemaster transport jet that can carry four Bushmasters left the east coast city of Brisbane for Europe on Friday, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said.

The 20 Bushmasters cost 50 million in Australian dollars, which is $37 million in U.S. dollars.

The vehicles are in addition to $116 million in Australian dollars ($87 million in U.S. dollars) in military and humanitarian aid previously committed to Ukraine.

Zelenskyy requested Bushmasters when he made a video address to the Australian Parliament on March 31.

"And as soon as he asked, we said yes," Morrison said.

\_\_\_

WASHINGTON - The Biden administration on Thursday announced it is levying sanctions against Russia's largest military shipbuilding and diamond mining companies.

The move blocks their access to the U.S. financial system as the United States looks to exact more economic pain on President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) for the invasion of Ukraine.

Alrosa is the world's largest diamond mining company and accounts for about 90% of Russia's diamond mining capacity, according to the U.S. Treasury Department.

Alrosa generated over $4.2 billion in revenue in 2021. Diamonds are one of Russia's top 10 non-energy exports by value.

The State Department also said it was blacklisting the United Shipbuilding Corporation, as well as its subsidiaries and board members.

The moves against the two-state owned companies come a day after the U.S. announced it was targeting the two adult daughters of President Vladimir Putin, two of Russia's largest banks and banning new American investment in Russia.

\_\_

LVIV, Ukraine - Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Thursday night that work has begun to dig through the rubble in Borodianka, another city northwest of Kyiv that was occupied by the Russians.

He also said "it is much scarier" there, with even more victims of the Russian troops.

In his daily nighttime video address to the nation Thursday, Zelenskyy said the Russians were preparing to shock the world in the same way by showing corpses in Mariupol and falsely claiming they were killed by the Ukrainian defenders.

Meanwhile, Bucha Mayor Anatoliy Fedoruk said Thursday on Ukrainian television that investigators have found at least three sites of mass shootings of civilians during the Russian occupation.

Fedoruk said hundreds have been killed and investigators are finding bodies in yards, parks and city squares.

-

PHOENIX - A Ukrainian diplomat pleaded for the United States to send weapons to his beleaguered nation in a speech to the Arizona Legislature on Thursday.

Dmytro Kushneruk, Ukraine's consul general in San Francisco, told Arizona lawmakers that Ukraine needs three things to repel Russian invaders and prevent more civilian deaths - "weapons, weapons and weapons."

Kushneruk said it's a "war for the soul of humanity" and time is of the essence as Russia regroups for an expected offensive on the Donbas region of Eastern Ukraine.

According to Kushneruk, prompt American help will save civilian lives and he pleaded for people not to look away even as the war drags on.

Kushneruk said Ukraine needs planes, anti-aircraft systems, heavy artillery, tanks, rockets systems and long-range missiles that can target Russian ships in the Black Sea.

The speech continued the outreach by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's government to political and cultural institutions around the world.

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WASHINGTON - President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) calls the United Nations vote Thursday to suspend Russia from the body's Human Rights Council "a meaningful step by the international community."

He also said that it further demonstrates how Russian President Vladimir Putin's war "has made Russia an international pariah."

The U.N. General Assembly voted Thursday to suspend Russia from the U.N.'s leading human rights body over allegations of horrific rights violations by Russian soldiers in Ukraine.

The vote on Thursday was 93-24 with 58 abstentions

The United States and Ukraine have called Russia's alleged rights violations tantamount to war crimes.

In a statement, Biden said the images out of Bucha and other areas of Ukraine as Russian troops withdraw are "horrifying" and "an outrage to our common humanity."

-

BRUSSELS - European Council president Charles Michel says the bloc's top diplomat has proposed adding an additional 500 million euros ($544 million) to Ukraine under the "European Peace Facility," the fund which has been used for the first time during the war to deliver defensive lethal weapons to a third country.

The EU has previously agreed to spend 1 billion euros ($1.1 billion) on military supplies for Ukrainian forces in an unprecedented step of collectively supplying weapons to a country under attack.

EU countries and NATO have so far excluded the option of a direct military intervention in Ukraine.

"Once swiftly approved this will bring to 1.5 billion the EU support already provided for military equipment for Ukraine," Michel said in a message posted on Twitter in which he thanked EU foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell.

The proposal needs to be approved by the 27 EU countries. The EU said the instrument should help Ukraine armed forces "defend the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty" and protect the civilian population.

\_\_

The World Health Organization has verified more than 100 "attacks on health care" in Ukraine since the country was first invaded more than a month ago, the organization's top official said Thursday.

At least 103 attacks on hospitals and other health-care facilities in the country, and at least 73 were killed and 51 injured in those incidents, said WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, speaking at a news conference in Washington, D.C.

The toll includes medical workers as well as patients, he said.

He praised the United States for supporting international health efforts in Ukraine, including the delivery of more 180 metric tons of medical supplies to hard-hit areas. "We are outraged that attacks on health care (in Ukraine) continue," he said.

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BRUSSELS - European Union nations have approved new sanctions against Russia, including an EU embargo on coal imports in the wake of evidence of torture and killings emerging from war zones outside Kyiv.

The ban on coal imports will be the first EU sanctions targeting Russia's lucrative energy industry over its war in Ukraine, said an official on condition of anonymity because the official announcement had not yet been made.

The EU ban on coal is estimated to be worth 4 billion euros ($4.4 billion) per year. In the meantime, the EU has already started working on additional sanctions, including on oil imports.

- Reported by Raf Casert.

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PARIS --The International Energy Agency says its member countries are releasing 60 million barrels of oil from their emergency reserves on top of previous U.S. pledges to take aim at energy prices that have soared since Russia invaded Ukraine.

The Paris-based organization said Thursday that the new commitments made by its 31 member nations, which include the United States and much of Europe, amount to a total of 120 million barrels over six months. It's the largest release in the group's history.

Half of that will come from the U.S. as part of the larger release from its strategic petroleum reserve that President Joe Biden announced last week.

The IEA agreed last Friday to add to the amount of oil hitting the global market. It comes on top of the 62.7 million barrels that the agency's members said they would release last month to ease shortages.

**Load-Date:** April 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Twice a refugee: How one man in Ukraine fled war once more to get his family to safety*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650S-3WK1-DY4H-K13D-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 2:13 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1419 words

**Byline:** Borzou Daragahi

**Highlight:** As millions of people escape Ukraine, a refugee in Moldova tells Borzou Daragahi how one Russian war shattered his childhood three decades ago, as another conflict now endangers his children's future

**Body**

He had hoped he could spare his three kids the traumatic childhood he had suffered, displaced by a war, fleeing shelling and gunfire.

But earlier this month, after sheltering in the basement of his home for nearly 10 days as Russian bombs pounded Kharkiv in northeast [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Malkhiz Razgoyev loaded his wife, children, relatives and several neighbours into a three-car convoy and made a desperate dash for safety.

They zigzagged across the country for days, not knowing where they would end up. Eventually they reached Ukraine's southwestern border with [*Moldova*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moldova) , and after hours of waiting in the queue of cars that stretched up to 10 miles, they crossed the frontier. Then came the struggle to find shelter, secure money, and figure out schooling for Mr Razgoyev's children.

Just like 30 years ago, when he was forced to flee war in his native Georgia, Mr Razgoyev found his life once again shattered by conflict.

"It's the 21st century, and I am living this life. I would never have imagined it," he tells The Independent, standing outside on a bleak, cold winter's day near the border crossing at Palanka. "I was already once a [*refugee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugee). Now for the second time I am a refugee."

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and[*more than 3 million turned into refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-war-ukraine-refugees-latest-b2036083.html) by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war against Ukraine, with 335,000 crossing into Moldova, which is among the poorest nations in Europe.

Many in the west are shocked and appalled by what they regard as a major war on the European continent.

But for many citizens in the former communist nations, war has shaped their lives. In addition to a decade of overlapping wars in the Balkans, there have been Russian-backed wars in Moldova, as well as the 2014 land grab by pro-Kremlin gunmen in eastern Ukraine.

In Georgia, where Mr Razgoyev was born, Russian-backed separatist Abkhazian and South Ossetian forces fought against the government of the newly independent former Soviet republic for months, in a 1991-93 civil war that left up to 10,000 dead and 250,000 displaced. At the same time, Georgians were convulsed in a violent political struggle that left more than 100 people dead.

Mr Razgoyev was eight years old at the time. He struggled to understand the hushed, heated conversations among the adults around him. Then one day, his mother packed up some belongings and took him and his brother away, settling the family with an uncle in Kharkiv.

There, in Ukraine, he and his brother struggled to adjust, but eventually made a life for themselves. He launched a business in 2006, assembling and selling couches and tables for children's rooms.

Mr Razgoyev met Olga, a Ukrainian native, on an online dating app. She loved animals, and worked at a store selling pet supplies. He loved children, and they would eventually have three: Artyom, now aged 10, and twins Anna and Bella, aged 8.

His career was a success. He was shipping furniture to the Donbas. In 2014, war engulfed eastern Ukraine, and a bomb struck one of his shops - but his business continued to expand, as did his family's prospects.

"I suffered a bit because of what happened there, but not as much as I am suffering now," he says.

The kids were growing up fast. Mr Razgoyev bought a late model SUV, and then a nine-seat Mercedes minivan that he uses to take his family back to Georgia once a year to see relatives.

"I had a nice life and a nice job," he says. "I used to go to Turkey on holiday once a year."

Life in Ukraine was improving. After years of stagnation and downturn during the 2014 war, the country's economy was picking up steam, despite the Covid pandemic and the ongoing war in the Donbas.

Under pressure from the US and the European Union it sought to enter, as well as its own bustling civil society, Ukraine had put a [*damper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/eastern-europe-healthcare-corruption-hiv-advocacy-a9326736.html) on rampant corruption. Razgoyev voted in 2019 for Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian, actor and producer who won the presidency with an unprecedented 73 per cent of the vote.

"I think he's the best president we've had," says Mr Razgoyev.

"He built some roads. And he's done things that I've never seen with my own eyes any Ukrainian president do. He's also young and has a very active presence that we never had."

Mr Razgoyev did not believe that Russian president Vladimir Putin would attack Ukraine, and stayed put, even after the fighting started, thinking it would soon be over. When the bombs started to land, he and his family scampered down into the basement of their home in Kharkiv.

After Russia failed to secure a quick victory, Mr Putin's armed forces began hitting civilian buildings, and that's when the horror began.

"They started to bomb the schools and kindergartens," says Nina, 44, a Ukrainian refugee, who arrived in Moldova with her 10-year-old son a day ago, and is sheltering inside an exposition centre turned dormitory for refugees.

Mr Razgoyev's family decided to leave Kharkiv after a 13 year-old-boy, a friend of his son, was killed while his family was escaping an airstrike that destroyed their apartment building.

"They used to play football together," he says.

Now it was Mr Razgoyev's own children who were struggling to understand what was happening. He withdrew all the cash he could from the bank. They gathered blankets and hastily packed suitcases.

The road trip was tough. Getting fuel was a challenge. They stopped frequently, scoured the internet for clues, and picked up tips, warnings, and guidance from others on the road.

As the father of three children, Mr Razgoyev is exempt from martial law restrictions that bar any military-age male citizen from leaving Ukraine.

But after the initial relief of crossing the border at Palanka, reality set in.

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are directed first to a temporary tent encampment near the frontier, but 90 per cent manage to find families to host them. The already fragile Moldovan government is struggling to meet their needs.

"We have many children and women," says Ala Volentik, a volunteer helping run the refugee dormitory at the expo centre. "There are people with disabilities and medical conditions."

The majority of Ukrainians and other refugees who arrive in Moldova then head to Poland or other parts of Europe.

When I know that my kids and my wife are safe here, I would go back to fight for Ukraine

Malkhiz Razgoyev

Mr Razgoyev's neighbours, who had joined his family's escape, departed to stay with relatives who lived in Germany. But he, his wife and their children, along with his brother's family, stayed in Moldova.

He searched on the web and found a reasonably priced house - more like a cabin - in Ivancea, a remote village in a sparsely populated rural area north of the capital Chisinau, and they managed to rent it from the sympathetic owner.

The house is freezing, and he and his brother spend endless hours chopping wood for the fireplace. But it is a roof over their heads.

Next came worries about money. They had stacks of Ukrainian cash. But banks and currency exchanges in Moldova suddenly refused to exchange any more. Someone would have to go back into Ukraine and redeposit the money onto a debit card so it could be withdrawn abroad.

Mr Razgoyev worried that, if he returned, he would not be allowed to leave and bring the card back. So Olga headed back into Ukraine, and he waited nervously for hours in the harsh cold at the Palanka frontier for her to return safely.

A health issue exempts him from being a soldier, but once his children are settled, he hopes to go back to Ukraine.

"When I know that my kids and my wife are safe here, I would go back to fight for Ukraine," he says. "Because it is my home."

Despite everything that has happened, he harbours no anger for Russians or even for Russia, a country he knows well.

"It's not their fault," he says. "They're suffering too. I blame one little man who has the devil inside him."

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

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[*'I feel shame': Fleeing abroad after Putin's war, Russian exiles see no future at home*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6516-1WY1-JBNF-W439-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 2:06 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1409 words

**Byline:** Borzou Daragahi

**Highlight:** Russians who fled urgently after Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine and crackdown at home are unsure if they will ever return, and what their nation may look like, reports Borzou Daragahi in Istanbul

**Body**

Kseniya could see the harbingers of war. There was the ramped-up propaganda on state television, the armoured vehicles and tanks heading from the Moscow area towards the Ukrainian frontier, and the ominous reports from international media that she closely followed.

The 27-year-old warned her family and boyfriend, who laughed off her concerns. The Russian psychologist, an activist and opposition supporter, had joined in the 2013-14 Maidan protests in Kyiv. She had many friends in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , and grew afraid. So in the weeks before Vladimir Putin launched his invasion, Kseniya left [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , ending up in Istanbul before it began.

The war that ensued has cost her once-cherished relationships with friends and family, as well as her career, her home, her nation as she knew it, and much of what she believed about herself and her future. She is an exile.

"The war has broken many people, not just Ukrainians," she tells The Independent during an interview.

"I have forgotten who I was before this. My work, psychology, is all about making people feel better. But now we are in a situation where people should feel ashamed, and I don't want to help Russians feel better about themselves."

Tens of thousands of Russians have fled the country in the wake of the war. They are paying exorbitant prices to get on the few flights out of the country. They cross land borders to former Soviet Republics somewhat beyond Mr Putin's wrath, such as Armenia, Georgia and Kazakhstan.

In the Turkish resort city of Antalya, a popular eastern European tourist destination, rental prices have tripled as wealthier Russians and Ukrainians rent and buy properties.

More often, the exiles sleep on couches or in spare rooms with old friends, or stay at cheap hotels. Most are highly educated but arrive with little money and perhaps even less hope, having given up the country that has rejected them and even tacitly encouraged them to leave.

"Any nation, especially the Russian nation, can always distinguish true patriots from b\*\*\*\*\*s and traitors, and spit them out like a fly that accidentally got into their mouth," Mr Putin said in a speech on Wednesday. "I am convinced that such natural and essential self-cleansing of the society will only strengthen our country."

The exiles are often in a state of shock, and in interviews, social media posts and conversations on the messaging app Telegram, they speak of feeling stigmatised over the actions of their government and their nationality.

"Right now I don't like being Russian, honestly," says Veronika, a 30-year-old Saint Petersburg native who is planning on flying to Istanbul on Friday. "I feel like I should be able to accept all the hate directed at me because of my passport. I do feel shame. I pay their stupid taxes, and at some level I participated in what's going on."

Veronika, an activist who has participated in repeated street protests over the years, booked a ticket weeks earlier and carefully planned her departure. Others flee under duress.

I feel guilty for the actions of my government, but I am not my government

Anna, art historian from Saint Petersburg

Dima Varlamov, a correspondent for Dozhd TV, an independent Russian television station, was at work on 1 March when his employer began receiving texts on his phone warning that the police were about to raid their offices.

They quickly fled into the streets, and standing outside a bar, pondered their choices. Anton decided right then and there to flee the country.

"We got the message," says the 32-year-old Moscow native.

His bank accounts were blocked, but friends bought him a ticket to Istanbul online. He went home and packed a single bag. He had just moved into a new apartment and installed the curtain rods, but the curtains still lay on his bed. His girlfriend remained behind, perhaps to join him later.

Within hours, he was on a red-eye flight to Istanbul, where he is staying for now at the home of another journalist. Still dazed and attempting to adjust, he recalls stories of the Russians who escaped to Paris, London, and Istanbul after Vladimir Lenin's Bolshevik Revolution of 1917.

Those Russians a century ago told themselves they would be home in a few months, only to remain abroad forever, and he has to acknowledge that the odds of him returning home are bleak.

Days after his arrival, Mr Putin passed a law making the voicing of anti-war views punishable by up to 15 years in jail; even referring to the Ukraine invasion as a war is illegal. The Kremlin calls it a "special military operation".

"If Putin has a quick win I can't go back," Mr Varlamov says. "If Putin loses but he stays in power, I cannot go back."

He reflects on the war in Ukraine, and questions whether he and his fellow Russians did enough to try to stop it, asking soul-searing questions.

"With this war, Russia made the biggest mistake of my generation, and I don't want to be responsible for it," he says. "I tried to be a good journalist. A journalist tries to do good for society. We didn't succeed. So maybe it's time to start a life somewhere else - not in Russia."

More than 5 million Russians already emigrated from Mr Putin's Russia during his 22-year rule and many predict the wave will continue.

Anton, a British-educated 33-year-old microbiologist in Moscow, is seeking a way out of the country. He recently booked an apartment through Airbnb abroad as a precondition for a visa out of Russia, and felt compelled to tell the hosts of the flat in a private message that he opposed the war in Ukraine.

"The war provided a situation for us where it is no longer hopeful, it brought us to a situation where it is difficult to hope for a democratic future for Russia," he said.

"We can only rely at this point on an outside event that may turn the country around and stop the country from progressing toward autocracy or a totalitarian regime. Russians traded their freedom for an ability to have enough food the next day."

Among those Russians abroad, some are organising politically. A protest takes place every weekend in the Beyoglu district of Istanbul.

Miron Yanovich Fyodorov, or Oxxxymiron, one of Russia's most famous rap stars, arrived in Istanbul after cancelling concerts in Moscow and Saint Petersburg to protest the war. He has now held the first of what he described as a series of "Russians Against War" livestreamed benefit shows he is organising to raise money for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

"There are tens of millions of Russians who categorically disagree with this war," he said in a video posted to YouTube. "And I think this should be said as loudly as possible."

On Tuesday, at a small crowded club in Istanbul's Kadikoy neighbourhood, several hundred came to see Oxxxymiron and raise money for the displaced. During a break in the show, he spoke to the audience and urged them not to cut off ties with their pro-war family and friends.

"The people who are for this war are in fact against this war," he said. "They just believe that this is really a special operation to bomb military facilities. 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".

Outside the venue, Russians held up signs to protest the war.

"My friends are in prison and I can be the next one," says Anna, a 26-year-old art historian from Saint Petersburg, holding up a poster that said, "No to war, no to silence" in Russian.

"I decided to go to Turkey instead of Russian prison because here I can do more against the war," she says.

"I really want to go home, but now is not the time. I feel guilty for the actions of my government, but I am not my government."

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**



[*Good Friday Agreement 'cannot change', Biden warns at St Patrick's Day event*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6519-K931-JBNF-W2F3-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 17, 2022 Thursday 11:45 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 1429 words

**Byline:** Jonathan McCambridge

**Highlight:** The US president made an impassioned plea that the Good Friday Agreement be protected amid ongoing post-Brexit negotiations.

**Body**

[*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has rounded off the St Patrick's Day celebrations in Washington with an emphatic warning that the Good Friday Agreement "cannot change".

Appearing at the traditional shamrock ceremony in the White House, Mr Biden made an impassioned plea that the Good Friday Agreement be protected amid the ongoing back-and-forth between the UK and the EU over post-Brexit arrangements for Northern Ireland.

US President Joe Biden, speaking while Taoiseach Micheal Martin appeared virtually due to a Covid-positive test, directly addressed the ongoing negotiations over the [*Northern Ireland Protocol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/northern-ireland-protocol) and the political instability in the region.

Speaking about the relationship between Ireland and the US, he said: "Our nations both are deeply committed to protecting the hard-won gains of peace in Northern Ireland. The Good Friday Agreement has been the foundation of peace and prosperity in Northern Ireland for nearly 25 years.

"It cannot change."

Amid resounding applause, he said he had made that point to UK Prime Minister [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) , whom he described as a "friend".

Mr Biden said all sides "must continue to resolve challenges over the implementation of (the) Northern Ireland Protocol".

"The United States stands ready to work with all the communities of Northern Ireland to ensure its extraordinary economic potential and ensure that it's realised, and we look forward to supporting the next Northern Ireland Executive after the upcoming Assembly elections, which are on their way."

Those elections will be held in May, at a time of considerable uncertainty about the future direction of politics in Northern Ireland.

First Minister of Northern Ireland Paul Givan resigned earlier this year as part of the DUP protest against the Northern Ireland Protocol, a move which also removed deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill from the joint office.

"History has proven that with the people of Northern Ireland, our leaders can accomplish when they work together," Mr Biden told the audience at the ceremony.

Earlier, Mr Martin spoke of his disappointment at being unable to meet face-to-face with Mr Biden on St Patrick's Day after contracting Covid.

Mr Martin was speaking as it emerged he may have to stay in the US for up to 10 days, although he insisted he will keep working while in Washington.

Speaking to the media virtually from self-isolation, Mr Martin said: "I feel good. Of course, I'm disappointed personally but it's not the end of the world.

"I have to keep things in perspective - that is important in the context of what is happening across the world today.

"I don't believe the meeting was in any way impaired as a result of this. It was a very warm meeting and it went on longer than anticipated by officials on both sides.

During the virtual meeting earlier in the day, Mr Biden hailed [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) leadership for its handling of the Ukrainian crisis.

Mr Biden also reaffirmed the US administration's "unequivocal support" for the Good Friday Agreement.

Mr Biden, who identifies deeply with his own Irish heritage, was seated beside a traditional bowl of shamrock during the bilateral meeting.

He quoted Irish poet WB Yeats as he described the impact the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has had on the world.

"All changed, changed utterly - a terrible beauty has been born," he said.

Mr Biden said Irish leadership on the issue has been "noticeable and impressive".

Both leaders condemned the invasion, with the Irish leader speaking about the need for a "unity of purpose".

The leaders' bilateral meeting lasted just over an hour.

The pair discussed the economy, Brexit and the Good Friday Agreement, the war in Ukraine and the undocumented Irish in the US.

Mr Martin reiterated the invitation for the President to come to Ireland, with Mr Biden saying he would love to visit Ireland again.

I think you've already brought in over 7,000 or so refugees from Ukraine, and you're prepared to do more, so thank you

Joe Biden

Mr Biden praised Ireland's willingness to take in refugees, adding: "What Ireland is doing now, what you are doing, taking in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, speak so loudly about your principles.

"And it's amazing and I want to publicly compliment you for it.

"I think you've already brought in over 7,000 or so refugees from Ukraine, and you're prepared to do more, so thank you."

The Irish premier, who appeared virtually from Blair House where he is staying, also thanked Mr Biden for the US's backing of the Good Friday Agreement.

He praised the "steadfast support", referencing how "important the Good Friday Agreement is in respect of stability and peace on the island of Ireland".

He said: "Over the last number of days, as I've been here, we've also witnessed - once again - that two way, very robust economic relationship between the United States and Ireland."

Mr Martin, appearing virtually for the second year in a row due to a positive Covid-19 test, said it was unfortunate he and Mr Biden could not meet face to face.

"This year, we're meeting virtually across the road, so we're getting closer," he joked.

Mr Biden is profoundly proud of his Irish ancestry and has never been shy about his passion for the country, its history and its literature.

References to Irish poets pepper many of his speeches, with Mr Biden choosing to namecheck the late Eavan Boland during a speech at the Ireland Funds Gala dinner in Washington on Wednesday evening.

It was at the same event that the Taoiseach was notified of the positive Covid-19 result just as he was due to speak.

Mr Martin appeared in good spirits during his appearance on-screen.

An Irish Government spokesperson said earlier on Thursday that the Taoiseach was "feeling well".

He said Mr Martin received a negative Covid test result on Wednesday afternoon, but a further test was carried out when one of his delegation tested positive.

This resulted in a positive test for the Taoiseach.

Speaking later on Thursday, Mr Martin confirmed he will remain in Washington and continue working while he recovers from Covid.

We had our cabinet meeting which I chaired from the embassy at the commencement of the week. Little did I think that I would have another cabinet meeting from here next week, but that is the way it is

Micheal Martin

A source said he will follow US Covid-19 guidelines which could result in no international travel for 10 days.

This means he would be unable to attend a Covid commemoration event in Dublin on Sunday.

He said: "We had our cabinet meeting which I chaired from the embassy at the commencement of the week. Little did I think that I would have another cabinet meeting from here next week, but that is the way it is.

"I will continue to work, we will manage this and I will be in daily contact with my colleagues and officials, particularly in respect of the response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine.

"I will keep working, I feel good and we will take it day by day and step by step."

Earlier on Thursday, the speaker of the House of Representatives Nancy Pelosi said Mr Martin was not wearing a mask during part of their interaction at the Ireland Funds Gala event.

She sat next to the Taoiseach moments before he was told he had tested positive for Covid-19.

Ms Pelosi was about to make an award to Mr Martin, but Irish ambassador Dan Mulhall accepted the award instead, and confirmed to guests that Mr Martin had tested positive.

"The Taoiseach had a mask on when he sat down but then when he started to eat, he took off the mask and then they called him aside," Ms Pelosi said on Thursday.

"I didn't know why. But some time later when it was my turn to speak, they told me how we would proceed and that he would not be speaking.

"I wasn't measuring it in minutes, but part of it was masked, some of it while he was eating but it was during the appetiser that they took him away."

She said she is tested for Covid "almost every day" and before any time she sees Mr Biden.

Meanwhile, Irish President Michael D Higgins sent his "good wishes" to Mr Martin.

"I was so very sorry to learn of this news breaking while the Taoiseach was busy representing Ireland in the United States leading up to our National Day," Mr Higgins said in a statement.

I wish the Taoiseach a speedy recovery

Michael D Higgins

"I know that this work is continuing as he takes the necessary steps following his positive test.

"I wish the Taoiseach a speedy recovery and also wish him further success with the continuation of his programme in Washington, and in overcoming the necessary constraints involved.

"Sabina joins me in sending our good wishes to the Taoiseach and to his wife, Mary.

"Go raibh biseach air go luath." (Get well soon).

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

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[*How one man from Ukraine fled war for a second time*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650X-P4N1-F072-408F-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 16, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 6

**Length:** 1368 words

**Byline:** BORZOU DARAGAHI

**Body**

He had hoped he could spare his three kids the traumatic childhood he had suffered, displaced by a war, fleeing shelling and gunfire. But earlier this month, after sheltering in the basement of his home for nearly 10 days as Russian bombs pounded Kharkiv in northeast Ukraine, Malkhiz Razgoyev loaded his wife, children, relatives and several neighbours into a three-car convoy and made a desperate dash for safety.

They zigzagged across the country for days, not knowing where they would end up. Eventually they reached Ukraine's southwestern border with Moldova, and after hours of waiting in the queue of cars that stretched for up to 10 miles, they crossed the frontier. Then came the struggle to find shelter, secure money, and figure out schooling for Mr Razgoyev's children.

Just like 30 years ago, when he was forced to flee war in his native Georgia, Mr Razgoyev found his life once again shattered by conflict. "It's the 21st century, and I am living this life. I would never have imagined it," he tells The Independent, standing outside on a bleak, cold winter's day near the border crossing at Palanka. "I was already once a refugee. Now for the second time I am a refugee."

Hundreds of civilians have been killed and more than 3 million turned into refugees by Russia's war against Ukraine, with 335,000 crossing into Moldova, which is among the poorest nations in Europe. Many in the west are shocked and appalled by what they regard as a major war on the European continent. But for many citizens in the former communist nations, war has shaped their lives.

In addition to a decade of overlapping wars in the Balkans, there have been Russian-backed wars in Moldova, as well as the 2014 land grab by pro-Kremlin gunmen in eastern Ukraine.

In Georgia, where Mr Razgoyev was born, Russian-backed separatist Abkhazian and South Ossetian forces fought against the government of the newly independent former Soviet republic for months, in a 1991-93 civil war that left up to 10,000 dead and 250,000 displaced. At the same time, Georgians were convulsed in a violent political struggle that left more than 100 people dead.

Mr Razgoyev was eight years old at the time. He struggled to understand the hushed, heated conversations among the adults around him. Then one day, his mother packed up some belongings and took him and his brother away, settling the family with an uncle in Kharkiv. There, in Ukraine, he and his brother struggled to adjust, but eventually made a life for themselves. He launched a business in 2006, assembling and selling couches and tables for children's rooms.

Mr Razgoyev met Olga, a Ukrainian native, on an online dating app. She loved animals, and worked at a store selling pet supplies. He loved children, and they would eventually have three: Artyom, now aged 10, and twins Anna and Bella, aged 8. His career was a success. He was shipping furniture to the Donbas. In 2014, war engulfed eastern Ukraine, and a bomb struck one of his shops - but his business continued to expand, as did his family's prospects.

"I suffered a bit because of what happened there, but not as much as I am suffering now," he says. The kids were growing up fast. Mr Razgoyev bought a late model SUV, and then a nine-seat Mercedes minivan that he uses to take his family back to Georgia once a year to see relatives. "I had a nice life and a nice job," he says. "I used to go to Turkey on holiday once a year."

Life in Ukraine was improving. After years of stagnation and downturn during the 2014 war, the country's economy was picking up steam, despite the Covid pandemic and the ongoing war in the Donbas.

Under pressure from the US and the European Union it sought to enter, as well as its own bustling civil society, Ukraine had put a damper on rampant corruption. Razgoyev voted in 2019 for Volodymyr Zelensky, a comedian, actor and producer who won the presidency with an unprecedented 73 per cent of the vote.

"I think he's the best president we've had," says Mr Razgoyev. "He built some roads. And he's done things that I've never seen with my own eyes any Ukrainian president do. He's also young and has a very active presence that we never had."

Mr Razgoyev did not believe that Russian president Vladimir Putin would attack Ukraine, and stayed put, even after the fighting started, thinking it would soon be over. When the bombs started to land, he and his family scampered down into the basement of their home in Kharkiv. After Russia failed to secure a quick victory, Mr Putin's armed forces began hitting civilian buildings, and that's when the horror began.

"They started to bomb the schools and kindergartens," says Nina, 44, a Ukrainian refugee, who arrived in Moldova with her 10-year-old son a day ago, and is sheltering inside an exposition centre turned dormitory for refugees. Mr Razgoyev's family decided to leave Kharkiv after a 13 year-old-boy, a friend of his son, was killed while his family was escaping an airstrike that destroyed their apartment building.

"They used to play football together," he says. Now it was Mr Razgoyev's own children who were struggling to understand what was happening. He withdrew all the cash he could from the bank. They gathered blankets and hastily packed suitcases. The road trip was tough. Getting fuel was a challenge. They stopped frequently, scoured the internet for clues, and picked up tips, warnings, and guidance from others on the road.

As the father of three children, Mr Razgoyev is exempt from martial law restrictions that bar any military-age male citizen from leaving Ukraine. But after the initial relief of crossing the border at Palanka, reality set in. ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** are directed first to a temporary tent encampment near the frontier, but 90 per cent manage to find families to host them. The already fragile Moldovan government is struggling to meet their needs.

"We have many children and women," says Ala Volentik, a volunteer helping run the refugee dormitory at the expo centre. "There are people with disabilities and medical conditions."

The majority of Ukrainians and other refugees who arrive in Moldova then head to Poland or other parts of Europe. Mr Razgoyev's neighbours, who had joined his family's escape, departed to stay with relatives who lived in Germany. But he, his wife and their children, along with his brother's family, stayed in Moldova.

He searched on the web and found a reasonably priced house - more like a cabin - in Ivancea, a remote village in a sparsely populated rural area north of the capital Chisinau, and they managed to rent it from the sympathetic owner. The house is freezing, and he and his brother spend endless hours chopping wood for the fireplace. But it is a roof over their heads.

Next came worries about money. They had stacks of Ukrainian cash. But banks and currency exchanges in Moldova suddenly refused to exchange any more. Someone would have to go back into Ukraine and redeposit the money onto a debit card so it could be withdrawn abroad.

Mr Razgoyev worried that, if he returned, he would not be allowed to leave and bring the card back. So Olga headed back into Ukraine, and he waited nervously for hours in the harsh cold at the Palanka frontier for her to return safely. A health issue exempts him from being a soldier, but once his children are settled, he hopes to go back to Ukraine.

"When I know that my kids and my wife are safe here, I would go back to fight for Ukraine," he says. "Because it is my home."

Despite everything that has happened, he harbours no anger for Russians or even for Russia, a country he knows well. "It's not their fault," he says. "They're suffering too. I blame one little man who has the devil inside him."

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 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*In Ukraine, female war reporters build on legacy of pioneers*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650J-G551-JBNF-W0KK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 4:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1397 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The female journalists covering Russia's punishing invasion of Ukraine owe a debt to the work of their 20th-century predecessors

**Body**

Clarissa Ward interrupted her live TV report on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to help a distraught older man, then a woman, down a steep and explosion-mangled path, gently urging them on in their language.

A day later, Lynsey Addario, a photographer for The New York Times, captured a grim image of a Russian mortar attack's immediate outcome: the bodies of a mother and her two children crumpled on a road, amid their suitcase, backpacks and a pet carrier.

The memorable reports illustrate both the skill and gutsiness of female journalists serving as eyewitnesses to Russia's brutal invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and the way their presence has changed the nature of war reporting.

They cover the tactics of war, but give equal measure to its toll.

"[*People*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/people) are so exhausted, they can barely walk," Ward told viewers in her report. "It's just an awful, awful scene. And they're the lucky ones."

The author of "You Don't Belong Here," a 2021 book that profiles three pioneering women who covered the Vietnam War, said there's "absolutely no doubt that the reporting is what I would call more humane, looking at the human side of war."

Elizabeth Becker argues that Frances FitzGerald of the U.S., Kate Webb of Australia and Catherine Leroy of France were foundational to modern war reporting. Arriving in Southeast Asia on their own dime, without a staff job and little or no journalism experience, they broke the male grip on war reporting with daring and innovation.

Traditionally, "the coverage was the battlefield, which is important," said award-winning journalist Becker, a 1970s Cambodian war correspondent. She said it took newcomer FitzGerald to ask, "'OK, what does this mean in terms of the Vietnamese and the villages?'"

FitzGerald earned a 1973 Pulitzer and other honors for "Fire in the Lake: The Vietnamese and the Americans in Vietnam," and her 2017 work, "The Evangelicals: The Struggle to Shape America," was short-listed for the National Book Award.

[*War reporting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war-reporting) is "a sense of mission, it's a sense of purpose, it's a sense of being able to tell a story," said Christiane Amanpour, the London-born chief international anchor for CNN. "And women are really very good at it, it seems."

It's also a matter of logic, said [*Holly Williams*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/holly-williams) , the Istanbul-based correspondent for CBS News on assignment in Ukraine.

"I'm acutely aware of the fact that if you don't tell women's stories, you're missing at least half of the picture," said the Australian-born Williams, who has reported on conflicts in Asia, Europe and the Middle East and worked for BBC News.

Ward, who also has hopscotched across those regions, worked for CBS News prior to joining CNN and, before that, was based in Moscow and Beijing for ABC News.

"Often women do have a different perspective on war, and for a long time that was not really at the forefront of a lot of coverage," Ward said. She strives to include "the humanity behind the story, the experience of ordinary people who are living in war zones. To me, that is equally as important as the military component."

The prominence of TV correspondents and the reach of their outlets adds to their impact. Oprah Winfrey offered online praise of network reporters "risking their lives to show the world the truth," singling out Ward as a "fierce, unshakable and outstanding journalist."

Many of their male colleagues also contribute nuanced reporting, as ABC News veteran Martha Raddatz and others noted. But Raddatz recalls a not-so-distant time when men tended to "love the equipment, love the airplanes."

Ward and and other female journalists tip their cap to their predecessors, including FitzGerald and the late Martha Gellhorn, whose reporting stretched from WWII to the U.S. invasion of Panama in 1989-90. They also praise recent trailblazers, including Amanpour.

Her decades of conflict reporting include the 1991 Gulf War, subsequent clashes in the Middle East region and, in southeastern Europe, the deadly 1992-96 siege of Sarajevo during the war between Bosnia and Herzegovina.

"I think my generation and myself, we were perhaps the last line of the rare woman foreign correspondent," Amanpour said. In every form of media it's "exploded into a very female friendly profession."

But parity has yet to be achieved in pay, Amanpour said. Or in all journalism jobs, according to Ward.

The growing number of female TV correspondents belies "a fairly male-dominated profession in general," Ward said. "Don't forget, the person in front of the camera is one person. Then you have, for TV, four people holding the camera, behind the camera, and most of them are still men."

In U.S. journalism overall, men retain a numerical advantage over women even in a changing media industry, according to a Pew Research Center analysis of census data. While the number of people working in any facet of print, online or video journalism fell by nearly 17% between 2008 and 2018, men remained a majority at the end of the decade at 64%, "on par with their share in 2008" of 60%, Pew found.

That's widely reflected, according to "The Missing Perspectives of Women in News," a 2020 report from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Despite progress, "the majority of journalists in newsrooms globally are men," the report said, citing several multi-country studies.

Female reporters face additional challenges in non-democratic countries and some regions, Amanpour said.

"They come under a huge amount of societal pressure in many parts of the developing world, and certainly in the Islamic world and other areas of what I call the patriarchy," she said. "It's very difficult, but they're doing it and coming out into this profession more and more, and I really applaud them."

The presence of women reporting in Ukraine is set against a backdrop of traditional roles and expectations, with women and children allowed to flee war's violence while men are required to stay behind and defend their country.

Yonat Friling, a Jerusalem-based senior producer for Fox News Channel who worked in Ukraine with correspondent Trey Yingst, is aware of how attitudes can vary. In 2004, she was on the international desk for an Israeli TV channel when she asked her boss to switch her to field producer.

"He told me, 'This is a job for men. Only men can do that,'" recalled the Israeli native. "Then I left, I joined Fox (in 2005). And on several occasions, including this time, I keep texting him, 'A job for men? Yeah, right.'"

The Ukraine assignment proved deeply emotional for Friling. When she recently joined the stream of refugees leaving Kiev, it was a reminder of grandparents who fled Nazism and Soviet occupiers in Europe in the 1940s.

"I saw children and women, and I (saw) my grandparents in their faces. ... I know how much this is going to influence their whole life and the next generations," she said.

Raddatz, who covered early refugee evacuations and returned to Ukraine on Friday, realizes how much has changed for her and her female colleagues over the years. The chief global affairs correspondent for ABC News covered the Bosnian crisis in the late 1990s and has focused on Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I remember in Iraq, I always thought that if something happened to me, it (the reaction) would be, 'How could she do that, go over there when she has two children?' whereas they would never say that with a guy," she said. "Now, I don't think they would do that."

Family needs and concerns add to the burden of war reporting.

NBC News correspondent Erin McLaughlin said that before Russia struck at Ukraine, the threat of what might happen made her parents worry more than they had over her previous assignments, including in Iraq.

"My brother went to stay with them for the weekend because they were so nervous," McLaughlin said. "It was really tough, but at the same time they understand that this is my calling. It's an important job, and someone needs to do it."

Ward, married and with two children, said her work takes an inevitable toll.

"It's my son's 4th birthday today, which has been really hard to miss," Ward said at the end of another draining day in Ukraine, her voice emotional. "There's the entire juggling act - you're FaceTiming with your kids and there's air raid sirens and bombs going off in the distance."

"I'm not going to pretend this isn't hard. But I also wouldn't be anywhere else right now," she said.

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Associated Press researcher Jennifer Farrar contributed to this report.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

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[*Meet the grandparents trying to escape Ukraine: 'I lived through the Second World War. And now we have this'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YN-XBR1-JBNF-W0M7-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 12:31 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1327 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL : Refugees Welcome: The elderly living in war-torn Ukraine are often unable to leave their homes. David Cohen meets two grandmothers who, with the help of their daughters, managed to reach the Polish border

**Body**

Eighty-seven year-old Tetyana Vatazhok leaned heavily on her crutches and set her face defiantly against the freezing cold as snow fell all around her.

She gazed out in silence as her younger friend, 85-year-old Zhanna Zabrodska, sat immobilised in a wheelchair alongside. Zhanna clutched a rucksack on her lap from which her cat Masha peaked out.

"Come feel my bag," she said. "Come and feel Masha shivering through the bag". Tears streamed down Zhanna's cheeks. "This is too much," Zhanna said.

"As a child, I lived through the Second World War. And now we have this."

She gestured to the queue of [***Ukrainian***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ***refugees*** full of exhausted mothers and children who had made it here to Kroscienko on the Polish side of the border crossing - and were waiting for transit to a reception centre where warmth and hot food awaited them.

"The Russians are same as the Germans then. I see them as Gestapo," she said.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

So far our appeal has raised £126,000 for the people of Ukraine, but they need more, please give what you can to help support them.

Zhanna and Tetyana had travelled from their bombed-out city of Kharkiv and had been en route for more than two days. They were accompanied by their their daughters, Veronica, 47 and Vita, 54, respectfully, and their cats Masha and Syoma. Their grandchildren, they said, thankfully no longer lived in Ukraine.

Grandparents are conspicuous at the border mostly because there are so few of them. The difficulty of enduring such an extremely arduous journey is reason enough.

In Zhanna's and Tetyana's case, they had severe disability, diabetes, hearing loss and a myriad of other medical ailments to contend with. Why did they come?

Veronica said: "We were hiding in the basement for 11 days since the war began. The bombing was intense and non-stop. My mother lives on the 9th floor of an apartment block and Tetyana lives in the neighbouring building, but the elevators no longer worked so they couldn't get back to their flats. They were stuck in those freezing basements because the electricity had been cut off by the Russians and there was no heat, no light, no water - and we started running out of food as well.

"We heard about people in our town who went to the shops to buy food and got killed by the Russians, so we were too scared to go anywhere. The yard was covered with bomb parts and all around buildings have been destroyed. You cannot believe this has happened to the city you love. Things got so bad in that basement that we realised we couldn't stay because our mothers could die of cold. But also, we couldn't go because it was dangerous and there was a chance they weren't strong enough to make it. So we faced a dilemma. A terrible choice. In the end we decided to try make it to safety."

They waited for the Ukrainian checkpoint guards to tell them it was okay to leave and joined a convoy to the railway station where they boarded a train to Lviv.

"We left on 7 March, we were 8 March in Lviv and 9 March at the Polish border." It was at the border, added Veroncia that her mother had been in danger of collapsing and aid volunteers had given her a wheelchair.

Ahead of them a sign said, "welcome to the European Union", but their conversation was mostly about the people they had left behind. Vita passed me her phone pointing to a text message from her friend's children who had fled Kharkiv to a nearby town called Balakliya, hoping it would be better.

I don't want to talk about my feelings because I will cry

Ukrainian refugee Veronica

The text said: "Can't go anywhere. We are now occupied." How did they feel having made it to safety?

"I don't want to talk about my feelings because I will cry," said Veronica. "You can't tell it with words. We're still in shock from the very beginning of the war because it was so unexpected."

As we spoke, a Polish fire volunteer (the firemen have been extraordinary) wheeled Zhanna through the muddy slush to the front of the queue, priority being given to the elderly disabled.

Her scarf was wrapped tightly around her neck and over her legs Veronica had draped a blanket, now wet from the snow. An observant Polish photographer noticed Zhanna's hands were exposed, so he took off the black leather gloves he was wearing and gave them to her.

An aid worker from World Central Kitchen offered the grandmothers apples. They took two each.

After 20 minutes, a transit van arrived, but it had no facility to load wheelchairs, so young mothers and children piled on instead.

One of the people waiting to board was Maria, an 18-year-old in a long flowing coat and high boots who had travelled on her own from Kyiv and who stood out because of her acute fashion sense, despite having fled 24 hours ago from Kyiv.

But Maria also stood out because she exuded a red-hot anger and defiance. "At this point, I am so emotionally drained that I don't think anything," she said.

"This is not something I thought I would ever experience in my life. I didn't want to leave and I stayed as long as I could. I left behind my boyfriend and so many people I love, including my elderly relatives."

She looked at Zhanna and Tetyana but it was not clear she even saw them.

"I am very, very tired, but I can tell you this. We will be going back to Kyiv. I have no doubt. None."

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) .

We want to get 200,000 signatures as soon as we can to help put as much pressure on the government as possible, please add your support today.

Suddenly into their midst, stepping out of a Red Cross van, swept a ball of energy handing out soft toys and bringing the first smiles of the day to the faces of children.

It was the mayor of Jaslo, Elwira Musialowicz-Czech, 45, who had travelled from her town about 100km away to drop three vans of aid at the border to be picked up by the mayor of a town they twinned with in the Ukraine.

I asked about their link to the Red Cross - one of the 13 charities our Refugees Welcome appeal is funding - and she said: " We are collaborating with the Red Cross because they are the experts in the field who know what is needed and because the Red Cross sign is one recognised all over the country as a sign of good people caring.

We are working with them to take what is needed now - electricity generators, baby food, first aid kits and medicines. And we will be here same time tomorrow. And the day after. Until this terrible thing is over."

An hour later, Tetyana and Zhanna were still waiting for a transit at the front of the queue. Where would they go? Zhanna shrugged. "We don't know," she said. The snow fell. Tears still rolled down her cheeks.

Additional reporting, translating, by Sofiia Sas

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**



[*Live updates: Fitch downgrades Russia's credit rating*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-FNW1-JBNF-W041-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 8:45 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS,WORLD,EUROPE; Version:1

**Length:** 1468 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Fitch Ratings has downgraded Russia's credit rating, citing a "severe shock" to fundamental conditions due to its invasion of Ukraine

**Body**

The latest developments on the Russia-[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) war:

LONDON - [*Fitch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fitch) Ratings has downgraded Russia's credit rating, citing a "severe shock" to fundamental conditions due to its invasion of Ukraine.

Fitch said the war has raised risks to financial stability and could undermine Russia's ability to service its government debt. It said that, in turn, will weaken the country's finances and slow its economy, further raising geopolitical risks and uncertainty.

Among other factors, the ratings agency noted sanctions imposed by Western countries that are limiting access to foreign currency needed to repay debt and purchase imports and increased uncertainty over Russia's willingness to pay such debts.

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BEIJING - [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and Belarusian athletes have been banned from the Winter Paralympic Games for their countries' roles in the war in Ukraine, the [*International Paralympic Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-paralympic-committee) said Thursday in Beijing.

The about-face comes less than 24 hours after the IPC on Wednesday said it would allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete when the Games open on Friday, but only as neutral athletes with colors, flags and other national symbols removed.

The IPC received immediate criticism for its initial decision. It was termed a betrayal that sent the wrong message to Russia's leadership. The IPC also said it was evident that many athletes would refuse to compete against Russians or Belarusians, creating chaos for the Paralympics.

The IPC now joins sports like soccer, track, basketball, hockey and others that have imposed blanket bans on Russians and Belarusians.

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SEOUL, South Korea - A South Korean pharmaceutical company manufacturing Russia's COVID-19 vaccine says it's bracing for business complications as the U.S.-led West escalates sanctions against Russia over the invasion of Ukraine.

Recently expanded U.S. sanctions include targeted measures against the [*Russian Direct Investment Fund*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russian-direct-investment-fund) , a sovereign wealth fund run by a close ally of President Vladimir Putin that globally markets the Sputnik vaccines.

Kim Gi-young, an official from Seoul-based GL Rapha, said the sanctions won't directly impede its production of the shots as the measures aren't aimed at essential medical supplies.

However, the company is concerned about potential problems rising from the financial side as South Korea joins the United States and many European countries in a move to cut off key Russian banks from global payment systems.

"Right now, we are watching how the situation develops," Kim said.

GL Rapha has so far produced 5 million shots of the single-dose Sputnik Light vaccine, but none of them have been used so far as Russia continues to delay rollout plans, Kim said.

GL Rapha also has an agreement with RDIF to produce 150 million shots of the two-dose Sputnik V and is participating in a consortium of South Korean companies that has been contracted to produce another 500 million doses of Sputnik V, but these shots haven't been produced yet.

RDIF has reportedly criticized the U.S. sanctions and said the measures would slow its promotion of Sputnik V.

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DUBAI, United Arab Emirates - The United Arab Emirates says Ukrainian passport holders continue to be eligible for visas on arrival to the Gulf state.

The UAE's Foreign Ministry statement on Thursday came in response to media coverage quoting Ukraine's Embassy in the UAE saying that the Gulf country is reimposing visa requirements on Ukrainians and suspending an agreement for visa-free travel between the two countries.

The energy-rich UAE, which relies on Russian and Ukrainian wheat exports, is home to some 15,000 Ukrainian residents among its roughly 8 million foreign residents and 1 million Emirati citizens. Before the coronavirus pandemic, around a quarter-million Ukrainian tourists visited the UAE.

The UAE, like other Gulf Arab states, does not recognize individuals fleeing war and has not permitted refugees from Syria, Iraq and other wars to seek asylum or seek resettlement.

The UAE, which is home to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, abstained in a U.N. Security Council vote late last week condemning Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. It is also chair of the Security Council.

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MAZYR, Belarus - A string of seven bus-size Russian military ambulances - their windows blocked with gray shades - pulled up to the back entrance of the main hospital about 30 miles (48 kilometers) from the border with Ukraine on Tuesday evening, ferrying casualties from the front.

The convoy was part of what residents and doctors said has in recent days become a steady flow of Russian soldiers wounded in fierce fighting around Kyiv, the Ukrainian capital, where a Russian advance has stalled in the face of strong resistance.

A doctor at the hospital - which is in southern Belarus's Gomel region, a main staging ground for Russia's offensive - said injured Russian troops began arriving on Monday. "I hope they don't jail me for sharing this," she said.

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WARSAW, Poland - The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe says one of its members died during shelling in the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv.

Maryna Fenina was killed while getting supplies for her family, the group said in a news release Wednesday. Fenina worked with the organization's monitoring mission in Ukraine.

"In Kharkiv and other cities and towns in Ukraine, missiles, shells and rockets are hitting residential buildings and town centers, killing and injuring innocent civilians - women, men and children alike," it said.

The organization's chairperson, Polish Foreign Minister Zbigniew Rau, and Secretary General Helga Maria Schmid extended their condolences.

"Our deepest condolences and sympathies go to Maryna's family. Maryna was a valued member of the SMM team, and our colleagues in Ukraine remain in close contact with her family to offer our support," it said.

The organization launched its Ukraine monitoring mission in 2014 in response to a request from Ukraine's government and the consent of the group's 57 participating states. The mission observes and reports on the situation in Ukraine and aims to facilitate dialogue.

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GENEVA - The U.N. refugee agency says 1 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia's invasion less than a week ago, an exodus without precedent in this century for its speed.

The tally from UNHCR amounts to more than 2 percent of Ukraine's population on the move in under a week. The World Bank counted the population at 44 million at the end of 2020.

The U.N. agency has predicted that up to 4 million people could eventually leave Ukraine but cautioned that even that projection could be revised upward.

In an email, UNHCR spokesperson Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams wrote: "Our data indicates we passed the 1M mark" as of midnight in central Europe, based on counts collected by national authorities.

On Twitter, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Filippo Grandi, wrote: "In just seven days we have witnessed the exodus of one million refugees from Ukraine to neighboring countries."

Syria, whose civil war erupted in 2011, currently remains the country with the largest refugee outflows - at more than 5.6 million people, according to UNHCR figures. But even at the swiftest rate of flight by refugees out of Syria, in early 2013, it took at least three months for 1 million refugees to leave that country.

UNHCR spokesperson Shabia Mantoo said Wednesday that "at this rate" the outflows from Ukraine could make it the source of "the biggest refugee crisis this century."

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KYIV, Ukraine - In a video address to the nation early Thursday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy gave an upbeat assessment of the war and called on Ukrainians to keep up the resistance.

"We are a people who in a week have destroyed the plans of the enemy," he said. "They will have no peace here. They will have no food. They will have here not one quiet moment."

Zelenskyy didn't comment on whether the Russians have seized several cities, including Kherson.

"If they went somewhere, then only temporarily. We'll drive them out," he said.

He said the fighting is taking a toll on the morale of Russian soldiers, who "go into grocery stores and try to find something to eat."

"These are not warriors of a superpower," he said. "These are confused children who have been used."

He said the Russian death toll has reached about 9,000.

"Ukraine doesn't want to be covered in bodies of soldiers," he said. "Go home."

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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)

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)

[*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)

[*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)

[*Elderly woman arrested in Russian anti-war protest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-elderly-woman-anti-war-protest-b2027436.html)

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Live updates: Kharkiv nuclear facility again hit by shelling*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6539-7V11-JBNF-W11V-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 27, 2022 Sunday 7:05 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 3188 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** Ukraine's nuclear watchdog says that a nuclear research facility in Kharkiv again has come under shelling by Russia and the fighting makes it impossible to assess the damage

**Body**

KYIV, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) - Ukraine's nuclear watchdog says that a nuclear research facility in Kharkiv again has come under shelling by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and the fighting makes it impossible to assess the damage.

The State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate said that the neutron source experimental facility in the Kharkiv Institute of Physics and Technology came under fire Saturday.

Ukrainian authorities have previously reported that Russian shelling damaged buildings at the Kharkiv facility, but there has been no release of radiation. The newly built neutron source facility is intended for the research and production of radioisotopes for medical and industrial needs. The International Atomic Energy Agency has said that the nuclear material in the facility is always subcritical and the inventory of radioactive material is very low, reducing the risks of radiation release.

Kharkiv has been besieged by Russian forces since the start of the invasion and has come under repeated shelling of its residential buildings and critical infrastructure.

Ukraine's nuclear facilities have been threatened by the Russian invasion.

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KEY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR:

- Biden ends speech in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) by calling for Putin's removal, saying, 'For God's sake, this man cannot remain in power'

- Shelled city of Chernihiv in northern Ukraine fears becoming 'next Mariupol'

- The Associated Press has independently documented at least 34 assaults on Ukrainian medical facilities by Russian forces

- Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) faces stark choices in Ukraine invasion as armed forces stall

- Hungarian PM Orban criticized for 'neutral' stance in Russia's war on Ukraine

- Ukrainian fashion brand in bombarded city picks up and flees

- Is cryptocurrency aid for Ukraine a significant innovation or just a sideshow?

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

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OTHER DEVELOPMENTS:

LVIV, Ukraine - The governor of the Lviv region says a man was detained on suspicion of espionage at the site of one of the two rocket attacks that rattled the city on Saturday.

Maksym Kozytskyy said police found the man had recorded a rocket flying toward the target and striking it. Police also found on his telephone photos of checkpoints in the region, which Kozytskyy said had been sent to two Russian telephone numbers.

Rockets hit an oil storage facility and an unspecified industrial facility, wounding at least five people. A thick plume of smoke and towering flames could be seen on Lviv's outskirts hours after the attacks.

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WARSAW, Poland - In a forceful speech in Warsaw denouncing Russian President Vladimir Putin and voicing strong support for Ukraine, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) also appeared to have a message for his Polish hosts.

Speaking of a "perennial struggle for democracy," Biden mentioned the rule of law and freedom of the press among the principles that are essential in a free society.

He spoke in a speech attended by President Andrzej Duda and his political allies in the conservative ruling Law and Justice party. Since they won power in 2015, the European Union has accused them of undermining the rule of law in Poland by eroding the independence of the judicial branch of government.

The Polish authorities were also in conflict with Washington last year over legal attempts to silence TVN, a broadcast network owned by U.S. company Discovery. The aim was to strip Discovery of its control of TVN, which produces independent news programs that are critical of the nationalist government.

Duda late last year vetoed the legislation, but concerns about press freedom in Poland remain due to the government's use of public media as a party mouthpiece.

Biden also paid homage to Poland's long struggle for democracy in his speech at the Royal Castle, which like most of Warsaw was destroyed by occupying Nazi German forces during World War II and later rebuilt.

He said Warsaw "holds a sacred place in the history of not only of Europe but humankind's unending search for freedom. For generations, Warsaw has stood where liberty has been challenged and liberty has prevailed."

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LVIV, Ukraine - Several rockets struck the western Ukrainian city of Lviv on Saturday in what officials say were two separate attacks that occurred the same day President Joe Biden was visiting the capital of Poland, whose border is just 45 miles away.

The powerful explosions frightened a city that had been a haven for hundreds of thousands of people fleeing the Russian assault on other parts of Ukraine.

The regional governor, Maksym Kozytskyy, said on Facebook that preliminary indications were five people were injured in the first attack but did not specify what the two rockets hit. Hours later, he reported three more explosions outside the city, again with no details.

Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi called the second round of explosions a rocket attack, saying it did significant damage to an unspecified "infrastructure object."

Lviv had been largely spared since Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine, although missiles struck an aircraft repair facility near the international airport a week ago.

The back-to-back attacks on Saturday brought a chill to residents and displaced Ukrainians who had seen Lviv as a relatively safe place to rebuild their lives. Home to about 700,000 people before the invasion, the city has absorbed many more.

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LONDON - Britain has seized two jet aircraft belonging to Russian billionaire Eugene Shvidler as Western governments seeking to end the war in Ukraine put pressure on Russian President Vladimir Putin by targeting the luxury lifestyles of his closest supporters.

Treasury Secretary Grant Shapps said Saturday that the two aircraft would be detained "indefinitely" after three-week investigation that had already grounded the planes. The Times of London described the aircraft as a $45 million Bombardier Global 6500 and a $13 million Cessna Citation Latitude.

"Putin's friends who made millions out of his regime will not enjoy luxuries whilst innocent people die," Shapps said on Twitter.

The U.K. froze Shvidler's U.K. assets last week as it announced a new round of sanctions on Russian companies and wealthy individuals. Shvidler was sanctioned because of his links to those who have backed the war in Ukraine and because he has profited from his support for the Putin regime, the U.K. said.

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LVIV, Ukraine - Air raid sirens sounded Saturday afternoon in the western city of Lviv, and governor of the region Maksym Kozytskyy reported "three powerful explosions near Lviv." Footage shot by The Associated Press showed thick plumes of smoke rising above the city.

Lviv, a city of over 700,000 roughly 70 kilometers (43 miles) east of Ukraine's border with Poland, has been largely spared from major Russian attacks in recent weeks. Two weeks ago, the Russian forces fired missiles on a military training center near Lviv, which at the time was the most westward target, and killed 35 people.

Since the beginning of the invasion, Lviv has become a safe harbor for some 200,000 displaced Ukrainians.

The explosions Saturday came as U.S. President Joe Biden was wrapping up a visit to neighboring NATO ally Poland in which he told Poland's president that " your freedom is ours."

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WARSAW - President Joe Biden on Saturday spent time with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Poland as he wrapped up his four-day visit to Europe, marveling at the spirit of their resolve in the aftermath of Russia's invasion of their homeland.

The president listened intently to young Ukrainian children tell them about their parents. He picked up a young Ukrainian girl in a pink coat, smiling broadly and telling her she reminded him of his own granddaughters.

He also held hands and gave hugs to their parents, as he heard their stories during a visit to a stadium in Warsaw where ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** go to obtain a Polish identification number that gives them access to social services such as health care and schools.

Some of the women and children told Biden that they fled for Poland without their husbands and fathers, men of fighting age that were required to remain behind to assist in the fight against Russian forces.

"What I am always surprised by is the depth and strength of the human spirit," Biden told reporters after his conversations. "Each one of those children said something to the effect of 'Say a prayer for my dad or grandfather or my brother.'"

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WARSAW, Poland - Poland's President Andrzej Duda welcomed President Joe Biden's assurances while visiting the Polish capital on Saturday that NATO would guarantee his country's security.

He said the assurances were all the more important as Russia is carrying out brutal assaults in Ukraine, just across Poland's eastern border.

"I think that for us Poles, in the situation we have today, in our part of Europe, in the era of Russian aggression against Ukraine, this is a very important element," Duda said.

Duda, speaking after meeting Biden, said that he also urged the United States to speed up its planned delivery of weapons to Poland.

Duda noted that under contracts already concluded with the U.S., Poland is set to receive Patriot missile sets, artillery rocket launchers, F-35 fighter jets and 250 Abrams tanks.

"I asked the U.S. president, Joe Biden, to accelerate, as much as possible, those purchasing programs that are already being implemented in order to strengthen our security," the Polish leader said.

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A Winona, Minnesota man taken into custody by Russian forces in Ukraine has been released, U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar said.

Tyler Jacob had been detained earlier this month while trying to cross from Ukraine into Turkey. Klobuchar said she reached out to the U.S. State Department and connected with John Sullivan, the U.S. ambassador to Russia, who discussed the situation with the Russian government.

The 28-year-old Jacob went to Ukraine in November, where he took a job teaching English to be with his longtime girlfriend, a Ukrainian, the Star Tribune reported. The couple married in January and lived in Kherson, a southern port on the Black Sea. Jacob stayed even after Russia invaded last month, but finally decided he should try to get out.

Along with some friends from Turkey, he got on a bus headed for the Turkish border but was taken into custody at a checkpoint in Armiansk.

Jacob is now safe with his wife and daughter and they are all planning to travel to Minnesota. The family declined to elaborate on the circumstances of Jacob's detainment. Klobuchar said they "want to be really careful" and "at some point ... the whole story will be told."

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PRAGUE - Several thousand Russians living in the Czech Republic in Prague and thousands more people in London have rallied to protest the Russian military aggression against Ukraine.

The organizers from Prague's Russian anti-war committee said the rally is an opportunity for the Russian nationals to say loud and clear "No to the war," "No to Putin," "We are with Ukraine," and "We are with the Czech Republic and the whole world against the Russian aggression."

The participants were marching through the Czech capital Saturday, waving white and blue flags, a common feature for the anti-war protests by the Russians. They replaced the Russian national flag with the tricolour of the red, blue and white horizontal fields with another one where the red field, which symbolizes blood, was replaced by one more white one.

The protesters also displayed banners that read "Stop Putin," "Save the World" and "Putin is not Russia," calling Russia's President Vladimir Putin a "Killer."

Besides their condemnation of the war, the Russians also said they want to make it clear they are part of the local society and not secret supporters of Putin.

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LONDON - Thousands have gathered in central London on Saturday to march in support of the people of Ukraine as they resist the Russian invasion.

The march was organized by London Mayor Sadiq Khan after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on people everywhere to show their backing for Ukraine. Demonstrators were marching from Hyde Park to Trafalagar Square, which has been decorated in the blue and yellow colors of Ukraine's flag.

"These innocent people have been through unimaginable pain and suffering over the last month, and by joining together today we are showing that we stand with them," Khan said.

Khan also pledged 1.1 million pounds ($1.45 million) to support refugees, migrants and asylum seekers in London. Some 3.8 million people have fled Ukraine since the invasion began.

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WARSAW, Poland - U.S. President Joe Biden has told Poland's President Andrzej Duda that "your freedom is ours," echoing of one of Poland's unofficial mottos. He assured Duda that the U.S. and other NATO allies would come to their aid if Russia should attack.

The two gathered Saturday on Biden's final day in Europe to speak about their shared effort to end the war in neighboring Ukraine.

Biden called the "collective defense" agreement of the Western military alliance a "sacred commitment," and said that the unity of NATO was of the utmost importance. He also acknowledged that Poland was bearing the brunt of the humanitarian crisis, with more than 2 million of the 3.5 million people fleeing Ukraine entering the country. He said the other NATO allies must do more. The U.S. has pledged to accept up to 100,000 refugees.

Duda said that the relations between the two nations are flourishing, despite the difficult times.

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BUCHAREST, Romania - NATO's deputy secretary-general says that Russian President Vladimir Putin's month-old "barbaric war" against Ukraine is one he cannot win.

Mircea Geoana said in an interview with The Associated Press that NATO would be "forced to take appropriate measures" in the event of a chemical or nuclear attack, which follows a string of ominous comments from Moscow officials who refuse to rule out their use. He declined to say what those measures would be.

"NATO is a defensive alliance, but also it's a nuclear alliance," he said. "If they will be using chemical weapons or other kinds of higher-end systems against Ukraine, this will be changing fundamentally the nature of the war that Mr. Putin has waged against Ukraine."

"I can guarantee that NATO is ready to respond proportionately," he added.

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HELSINKI - Finland's president says his country would likely be targeted by Russian cyber warfare and could face border violations if it decides to apply for membership in NATO.

Several polls in recent weeks have shown a majority of Finns now supporting NATO membership, up from 25% at most before the Russian invasion of Ukraine. President Sauli Niinisto said in an interview Saturday with public broadcaster YLE that the biggest benefit would be "gaining a preventive effect."

But he pointed to a risk of disruptive behavior by Russia during an accession process, which would take at least months.

He said an application would lead to tensions at Finland's 1,340-kilometer (830-mile) border with Russia, including the possibility of "robust" border and territorial violations - not just by Russian aircraft, as Finland has experienced in the past.

Niinisto said: "We don't even know all the possiblities for hybid influencing that someone may invent. The entire world of information technology is vulnerable. Even some important society functions can be disrupted."

Moscow has said it would consider European Union members Finland and neighboring Sweden joining NATO a hostile move that would have serious military and political repercussions.

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MEDYKA, Poland --Refugees arriving in Poland from Ukraine are pleading for more help to end the war as U.S. President Joe Biden wraps up his four-day visit to Europe.

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.

Elena Taciy, a 50-year-old from Berdyansk, said that the U.S. support is "right and needed." She said Saturday she wanted Biden "to come to Ukraine in person and see the situation with his own eyes."

Maria Shevchenka, a 43-year-old from Mykolaiv, said that "we are waiting for them (the Americans) to help us end this crisis, so that finally we can return back to our country and our homes."

Biden, who was in Warsaw on Saturday, dropped in on a meeting between U.S. and Ukrainian foreign policy and defense leaders.

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LVIV, Ukraine - The governor of the Kyiv region says that Russian forces have entered the city of Slavutych and seized a hospital there.

Slavutych is located north of Kyiv and west of Chernihiv, outside the exclusion zone that was established around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant after the 1986 disaster. It is home to workers at the Chernobyl site.

Governor Oleksandr Pavlyuk said Saturday that the Russians also kidnapped the city's mayor, but some media reported later in the day that the mayor was released swiftly. Neither claim could be verified independently.

The governor said that residents of Slavutych took to the streets with Ukrainian flags to protest the Russian invasion.

"The Russians opened fire into the air. They threw flash-bang grenades into the crowd. But the residents did not disperse, on the contrary, more of them showed up," Pavlyuk said.

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LVIV, Ukraine - Authorities in the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, have announced a new 35-hour curfew in the city.

Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko said the curfew will run from 8 p.m. local time on Saturday to 7 a.m. on Monday, with local residents allowed to leave their homes only to get to a bomb shelter.

Klitschko said that shops, pharmacies, gas stations and public transport will not be operating during the curfew.

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ISTANBUL - Turkey's defense ministry says a "mine-like" object has been "neutralized" at the northern entrance to the Bosporus Strait.

The sighting on Saturday of a possible naval mine followed warnings that mines laid at the entrances to Ukrainian ports could break free in bad weather and cross the Black Sea.

Broadcaster NTV showed images of an object bobbing in the waves off Istanbul's Sariyer district, on the Bosporus' European coast. A Coast Guard vessel was stationed nearby.

A Defense Ministry statement said divers were dispatched to deal with the object. According to Demiroren News Agency, it was noticed by fishermen.

On March 18, Turkey advised ships to keep a "sharp lookout" and report any possible mines that had drifted from Ukrainian ports.

Last year some 38,500 ships passed through the Bosporus, which links the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. Soon after the Russian invasion of Ukraine, Ankara closed the strait to military vessels.

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LONDON - Britain's Defense Ministry says Russia continues to besiege a number of major Ukrainian cities including Kharkiv, Chernihiv and Mariupol.

A daily update says Russian forces are proving reluctant to engage in large scale urban infantry operations, rather preferring to rely on the indiscriminate use of air and artillery bombardments in an attempt to demoralize defending forces.

The assessment says it is likely Russia will continue to use its heavy firepower on urban areas as it looks to limit its own already considerable losses, at the cost of further civilian casualties.

**Load-Date:** March 27, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Homes for Ukraine scheme hits ‘crisis point’ as councils brace for surge in homeless refugees*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:669C-XK61-DY4H-K1RY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

September 3, 2022 Saturday 8:09 AM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:2

**Length:** 1460 words

**Byline:** Holly Bancroft

**Highlight:** Exclusive: Majority of surveyed councils concerned about increasing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless, as government accused of ‘lack of plan’

**Body**

Councils are bracing themselves for an influx of homeless [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) amid warnings that the government has “no plan” for the continuation of its flagship Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) scheme.

With hosts facing increased pressure from the rising [*cost of living*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cost-of-living-0) , many local authorities are worried that Ukrainian families will be left homeless when the initial six-month arrangements end.

Refugees, hosts and councillors are also concerned about how Ukrainians will find independent accommodation in an increasingly competitive [*rental market*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rental-market).

In a snapshot survey of 64 councils, 61 per cent told The Independent that they were worried about an increasing number of Ukrainians presenting as homeless or being at risk of homelessness in the coming months. That was compared to 14 per cent who weren’t worried, and 25 per cent that didn’t respond.

Have you been involved in the Ukraine scheme? If so email [*holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk*](mailto:holly.bancroft@independent.co.uk)

The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March meaning the first refugees to arrive will reach the six-month mark during September.

Twenty-five per cent of sponsors said they only want to provide accommodation for six months or less, according to an ONS survey of 17,702 hosts. There are currently 86,100 Ukrainians in the UK under the scheme, 48,798 of which had arrived by the end of April.

“We’re going to see building pressures over the next few months and the government actually has no plan. There is zero plan or guidance coming out from the government,” Cllr Nesil Caliskan, leader of Enfield council, told The Independent.

“If we waited for the government to act we would get to six months and we’d risk having loads of people homeless. So that’s why we’re planning our support now.”

Cllr Caliskan said a “big concern” was the affordability and availability of private sector rentals, making it very hard for Ukrainian families to find accommodation.

Cllr James Jamieson, chairman of the Local Government Association which represents councils, urged the government to provide clarity on what happens next.

“Councils, sponsors and Ukrainian guests all need to know what the options are at the end of the six-month initial placement period so they can start planning now.”

“There is a significant risk that -even if rematching is available -many Ukrainian families may need to present as homeless because of a lack of sponsors or other options,” he said.

As of 29 July, 1335 households had presented as homeless to councils -635 of those were on the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Analysis by Barnados, Labour and the Lib Dems predicts that between 15,000 and 21,000 Ukrainians could be homeless by winter, rising to more than 50,000 by the middle of next year.

“Homes for Ukraine is a really strong scheme but the crisis point now is if we can’t get the refugees into independent housing,” Simone Schehtman, the lead pairer of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and hosts in Birmingham, said. “You go to the estate agent to try and get on the property ladder and the computer will just say no; you will fail the credit check and you won’t have a guarantor.”

She urged ministers to allow local authorities to become guarantors of refugee’s rent and warned that if a plan was not put in place soon “six months of hard graft and good will by the British public and the government will become meaningless because we will have a haemorrhaging of homelessness”.

Alistair Carmichael MP, Liberal Democrat home affairs spokesperson, said it would be “a tragedy” if any refugees were forced onto the streets, adding: “Ministers must act now.”

Responding to the concerns, a government spokesperson said they disagreed that there was no plan for the future of the scheme. “The vast majority of sponsors want to provide support for longer than six months and we are working closely with councils to ensure all those who have fled Putin’s war have a safe place to live,” they said.

They emphasised that sponsors will continue to receive monthly £350 “thank you” payments for up to 12 months.

Inna Sukhoraba and her 16-year-old daughter Irynka are being sponsored by a host in Tetbury, Gloucestershire, and have had trouble finding a place to rent for when their placement ends.

Their host, Pilar, told The Independent: “Inna had found a place and was happy to pay six months rent in advance but then suddenly two days later the landlord decided to take somebody else.

“It is very difficult for the Ukrainians who want to be independent and build their lives here. The government needs to give them support to move forward because they cannot be permanent guests. Where we live the rent is very expensive and one day flats come on the market, the next day they are gone.

“As hosts, we feel that we have been sort of abandoned. They don’t have a plan for us or our guests and we are totally stuck.”

Svitlana Stadnyk, who volunteers as a mediator between hosts and Ukrainians in partnerships with National Family Mediation, said she expected to see more cases in the coming months.

“As the autumn comes, and as the six-month end approaches, there will be more and more people who need help resolving conflicts,” she said. “There are varying sources of tension and one is the rising cost of living.

“Many hosts did not receive their thank you payments in time and they are seeing their utility prices go up going into the winter.”

The government provides councils with a £10,500 support fund for each refugee on the Homes for Ukraine scheme, however, they have not yet committed to continuing the payments past 12 months -leaving local authorities unsure where the money will come from after the first year.

Barnsley metropolitan borough council said it was worried about the six-month deadline, primarily due to lack of affordable, available accommodation, while Hampshire County Council said it was seeing “increasing pressure” on its services due to the number of arrangements coming to an end.

East Suffolk Council said that it was concerned that the six-month mark would come at a time when families were facing challenges managing the increased cost of living, while Tandrige District council said it was worried its homeless prevention service would not be able to cope with the increased demand.

A spokesperson for the Department for Levelling Up said: “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.

“All arrivals have access to benefits from day one and we are giving councils an extra £10,500 per person to cover any extra costs.”

‘I simply could not survive the third night’

On the third night of the war, Inna decided she and her daughter Irynka need to leave. They had been staying with Inna’s parents in Berdychiv, Zhytomyr region and sat listening to the Russian planes flying over their home, petrified that bombs would fall on them.

“The first two nights Russian planes were flying over us and we didn’t know if they were going to drop bombs on us or not. I realised I simply could not survive the third night, so my daughter and I got on the train to Poland,” she said.

While in Poland, she and her daughter found a placement under the Homes for Ukraine scheme but they always knew it would just be for six months.

“I like British people and British culture and I am afraid to go back to Ukraine,” she told The Independent.

Now, four months into the arrangement, she is trying to find a place where she can live independently.

“I was a project manager for the Bank of Ukraine but now it is difficult for me here. For example, I found accommodation for my daughter and I and the first landlord agreed that we could rent the place but then something changed and she changed her mind.”

“Where we live rent is very expensive to start with,” her host Pilar said. “The flats they are looking for, one day it comes on the market, the next it is gone.”

“The Thank you payments that the government gives to the host, why can’t they give that to the Ukrainians who want to be independent?” she suggested.

Inna is keen to find work in the UK but has struggled due to the language barrier.

“I’m working on improving my English and I’m starting a business,” she said. “When I arrived in the UK, British people told me they liked my Ukrainian style and so I thought I could make Ukrainian dresses and sell them here.”

She is financially supporting her sister and her parents back home in Ukraine and still has to pay for the utilities at her Kyiv flat. She is hoping that she will be able to support herself by selling clothes and went to her first market last week.

“The main goal for my business is to support the Ukrainian economy, as well as preserve and spread our culture while I am abroad.”

**Load-Date:** September 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Rishi Sunak news -live: Hunt expected to lift cap on bankers’ bonuses in Autumn Budget*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66W5-F261-JBNF-W4RN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

November 16, 2022 Wednesday 5:17 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 186 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh

**Highlight:** Among slew of ‘difficult decisions’ chancellor and prime minister likely to take to restore UK’s economic credibility

**Body**

[*Jeremy Hunt*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jeremy-hunt) is likely to lift the cap on bankers’ bonuses when he delivers his [*Autumn Budget*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/autumn-budget) tomorrow, part of a range of measures designed to restore the UK’s economic credibility.

The Financial Times first reported the [*chancellor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chancellor) will make the lifting of the cap one of the few measures to survive from [*Kwasi Kwarteng*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kwasi-kwarteng) ’s disastrous mini-Budget, amid speculation about the “difficult decisions” that Mr Hunt and the prime minister are likely to take as they try to find up to £60bn from a combination of hikes and spending cuts.

Earlier, [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) urged banking executives “to embrace pay restraint” in order not to exacerbate inflation.

The Budget is widely expected to raise finances through stealth taxes by freezing the rates at which workers begin paying higher rates of tax, with inflation and pay increases dragging more people into higher bands.

But tough spending cuts are likely too, with Mr Hunt reportedly eyeing up plans to cut funding for the government’s homes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** scheme and planning to reduce funds received by councils for some of the services for refugees hosted by UK families.

**Load-Date:** November 16, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Polish Nobel author says Russia threat to 'free world'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65FS-N361-DY4H-K0TG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 15, 2022 Sunday 5:11 PM GMT

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**Length:** 170 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** A Polish Nobel Prize-winning author says that Russia presents a threat to the "free world" and its attack on neighboring Ukraine had echoes of the Second World War

**Body**

A Polish [*Nobel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nobel) Prize-winning author on Sunday called [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) a threat to the "free world," saying its attack on neighboring Ukraine had echoes of the Second World War.

[*Olga Tokarczuk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olga-tokarczuk) , known for her humanist themes and playful, subversive streak, spoke at a writers festival in [*Jerusalem*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jerusalem).

"The Poles share the Ukrainian feeling of danger that Russia presents to the free world," Tokarczuk said, adding that the Polish government had warned about the risk presented by Russian aggression for years.

Poland, Ukraine's western neighbor, has taken in over three million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since Russia launched its invasion in late February. Warsaw has called for tough international sanctions against Russia.

"Nobody could imagine that this war would be so cruel so anachronistic and this war brings to mind the horrible images of World War Two," she said.

Tokarczuk was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2018 for her 18th-century epic "The Books of Jacob," about a Jewish mystic and sect leader named Jacob Frank.

**Load-Date:** May 15, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Inside Politics: Zelensky calls for Nuremberg-style trials and NI tax hike bites*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:655D-FWY1-DY4H-K19H-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

April 6, 2022 Wednesday 8:51 AM GMT

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1665 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Ukraine president calls on UN to act amid mounting evidence of war crimes by Putin's forces, and millions of Britons hit with rise to national insurance contributions, writes Matt Mathers

**Body**

Liz Truss is in Brussels, where she will discuss the Ukraine war with G7 and Nato leaders. The foreign secretary, who was in Poland yesterday, is expected to call on the UK's partners in Europe to impose harsher sanctions on the Kremlin to send the Russian economy "back into the Soviet era" as punishment for invading its neighbour. The meetings, however, threaten to be overshadowed by a row over the bloc's importation of Russian gas, with Brussels still not setting out a clear timetable of when it plans to end its reliance on Moscow for the natural resource - a lucrative source of income for Putin's war machine.

Much has been written here in the UK about sky-high energy bills and the cost of living crisis, both of which have been exacerbated by the conflict. The increasing cost of electricity, gas and food - not to mention surging inflation - are all problems afflicting the continent too. But the difference between the UK and the EU is that we are far less reliant on Russia for our oil and gas. Overnight reports suggest the EU will agree to further measures targeting some Russian financial and state-owned bodies. Leaders on the continent are, however, unlikely to make major commitments to ending their reliance on Russian gas pipelines while the energy market remains so volatile. Doing so would mean shipping in supplies of expensive liquefied natural gas from elsewhere, resulting in even bigger bills for their voters.

Inside the bubble

Politics commentator Andrew Grice on what to look out for today:

Liz Truss will discuss the Ukraine war with Nato foreign ministers in Brussels. Volodymyr Zelensky, Ukraine's president, will address the Irish parliament. The Commons is not sitting but the crisis will loom large in the House of Lords. Tory peer Arminka Helic, who fled war-torn Bosnia, will stage a debate on ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***. The House's international relations committee will take evidence on from two defence experts - Professors Michael Clarke and Malcolm Chalmers.

Coming up:

- Health secretary Sajid Javid on BBC Radio 4 Today at 8.10am

- Lib Dem leader Ed Davey on Times Radio Breakfast at 8.20am

Daily Briefing

WAR CRIMES PLEA: Volodymyr Zelensky gave an impassioned speech yesterday to a meeting of the United Nations Security Council in which he called for [*Nuremberg-style trials*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay92b2xvZHlteXItemVsZW5za3ktbGl6LXRydXNzLXVrcmFpbmUtbnVyZW1iZXJnLXVuaXRlZC1uYXRpb25zLWIyMDUxNDIzLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B945ea823&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=WXvfDzxyHK%2F3ejR1sBpDbPxCIQlCOlgJ6nb5uaQYPQg%3D&reserved=0) as evidence of Russian war crimes mounts up. Appearing at the session virtually, Zelensky also played allies a grim video appearing to show bound, killed and burned civilians and mass graves in images from across his nation that the UK's ambassador to the UN, Dame Barbara Woodward, described as "harrowing". His comments came as Putin's troops continued to bombard the besieged city of Mariupol in Ukraine's southeast. The humanitarian situation in the destroyed port city is "worsening", Britain's Ministry of Defence said in its latest update on the war this morning. "Most of the 160,000 remaining residents have no light, communication, medicine, heat or water," it added. "Russian forces have prevented humanitarian access, likely to pressure defenders to surrender." In other updates, the UK, US and Australia have issued a joint statement saying they have agreed to work together to [*develop offensive and defensive hypersonic weaponry*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9ob21lLW5ld3MvdWstaHlwZXJzb25pYy1taXNzaWxlcy1ydXNzaWEtYjIwNTE3NDcuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B12eceb87&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=dtdl%2BKkeXMk1D2d12nGCthb60rRHxv6hVx6%2BubKnJIk%3D&reserved=0) to counter Putin, following reports last month that his forces used hypersonic missiles in Ukraine. We'll have all the latest updates from the war on our [*liveblog*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1uZXdzLXJ1c3NpYS1zYW5jdGlvbnMtemVsZW5za3ktYnVjaGEtYjIwNTE4MTEuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Be94e9a3b&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=JgA4iDdsfZy36pY15FDiRl4zzt8mo7F%2BVjWDOrpddv8%3D&reserved=0). TAX HIKE HITS: Against a backdrop of rising fuel, food and energy prices, millions of workers across the UK are today hit with a tax rise as the national insurance rise comes into force. Contributions increase by 1.25 per cent, although some of that rise will be offset in July by an increase to the threshold at which workers pay the levy announced by Rishi Sunak, the chancellor, in his spring statement last month. Boris Johnson has [*defended the manifesto-busting tax hike*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9ob21lLW5ld3MvbmF0aW9uYWwtaW5zdXJhbmNlLXJpc2UtdG9kYXktYm9yaXMtam9obnNvbi1iMjA1MTc1MC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B69b63d0f&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=6yEYdxul78bFZaT%2B7raJinCiE3ek1KlMpQWCRHD4Dbo%3D&reserved=0) , saying it is "necessary, fair and responsible" to fund the NHS and social care. The government predicts that the tax rise will raise £39bn over the next three years to help reduce the Covid-induced NHS backlogs and later reform adult social care for the long-term. "We must be there for our NHS in the same way that it is there for us," the prime minister added. "Covid led to the longest waiting lists we've ever seen, so we will deliver millions more scans, checks and operations in the biggest catch-up programme in the NHS' history." Labour says it is the wrong time to be raising taxes as families face an average increase of £700 in their annual energy costs. 'WOKE WAR': Last week was not a good one for the government's relations with the LGBT+ community, and this one is proving to be no better. First, Iain Anderson, who was appointed last year to be No 10's LGBT+ champion for business, resigned in protest at the government's move to exclude trans people from upcoming legislation to ban gay conversion therapy. "I was LGBT business champion, not LGB or T, and that's why I'm walking away," he told ITV News, suggesting ministers were trying to "drive a wedge" between trans and lesbian, gay and bisexual people. No 10 was then forced to [*cancel its long-touted global LGBT+ conference as the backlash over that same issue grew*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9sZ2J0LWNvbmZlcmVuY2UtY29udmVyc2lvbi10aGVyYXB5LWdvdmVybm1lbnQtYjIwNTE2MjYuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B94001851&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=8ADg%2FWsg7%2B7RVfyU0vYZ5ykMUQpmOb%2FXtlovi56n4A0%3D&reserved=0). It came just 24 hours after 100 organisations pulled out of the event, accusing the government of waging a "woke war" on the community. Several hours of crunch talks had taken place to try and salvage the event, but the boycott has left organisers unable to continue as planned, according to the BBC. 4 SALE BACKLASH: No 10 could face yet another Tory rebellion over its plans to privatise Channel 4 after several senior Tories came out yesterday to [*criticise the move.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9jaGFubmVsLTQtcHJpdmF0aXNlZC1uYWRpbmUtZG9ycmllcy1iMjA1MTA4Ni5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Be13edbe7&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=mzF1QGdA4rrlFURjYjCzW87S8hkt3VJoq4iUycgGw6w%3D&reserved=0) Jeremy Hunt, Baroness Ruth Davidson, Damien Green and Tom Tugendhat were among those to question the decision to sell off the publicly-owned but privately funded broadcaster. Channel 4's former head of news and current affairs, Dorothy Byrne, accused No 10 of throwing "a bit of red meat to Tory supporters of a very right-wing nature at a time that the government is in trouble". Meanwhile Tory MP Julian Knight, chair of the digital, culture, media and sport select committee, suggested the decision by the government to press ahead with selling Channel 4, created by Margaret Thatcher, may have been done in "revenge" for the channel's "biased coverage of the likes of Brexit and personal attacks on the PM? ... there is a feeling of payback time." GREEN PLANS BLOCKED: Embattled Sunak, whose popularity among the Tory faithful has tumbled in the wake of his widely panned spring statement, wakes up to yet more bad headlines this morning after The Daily Telegraph was briefed that [*the Treasury is blocking plans for hundreds of millions of pounds to be spent on making homes more energy efficient*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9yaXNoaS1zdW5hay1lbmVyZ3ktZ3JlZW4taG9tZXMtZnVuZC1iMjA1MTczNi5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bdcae90e5&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=94oSTn9xCxFXIcfghoPOtjeclrSjyU1jt4PUR1k3%2Bho%3D&reserved=0) , which would in turn reduce bills amid the cost of living crisis. Downing Street and business secretary Kwasi Kwarteng's team were hoping for an expansion of the Energy Company Obligation scheme to be included in this week's energy security strategy, The Telegraph said. But the chancellor is said to have rejected the proposals as he is sticking closely to pledges outlined in autumn 2021. The newspaper quoted a senior government figure as saying: "It would have been something that we could say to households 'We're on your side, we want you to reduce your bills'. But the Treasury doesn't believe in it." 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%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly9ldXIwMi5zYWZlbGlua3MucHJvdGVjdGlvbi5vdXRsb29rLmNvbS8_%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Be2b29bf2&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733266459%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=kAMzLOGMFj91gKD5DozR3jSpBavag6gqqsBX2xNTbps%3D&reserved=0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly9ldXIwMi5zYWZlbGlua3MucHJvdGVjdGlvbi5vdXRsb29rLmNvbS8_%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8C3a4bb226&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=VfB5xc6ONkeDwVGno5cVhlN4E%2B8Sw8GLJddFXqJPTLk%3D&reserved=0) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly9ldXIwMi5zYWZlbGlua3MucHJvdGVjdGlvbi5vdXRsb29rLmNvbS8_dXJsPWhldHBzJTNBJTJGJTJGd3d3LmdvZnVuZG1lLmNvbSUyRnJlZnVnZWVzd2VsY29tZSZkYXRhPTA0JTdDMDElN0NNYXR0Lk1hdGhlcnMlNDBpbmRlcGVuZGVudC5jby51ayU3Q2YyNGEwYzMzMTUzYjQ2ZjFjYjY4MDhkYTAwMWJkOWU1JTdDMGYzYTRjNjQ0ZGM1NGE3NjhkNDE1MmQ4NWNhMTU4YTUlN0MwJTdDMCU3QzYzNzgyMjQxNjg3NDc5MjA1MCU3Q1Vua25vd24lN0NUV0ZwYkdac2IzZDhleUpXSWpvaU1DNHdMakF3TURBaUxDSlFJam9pVjJsdU16SWlMQ0pCVGlJNklrMWhhV3dpTENKWFZDSTZNbjAlM0QlN0MzMDAwJnNkYXRhPTM1NkVwYmtuYTVva01NWG41JTJGYUw0UndlOXY3NFcwTUslMkJpUE0zaG5tUkZJJTNEJnJlc2VydmVkPTA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Dd9c324ea&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=AphMaWLgy5S2u25CFEjW8Vvskmgw1YFbcvZLQc7%2BF50%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page. On the record "The recent leaking of a plan to drop the government's flagship legislation protecting LGBT+ people from conversion therapy was devastating. Conversion therapy is abhorrent. Only hours later to see this plan retracted but briefing take place that trans people would be excluded from the legislation and therefore not have the same immediate protections from this practice was deeply damaging to my work."Former government LGBT+ business champion Iain Anderson.From the Twitterati"One Conservative MP tells me tonight: 'We have mortally wounded ourselves with the LGBT community.' A second says 'It's abhorrent'".ITV UK editor Paul Brand.Essential readingJohn Rentoul, The Independent: [*Tony Blair has a point - Labour's 'defect at birth' was its link with the trade unions*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy90b255LWJsYWlyLWxhYm91ci11bmlvbnMtZGVmZWN0LWF0LWJpcnRoLWIyMDUxMzYwLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B1f5f4fe1&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=HG%2FqRq83JrLvEdSgiF61CknJ3v89i5uqktaXbE3LgSY%3D&reserved=0) Tom Peck, The Independent: [*There is comfort in constancy - like Nadine Dorries still not knowing what Channel 4 actually is*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdm9pY2VzL2NoYW5uZWwtNC1uYWRpbmUtZG9ycmllcy1wcml2YXRpc2F0aW9uLWIyMDUxMzUwLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Beea1eef0&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2B0hrCGWG%2FUS%2BXmA9tqXx3i7IFYObclH%2FEZsYZqnbTOo%3D&reserved=0) Marina Hyde, The Guardian: [*It's totally OK to break laws in England - just ask the MPs who make them*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhlZ3VhcmRpYW4uY29tL2NvbW1lbnRpc2ZyZWUvMjAyMi9hcHIvMDUvYnJlYWstbGF3cy1lbmdsYW5kLW1wcy1qYWNvYi1yZWVzLW1vZ2ctY292aWQ%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B9280481e&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=r2HT4Y7dIOYbBOdyiJhlNiLmtvRfqOSPnJRwe0ZkGAo%3D&reserved=0) Carl Miller, The Atlantic: [*Who's behind #IStandWithPutin?*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27269781.39726%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhlYXRsYW50aWMuY29tL2lkZWFzL2FyY2hpdmUvMjAyMi8wNC9ydXNzaWFuLXByb3BhZ2FuZGEtemVsZW5za3ktaW5mb3JtYXRpb24td2FyLzYyOTQ3NS8%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B3f16ec11&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C186250fba6ec42a706aa08da17a01f13%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637848273733422664%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=fRzQiGAhKvbCZruPftsLxG8NjJexBPmwsz%2FSwhGJS90%3D&reserved=0)

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[*Inside Politics: Nazanin arrives back in the UK*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6515-6T81-JBNF-W338-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1724 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Aid worker and fellow British-Iranian national, Anoosheh Ashoori, touch down on UK soil after years of hell detained in Iran, writes Matt Mathers

**Body**

Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's nightmare is finally over. After six years of detention in Iran, she and fellow British-Iranian national Anoosheh Ashoori are back in the UK. "The first thing she always wanted to do was for me to make her a cup of tea," Nazanin's husband Richard said, in a moment of light relief following what has been a hellish period for him and the couple's daughter, Gabriella. It was interesting to note the praise received by Liz Truss, the foreign secretary, for her role in securing the aid worker's release, which came not just from colleagues from within her own party (Jeremy Hunt among them) but also opposition MPs, particularly Labour's Tulip Siddiq, Nazanin's local MP. "I've dealt with three prime ministers and five foreign secretaries...finally when I came to a woman who was foreign secretary...[she] actually did something," she said.

Despite regularly topping popularity polls among the Tory faithful, Truss is often dismissed as lightweight by commentators in the media and never really considered a true contender for the Tory leadership. But her work on Nazanin's case, and her stint as international trade secretary - when she brokered scores of trade deals - show she is someone who at least can get a job done, unlike Gavin Williamson, for example, who was recently rewarded with a knighthood for failing in education and defence. Siddiq, the MP for Hampstead and Kilburn and a shadow Treasury minister, campaigned tirelessly (as did husband Richard, who at one point went on hunger strike) for the release of her constituent. Her praise of Truss and the pair's coming together for the greater good was a rare moment of bipartisanship in Westminster, the likes of which we need to see more of in our politics.

Inside the bubble

Commons action gets underway at 9.30am with transport questions, followed by the weekly business statement from Mark Spencer, leader of the house. Later, the education select committee publishes a report on the government's Covid catch up programme. Following that there is backbench business on the Irish diaspora in Britain, the introduction of paid miscarriage leave and the potential merits of reforming educational assessments.

Coming up:

- Shadow culture secretary Lucy Powell on Sky News Breakfast at 8.05am

- Europe minister James Cleverly on ITV GMB at 8.30am

Daily Briefing

MUM'S HOME!: Nazanin and Anoosheh touched down on British soil just after 1am this morning when their plane landed at RAF Brize Norton, in Oxfordshire. The families of the pair [*shed tears as their loved ones came home following years of long and cruel separation caused by their detention in Iran.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9uYXphbmluLXphZ2hhcmktcmF0Y2xpZmZlLWFzaG9vcmktaXJhbi1yZWxlYXNlLWIyMDM3MTA2LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Ba540affd&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=P%2BUPTHcIlvPRoUmM4BfTU9AE0dSvR7lGnUC5wsF3aB0%3D&reserved=0) Both were jailed on spying charges, which they have always vehemently denied. Social media footage shared by Anoosheh's daughter, Elika, showed Gabriella, 7, asking "is that mummy?" and again shouting "mummy" as her mother walked down the plane's stairs. Richard shook Anoosheh's hand, as Gabriella appeared to run towards her mother, who was out of shot. She then carried the little girl in her arms as they were surrounded by other family members. Anoosheh was then reunited with his family, who were in tears as they embraced. Nazanin then appeared and hugged and kissed her daughter and members of Anoosheh's family. The release of Mrs Zaghari-Ratcliffe and Mr Ashoori follows months of intensive diplomatic negotiations between London and Tehran, including the eventual payment of an outstanding £400m debt owed by Britain to the regime. "It's been very emotional, but also a really happy moment for the families, and I'm pleased to say that both Nazanin and Anoosheh are in good spirits and they're safe and well back here in Britain," foreign secretary Truss said. Sharing a photo of Nazanin's family on Twitter, Labour MP Siddiq said: "This picture makes me so happy and so proud of all three of my brave constituents. Thank you everyone for your constant support for this incredible family." BRUTAL BOMBING: There is no let-up in Vladimir Putin's brutal and indiscriminate bombing campaign in Ukraine, with Russian forces accused of destroying a theatre where [*hundreds of civilians had been sheltering in the besieged city of Mariupol*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvcnVzc2lhLXVrcmFpbmUtbWFyaXVwb2wtYm9tYi1jaXZpbGlhbnMtYjIwMzc0MzYuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B8244f538&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=e9uqR%2FfX4APt0QJVo4sLnIrtb1l9Aog16vT98KOuYYU%3D&reserved=0). Some reports claimed that more than 1,000 people were seeking shelter in the building, although the number of casualties remains unknown. Volodymyr Zelensky, the Ukraine president, accused the Kremlin of deliberately targeting the shelter, which images appear to show had "children" written in Russian outside it. Joe Biden, the US president, called Mr Putin a "war criminal" and announced the United States would send an additional $800m (£600m) in military aid to Ukraine, including more anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons and drones. According to the [*Financial Times*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly90d2l0dGVyLmNvbS9tYXhzZWRkb24vc3RhdHVzLzE1MDQxMTUwMTI4NTE0MTMwMDA_cz0yMCZ0PTBDYkZ2SXhMa0ZTQW9nX3poeno4Zmc%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B25aa8b3b&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=yi79vWOswhJlbLr2%2FScudeGlzse5SrLwS7F0wctoTkI%3D&reserved=0) , both sides are exploring a neutrality plan in peace talks, some of the details of which include Russia agreeing to a cease fire and withdrawing; Ukraine agreeing to "neutrality" outside Nato; Kyiv keeping its army but not hosting foreign bases; Russian getting legal status in Ukraine. Analysts, however, fear that Putin will keep his troops in Ukraine until he can be convinced that he can achieve victory in the war. We'll have all the[*latest updates on our liveblog.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1ydXNzaWEtcHV0aW4td2FyLWNyaW1pbmFsLWRlYXRoLWxhdGVzdC1iMjAzNzc1NC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bfe9b7b15&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=%2Fb9iUEXBxmhaF77nsN5yblZsFqlWXqx%2Fs2g29mbNYkc%3D&reserved=0) CAP EMPTY: [*As Inside Politics predicted yesterday*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL2luc2lkZS1wb2xpdGljcy11a3JhaW5lLW11c3QtYWNjZXB0LWl0LXdpbGwtbm90LWpvaW4tbmF0by16ZWxlbnNreS1zYXlzLWIyMDM2ODc1LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B233ce6ed&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=dJ6WSHNZhEOzuJu3UAHqx6PpfRUGhI9yaXKfpLmo3U0%3D&reserved=0) , Boris Johnson has come back from his trip to the Gulf States with his cap empty and no public agreement from either Saudi Arabia or the UAE to ramp up oil production as the west looks to wean itself off Russian supplies amid the Ukraine crisis, which is driving up fuel prices. Asked whether he had secured assurances that the oil-rich Gulf state would turn on the taps, he could say only that it [*was a decision for them.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLXNhdWRpLW9pbC1leGVjdXRpb25zLWIyMDM3NDQyLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bab1022ff&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=xKw%2B%2BgVJQBYeM172FvlZjiC9rVwgm9asU91cb%2FoUFy4%3D&reserved=0) "I think there's certainly an understanding that there's an interest for Saudi Arabia - for all oil-producing and exporting countries - in making sure that the global economy is not damaged by the current spikes, that we don't get the kind of inflation that we saw in the 1970s, we don't see the stagflation," he said. "So it was a very productive conversation." Understanding is perhaps the only word the prime minister could use following his meetings, and one suspects leaders in both Saudi Arabia and the UAE may have a completely different comprehension of how the talks went. 'SOURCE OF SHAME': Although the UK has in recent days taken a more compassionate approach to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the war, the government's response to handling the crisis still falls far short of what many of our European neighbours are doing. And the Trades Unions Congress (TUC) yesterday went as far as to brand Johnson's response a [*"source of shame".*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9ob21lLW5ld3MvdWtyYWluZS1yZWZ1Z2Vlcy13YXItdHJhZGUtdW5pb24tY29uZ3Jlc3MtdHVjLXVrLWIyMDM3MzUwLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B4e270f2d&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=fcxsKIjX4%2FfOJv1Y4BnGFw0aPgT8H%2BKnZP%2BqOKSDNSc%3D&reserved=0) In a letter to the prime minister, TUC general secretary France O'Grady said the government had "fallen short of the humanity, common decency and urgent action that ordinary working people in Britain expect" in responding to the millions of Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion in recent weeks and called for visa-free travel for all those fleeing the conflict. The Home Office was approached for comment. RACE ACTION PLAN: The government has set out an action plan to tackle inequality based on recommendations from a commission that concluded there [*was no systemic racism in Britain.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9yYWNlLWluZXF1YWxpdHktZ292ZXJubWVudC1zZXdlbGwtcmVwb3J0LWIyMDM3NjAxLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B2842229b&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=AnBYZT8lAYxLzqkIOQkONIRwXtAJoICXL0uFAQKhd%2Fw%3D&reserved=0) The Inclusion Britain strategy, published on Wednesday evening, was developed in response to a controversial report by the Commission on Race and Ethnic Disparities (CRED) last year.Lack of opportunity should not be seen "solely through the prism of ethnic minority disadvantage", said equalities minister Kemi Badenoch in an introduction to the 97-page plan which aims to "counter the pessimism that often prevails in debates about race in 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. On the record "I think you'd need to talk to the Saudis about that. But I think there was an understanding of the need to ensure stability in global oil markets and gas markets."Johnson fails to get public commitment from Saudis to increase oil production.From the Twitterati"It's extraordinary to think that in the ultra-connected world of 2022 most Russian citizens still have no idea about the atrocious war crimes being committed by their government."FT chief politics commentator Jim Pickard on Ukraine war.Essential readingAndrew Grice, The Independent: [*The Tories are blaming everyone but themselves over the refugee crisis*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdm9pY2VzL3JlZnVnZWVzLWhvbWUtb2ZmaWNlLXByaXRpLXBhdGVsLXVrcmFpbmUtYjIwMzY5NjQuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bb1ff64c5&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=xbchFHUM1XnMr3jPwD43%2FvY0sb%2BtEUhXeG8QvtHssfI%3D&reserved=0) Holly Baxter, The Independent: [*Zelensky's address to Congress was direct and disturbing*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdm9pY2VzL3plbGVuc2t5LXNwZWVjaC1jb25ncmVzcy1iaWRlbi1sYXZyb3YtbmVnb3RpYXRpbmctYjIwMzcxODIuaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B63909696&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=xyOLGRAGcG08sadoheKGbxd9eR0Fap%2Bcso4lLi8uohl%3D&reserved=0) Katy Balls, The Spectator: [*How the Foreign Office secured Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe's release*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuc3BlY3RhdG9yLmNvLnVrL2FydGljbGUvaG93LW5hemFuaW4temFnaGFyaS1yYXRjbGlmZmUtcy1zaXgteWVhci1uaWdodG1hcmUtY2FtZS10by1hbi1lbmQ%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B66b52748&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=aV6smY20fY5rmbr70w6eKxq2jqxYEWaHRxKUfhuljZE%3D&reserved=0) Anne Applebaum, The Atlantic: [*America needs a better plan to fight autocracy*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhlYXRsYW50aWMuY29tL2lkZWFzL2FyY2hpdmUvMjAyMi8wMy9ydXNzaWEtdWtyYWluZS1zZW5hdGUtdGVzdGltb255LWF1dG9jcmFjeS1rbGVwdG9jcmF0cy82MjcwNjEv%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B52e6e0b4&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=4DwJ86fhS%2Bq1Vk4uD%2BsmKpseFuA1IovYlJz0eU%2B5oic%3D&reserved=0)

Sign up [*here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27053585.45493%2FaHR0cHM6Ly9ldXIwMi5zYWZlbGlua3MucHJvdGVjdGlvbi5vdXRsb29rLmNvbS8_%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B8be4c4d5&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C71415bf35bd94149a48c08da07f083ad%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637831026849632799%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=LAVhloiTKvg0ZI%2B%2BBzDNDk6IAMkJ%2Bbao7X0UXJPHYMI%3D&reserved=0) to receive this free briefing in your email inbox each weekday

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

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[*Meet the rescuers trying to save fleeing Ukrainians: 'The hardest part was I could only take four people'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YG-8PN1-DY4H-K3JF-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 9, 2022 Wednesday 2:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 1456 words

**Byline:** David Cohen

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL : David Cohen has spoken to those who have dropped everything and driven to the Polish border to help Ukrainians seeking refuge as part of our Refugees Welcome campaign coverage

**Body**

On the day that the number of refugees fleeing[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) officially passed 2 million, Maarten Roelofs from the Netherlands was focused on finding just one of them - a woman, 33-weeks pregnant, who could give birth at any moment.

At the thronging Medyka border-crossing into [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , Maarten and his neighbour Hans van Wyk split up to cover the exits, holding up hand-made signs that said "Ellen" and peered urgently into the faces of the exhausted women streaming endlessly towards them.

The two men had driven 15 hours from Haarlem and had arrived at 9.30am on Tuesday morning. Hans, 47, an event manager, had never met Ellen and only had a photograph to rely on. But Maarten, 49, who owns a digital design company, knew Ellen as the wife of a former employee who had fled Donetsk and then Kyiv -and whose husband had desperately turned to him for help.

"Maarten sent out a WhatsApp to our street group and asked if someone could accompany him on a 15-hour drive to bring Ellen to safety," said Hans.

"I thought, yes, I can do that and so I took off work. We have been here a few hours and it is dramatic and completely heartbreaking. I cannot imagine the stress of leaving homes and husbands and, in Ellen's, case being heavily pregnant with her first baby and having to flee bombing and shelling not once but twice."

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

So far our appeal has raised £125,000 for the people of Ukraine, but they need more, please give what you can to help support them.

They were just two of a growing but indeterminate number of people who have travelled across Europe "to lend a hand", often to save friends of friends or people they barely know.

At Medyka and two other border points we visited, we spoke to people who had driven in from Switzerland, Italy, Germany, the Czech Republic and Portugal, some holding crude signs like Maarten and Hans, and many waiting up to 24 hours in the freezing cold to pick people up.

These were ordinary people doing extraordinary things -their heart-warming acts of kindness leavening an otherwise bleak and pitiful scene at the border.

Among these unsung heroes was Nick Horseman, 62, known by officials at the Korczowa border point as "the man from London" - even though he is from Hampshire. Nick, a semi-retired, self-made millionaire who lives in a £3m house in the village of Hook, took 30 hours to drive to the Polish Ukrainian border four days ago.

His aim was to bring in essential provisions and medical supplies, but he was so moved by the scale of the unfolding human disaster that he had stayed to help.

He has since ferried 20 women and children (and the occasional dog) to safety, driving 14 hours a day and spending £3,000 of his own money to pay for their first night's accommodation in a hotel and hot meals on their way to wherever they ask to go.

We met Nick at the McDonald's over the road from a giant humanitarian aid centre that has been set up a few miles from the border in Przemysl where thousands of refugees waited in a massive, emptied out mall amid mountains of aid clothing and people dispensing hot food - and then later accompanied him to Przemysl station where 1,500 more Ukrainians arrived on the 6.15pm train from Lviv.

The destination showing at the front of the train, lit up in orange, had been changed from Przemysl to two words: "Putin D\*\*\*head."

Nick said: "When I arrived on Saturday, it was much more chaotic at the Medyka and Korczowa reception centres than it is now and you had a real sense of women and children in peril. People were exhausted and desperate. You would tell the official where you were driving and he would shout "Krakow" and point to you and suddenly you would have women and children surging towards you. The hardest part was that I could only take four people in my car and so I had to choose."

Nick, a divorced father of two who is dyslexic and left school at 14, said he was moved to come because he found himself glued to TV coverage for days and decided he could no longer stand idly by.

"My father was a war hero, he fought with the Desert Rats and was held in a POW camp in Poland for three years after being captured in north Africa," he said. "He survived the death marches at the end of the war but he was skeletal and weighed just six-and-a-half stone."

None of his family background was uppermost as he drove to a coffee shop in Folkestone where they had been collecting aid for Ukrainians.

"We loaded my car to the gunnels with blankets, sleeping bags, chocolate, non-prescription medicines, toothpaste and children's boots and I headed for Poland," he said.

Nick's intention was to drop off the goods and bring a refugee family back to the UK to put up in his home, hoping the regulations regarding ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** would have been eased. But when that didn't happen - the UK have taken just 300 Ukrainians compared to 2,200 in Ireland and more than 1 million entering Poland - he decided to pitch in as he could. The first family he took, two sisters and their children, asked to go to an address three-and-a-half hours away in Krakow.

"They had been queuing for 30 hours at the border and as soon as they got in the car, the children immediately collapsed and fell asleep," he said.

"I will never forget how the mothers looked around at their sleeping children and tears just rolled down their cheeks."

He added: "When I dropped them in Krakow, the one mother said to me, 'I didn't realise there were people like you in the world'. It made me feel so inadequate to receive such extreme gratitude for such a small gesture."

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) .

We want to get 200,000 signatures as soon as we can to help put as much pressure on the government as possible, please add your support today.

He got back in his car and drove back to the border and loaded up with four more women and children.

"Some of them had horrific video footage they told me they had taken themselves on their phones. One woman showed me an animal rescue RSPCA officer being shot dead by Russian soldiers while trying to feed the growing number of stray dogs foraging for food across the city. Another showed me her block of flats with huge chunks missing. All had stories of husbands left behind to fight in Kyiv and Kharkiv, or wherever they came from."

Nick was aware, too, of dark rumours circulating that some men picking up women at the border could be people traffickers masquerading as helpers. Signs at the reception centres gave women advice on how to protect themselves.

"It is a major concern," said Nick. "There are no checks on the drivers by the authorities at all. I was very worried about it, but then I decided it's not a good enough reason to stop helping. I was supposed to be walking the Camino de Santiago across northern Spain this week, but I have decided to stay a week or two more, as long as I can make a difference."

Meanwhile Maarten had news to report. "Ellen has come through the border, we have got her and five other refugees including another pregnant woman and her child who needs to go to hospital," he texted yesterday afternoon. Late last night I got another text. "Arrived in Dresden. Have sent the family of 5 (2 kids + pregnant woman + grandmother) to a refugee home." Ellen, he added, was "dead tired" and resting in a hotel. "It's so sad. She didn't want to leave her husband and is afraid she won't see him again. Tomorrow we will take her to a relative in Holland."

Additional reporting, translating, by Sofiia Sas

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**



[*Tributes pour in for 'legend' Fox cameraman killed in Ukraine attack that injured correspondent Benjamin Hall*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650T-8N31-JBNF-W3BM-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 15, 2022 Tuesday 9:32 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 1696 words

**Byline:** Megan Sheets

**Highlight:** 'Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate'

**Body**

Tributes have poured in for a [*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) cameraman who was killed while covering the Russian invasion in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The network announced the death of 55-year-old veteran journalist Pierre Zakrzewski on Tuesday, one day after the vehicle he was traveling with Fox correspondent Benjamin Hall and freelancer Oleksandra "Sasha" Kuvshynova was fired upon by Russian forces. Ms Kuvshynova, 24, was killed and Mr Hall was injured and hospitalised.

[*Ukraine news -live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-zelensky-china-nato-b2035896.html)

In the wake of the news, dozens of Mr Zakrzewski's colleagues have shared their heartbreak at the loss.

Making the announcement live on air, Fox News anchor Bill Hemmer called Mr Zakrzewski "an absolute legend".

"He was a professional, he was a journalist, and he was a friend," Mr Hemmer said. "We here at the Fox News Channel want to offer our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife, Michelle, and his entire family. Pierre Zakrzewski was only 55 years old, and we miss him already."

Fellow anchor John Roberts tweeted: "I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family."

"I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you," Fox correspondent Trey Yingst tweeted.

Horrible news to report: Fox cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski was killed in the same attack that wounded correspondent Benjamin Hall. I worked with Pierre many times around the world. He was an absolute treasure. Sending our most heartfelt prayers to Pierre's wife and family.- John Roberts (@johnrobertsFox) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/johnrobertsFox/status/1503748493004972032?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) I don't know what to say. Pierre was as good as they come. Selfless. Brave. Passionate. I'm so sorry this happened to you. [*pic.twitter.com/IvxlPWGDAl*](https://t.co/IvxlPWGDAl) - Trey Yingst (@TreyYingst) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/TreyYingst/status/1503750514869211149?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Such a fine man. Such a good friend. Such a fantastic war photographer and so much more. RIP Pierre Zakrzewski. [*pic.twitter.com/Q6KJKCuayI*](https://t.co/Q6KJKCuayI) - Jennifer Griffin (@JenGriffinFNC) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/JenGriffinFNC/status/1503757022042505225?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Everyone in the industry knew of, admired and adored Fox News war zone photographer Pierre Zakrzewski. May he Rest In Peace. My thoughts and prayers to his wife and family. [*https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb*](https://t.co/6OvL2BXzlb) - Bryan Llenas (@BryanLlenas) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/BryanLlenas/status/1503749571217928195?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Many outside of Fox also paid tribute, including CNN's international correspondent Scott McLean, who described meeting Mr Zakrzewski in Kyiv two years ago."He was extremely popular in the industry," Mr McLean said. "Everybody seemed to know him."I don't usually drink a lot when I'm on the road because we're busy, but... we were three sheets to the wind because he was just a lovely guy to hang out with.""I don't usually drink a lot when I'm on the road because we're busy, but... we were three sheets to the wind because he was just a lovely guy to hang out with." CNN's [*@scottmclean*](https://twitter.com/scottmclean?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) remembered the "extremely popular" Fox cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski, who was killed in Ukraine. [*pic.twitter.com/OurSJiNtWE*](https://t.co/OurSJiNtWE) - Mediaite (@Mediaite) [*March 15, 2022*](https://twitter.com/Mediaite/status/1503802085736960009?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Fox News CEO Suzanne Scott echoed colleagues' remarks in a statement announcing Mr Zakrzewski's death.

"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 read.

"Pierre was a war zone photographer who covered nearly every international story for FOX News from Iraq to Afghanistan to Syria during his long tenure with us. His passion and talent as a journalist were unmatched. Based in London, Pierre had been working in Ukraine since February. His talents were fast and there wasn't a role that he didn't jump in to help with in the field -from photographer to engineer to editor to producer -and he did it all under immense pressure with tremendous skill.

"He was profoundly committed to telling the store and his bravery, professionalism and work ethic were renowned among journalists at every media outlet. He was wildly popular -everyone in the media industry who has covered a foreign story knew and respected Pierre."

"We extend our deepest condolences to Pierre's wife Michelle and family -please keep them all in your prayers. And please continue to pray for Benjamin Hall, who remains hospitalized in Ukraine. We will continue to be in touch with any further updates as needed."

Ms Scott hadannounced the hospitalisation of Mr Hall -a British-American journalist serving as the network's State Department correspondent who has previouslywritten for The Independent-in a memo to colleagues on Monday afternoon which did not reveal what had happened, the extent of his injuries or that Mr Zakrzewski was also injured in the same attack.

"Earlier today, our correspondent Benjamin Hall was injured while news gathering outside of Kyiv in Ukraine," the Monday memo read. "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."

On Tuesday, Ukraine's Ministry of Defence said Mr Hall hadlost part of his leg and confirmed that Ukrainian journalist Ms Kurshynova had also been killed.

Fox News [*addressed Ms Kurshynova's death in another statement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/fox-journalist-killed-ukraine-russia-benjamin-hall-b2036613.html) hours after the one about Mr Zakrzewksi.

Ms Scott said they held off on reporting the death of Ms Kuvshynova earlier "out of respect for her family whom we have been in touch with throughout and we extend our deepest condolences to them".

"In our efforts to keep you updated on yesterday's tragic events, we want to report that journalist Oleksandra 'Sasha' Kuvshynova was also killed alongside our cameraman Pierre Zakrzewski when their vehicle was struck by incoming fire yesterday while in the field with Benjamin Hall," she wrote.

"Sasha was just 24 years old and was working as a consultant for us in Ukraine. She was helping our crews navigate Kyiv and the surrounding area while gathering information and speaking to sources.

"She was incredibly talented and spent weeks working directly with our entire team there, operating around the clock."

The attack on the Fox News crew came just a day after American journalist Brett Renaud was shot and killed by Russian forces in Irpin while on an assignment for TIME magazine.

Mr Renaud 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. A second American journalist was also wounded and taken to hospital.

[*White House Press Secretary Jen Psaki said*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/fox-reporter-ukraine-benjamin-hall-psaki-b2035713.html) Joe Biden was thinking of Mr Hall on Monday when asked about the situation and the president's previous pledge to "respond forcefully" if any Americans were harmed in Ukraine.

"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 in Monday's press briefing.

She added that Mr Biden has been "leading the world" in putting "consequences" and "repercussions" in place in the form of crippling economic sanctions.

US State Department spokesman Ned Price also addressed Mr Hall at his daily press briefing on Tuesday, saying the Biden administration would [*do "everything possible" to help the injured journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/fox-reporter-state-department-ukraine-b2036560.html).

As the Fox News community mourns the deaths of Mr Zakrzewski and Ms Kuvshynova and prays for Mr Hall's recovery, some of the networks own hosts have come under fire for promotive misleading narratives about the [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) -Ukraine conflict that increasingly flatter the Kremlin's version of events.

The most controversial host is[*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) , whose show is reliably among the most-watched pundit on cable news. Having often questioned before the conflict why anyone in the US should root for Ukraine (a well-established American ally) against Russia (an authoritarian adversary), he has lately helped introduce a[*conspiracy theory*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/ukraine-russia-kremlin-qanon-white-house-b2034074.html) about US-funded and operated biolabs in Ukraine that have supposedly been developing bioweapons.

On Monday, Fox and Friends co-host Rachel Campos-Duffy further scrambled her network's mixed messages about the conflict by raising the argument that the conflict is in fact the west's fault.

The host asserted that the US "provoked" Russia by allowing the prospect of Ukraine becoming a member of Nato.

"They made very clear that there was a red line," she said. "The red line was a neutrality for Ukraine, that they could not enter Nato." (Ukraine is still not a Nato member.) "And in the end, if they get this peace agreement ... that's probably going to end up being the case anyway."

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**



[*Refugee count tops 1 million; Russians besiege Ukraine ports*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X5-4Y41-JBNF-W1DY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 6:07 AM GMT

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**Section:** NEWS; Version:2

**Length:** 1516 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Highlight:** The U.N. refugee agency says 1 million people have fled Ukraine since Russia's attack began, making it the swiftest exodus of refugees this century

**Body**

The number of people sent fleeing Ukraine by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's invasion topped 1 million on Wednesday, the swiftest refugee exodus this century, the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) said, as Russian forces kept up their bombardment of the country's second-biggest city, [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , and laid siege to two strategic seaports.

The tally from the U.N. refugee agency released to The Associated Press amounts to more than 2% of Ukraine's population being forced out of the country in less than a week. The mass evacuation could be seen in Kharkiv, where residents desperate to get away from falling shells and bombs crowded the city's train station and tried to press onto trains, not always knowing where they were headed.

In a videotaped address, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Ukrainians to keep up the resistance. He vowed that the invaders would have "not one quiet moment" and described Russian soldiers as "confused children who have been used."

Moscow's isolation deepened when most of the world lined up against it at the United Nations to demand it withdraw from Ukraine. And the prosecutor for the International Criminal Court opened an investigation into possible war crimes.

With fighting going on on multiple fronts across the country, Britain's Defense Ministry said Mariupol, a large city on the Azov Sea, was encircled by Russian forces, while the status of another vital port, [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) , a Black Sea shipbuilding city of 280,000, remained unclear.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's forces claimed to have taken complete control of Kherson, which would make it the biggest city to fall yet in the invasion. A senior U.S. defense official disputed that.

"Our view is that Kherson is very much a contested city," the official said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Zelenskyy's office told the AP that it could not comment on the situation in Kherson while the fighting was still going on.

The mayor of Kherson, Igor Kolykhaev, said Russian soldiers were in the city and came to the city administration building. He said he asked them not to shoot civilians and to allow crews to gather up the bodies from the streets.

"We don't have any Ukrainian forces in the city, only civilians and people here who want to LIVE," he said in a statement later posted on Facebook.

The mayor said Kherson would maintain a strict 8 p.m.-to-6 a.m. curfew and restrict traffic into the city to food and medicine deliveries. The city will also require pedestrians to walk in groups no larger than two, obey commands to stop and not to "provoke the troops."

"The flag flying over us is Ukrainian," he wrote. "And for it to stay that way, these demands must be observed."

Mariupol Mayor Vadym Boychenko said the attacks there had been relentless.

"We cannot even take the wounded from the streets, from houses and apartments today, since the shelling does not stop," he was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying.

Russia reported its military casualties for the first time since the invasion began last week, saying nearly 500 of its troops have been killed and almost 1,600 wounded. Ukraine did not disclose its own military losses but said more than 2,000 civilians have died, a claim that could not be independently verified.

In a video address to the nation early Thursday, Zelenskyy praised his country's resistance.

"We are a people who in a week have destroyed the plans of the enemy," he said. "They will have no peace here. They will have no food. They will have here not one quiet moment."

He said the fighting is taking a toll on the morale of Russian soldiers, who "go into grocery stores and try to find something to eat."

"These are not warriors of a superpower," he said. "These are confused children who have been used."

Meanwhile, the senior U.S. defense official said an immense column of hundreds of tanks and other vehicles appeared to be stalled roughly 25 kilometers (16 miles) from Kyiv and had made no real progress in the last couple of days.

The convoy, which earlier in the week had seemed poised to launch an assault on the capital, has been plagued with fuel and food shortages, the official said.

On the far edges of Kyiv, volunteers well into their 60s manned a checkpoint to try to block the Russian advance.

"In my old age, I had to take up arms," said Andrey Goncharuk, 68. He said the fighters needed more weapons, but "we'll kill the enemy and take their weapons."

Around Ukraine, others crowded into train stations, carrying children wrapped in blankets and dragging wheeled suitcases into new lives as refugees.

In an email, U.N. refugee agency spokesperson Joung-ah Ghedini-Williams told the AP that the refugee count surpassed 1 million as of midnight in central Europe, based on figures collected by national authorities.

Shabia Mantoo, another spokesperson for the agency, said that "at this rate" the exodus from Ukraine could make it the source of "the biggest refugee crisis this century."

A large explosion shook central Kyiv on Wednesday night in what the president's office said was a missile strike near the capital city's southern railway station. There was no immediate word on any deaths or injuries.

Russian forces pounded Kharkiv, Ukraine's biggest city after Kyiv, with about 1.5 million people, in another round of aerial attacks that shattered buildings and lit up the skyline with flames. At least 21 people were killed over the past day, said Oleg Sinehubov, head of the Kharkiv regional administration.

Several Russian planes were shot down over Kharkiv, according to Oleksiy Arestovich, a top adviser to Zelenskyy.

"Kharkiv today is the Stalingrad of the 21st century," Arestovich said, invoking what is considered one of the most heroic episodes in Russian history, the five-month defense of the city from the Nazis during World War II.

From his basement bunker, Kharkiv Mayor Igor Terekhov told the BBC: "The city is united and we shall stand fast.''

Russian attacks, many with missiles, blew the roof off Kharkiv's five-story regional police building and set the top floor on fire, and also hit the intelligence headquarters and a university building, according to officials and videos and photos released by Ukraine's State Emergency Service. Officials said residential buildings were also hit, but gave no details.

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency warned that the fighting poses a danger to Ukraine's 15 nuclear reactors.

Rafael Grossi of the International Atomic Energy Agency noted that the war is "the first time a military conflict is happening amid the facilities of a large, established nuclear power program," and he said he is "gravely concerned."

Russia already has seized control of the decommissioned Chernobyl power plant, the scene in 1986 of the world's worst nuclear disaster.

In New York, the U.N. General Assembly voted to demand that Russia stop its offensive and immediately withdraw all troops, with world powers and tiny island states alike condemning Moscow. The vote was 141 to 5, with 35 abstentions.

Assembly resolutions aren't legally binding but can reflect and influence world opinion.

The vote came after the 193-member assembly convened its first emergency session since 1997. The only countries to vote with Russia were Belarus, Syria, North Korea and Eritrea. Cuba spoke in Moscow's defense but ultimately abstained.

Ukraine's U.N. Ambassador Sergiy Kyslytsya said Russian forces "have come to the Ukrainian soil, not only to kill some of us ... they have come to deprive Ukraine of the very right to exist." He added: "The crimes are so barbaric that it is difficult to comprehend."

Russia ramped up its rhetoric. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov reminded the world about the country's vast nuclear arsenal when he said in an interview with Al-Jazeera that "a third world war could only be nuclear."

In other developments:

- A second round of talks aimed at ending the fighting was expected Thursday, but there appeared to be little common ground between the two sides.

- The price of oil continued to soar, reaching $112 per barrel, the highest since 2014.

- Airbus and Boeing said they would cut off spare parts and technical support to the country's airlines, a major blow. Airbus and Boeing jets account for the vast majority or Russia's passenger fleet.

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Isachenkov and Litvinova reported from Moscow; Karmanau reported from Lviv, Ukraine. Mstyslav Chernov in Mariupol, Ukraine; Sergei Grits in Odesa, Ukraine; Francesca Ebel, Josef Federman and Andrew Drake in Kyiv; Jamey Keaten in Geneva; Lynn Berry, Robert Burns and Eric Tucker in Washington; Edith M. Lederer and Jennifer Peltz at the United Nations; and other AP journalists from around the world 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)

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)

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[*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

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[*Ukraine crisis upends Hungary's election race as Orban faces heat over ties with Russia*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64X6-98D1-DY4H-K1R4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 3, 2022 Thursday 1:44 PM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 1577 words

**Byline:** Borzou Daragahi

**Highlight:** Viktor Orban's relationship with Vladimir Putin and the Kremlin is under fresh scrutiny after the invasion and Hungary's opposition coalition is seizing the opportunity to attack, reports Borzou Daragahi in Budapest

**Body**

Thirty-two years ago, an outspoken young Hungarian activist used a simple slogan to gain fame and launch an unparalleled rise in national politics: "Russians, go home!"

Over the last week, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban's political opponents used his own slogan against him, chanting it at demonstrations against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to highlight his cosy ties to the Kremlin and [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ahead of general elections just a month away.

"He's a lapdog of Putin," opposition leader Peter Marki-Zay told a crowd of hundreds gathered on Tuesday evening in front of a controversial Russian state-owned International Investment Bank (IIB), which Mr Orban invited to headquarter in the Hungarian capital. "Orban has betrayed his country, not only for Russia but for the Chinese Communist Party."

The crowd, holding up signs showing Mr Putin's crossed out face, chanted: "Russians, go home!"

With a month before 3 April polls, the usually tertiary issue of European Union (EU) and Nato member [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) 's foreign policy has taken the forefront in an election that had largely hinged on skyrocketing inflation, utility prices and a flawed healthcare system that failed during the pandemic.

The war "overshadows everything," said Mr Marki-Zay during a wide-ranging online briefing with The Independent and half-a-dozen European news outlets. "Everyone is concerned about the war."

Mr Orban, criticised over his authoritarian ways and mishandling of the Covid crisis, was already struggling to gain a decisive edge in the polls, only slightly beating out a unified coalition of his enemies headed by Mr Marki-Zay, a small-town mayor, though he is primed to win because of an electorate favourable to his Fidesz party.

But Moscow's attack on Ukraine, a nation which borders Hungary and is home to hundreds of thousands of ethnic Hungarians, has suddenly changed the dynamics of what had been a relatively subdued race.

[*Watch:* ***Ukrainian******refugees*** *flee to Hungary as Russia's war worsens*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukrainian-refugees-hungary-russia-war-b2027484.html)

"The opposition didn't really have a flagship issue in their campaign," says Andrea Virag, director of strategy at the Republikon Institute, a Hungarian think tank. "Now there is this war, and everyone is interested in it. Politicians are talking about it nonstop."

It appears that Mr Orban's years-long gamble to bolster his power with Kremlin cash and influence is coming to an end. He has spent the last 12 years telling Hungarians that Russia - the same nation that infamously ordered troops to crush the country's 1956 democracy uprising - was now Hungary's friend. Now, in photos, he is almost visibly squirming.

Facing mounting public and international outrage, Mr Orban condemned the Russian attack on Ukraine. After initially resisting, his government announced plans to comply with hard-hitting EU sanctions on Russia which have meant severely downgrading economic connections to Kremlin institutions.

"Now the unity of the EU is paramount," Mr Orban was quoted as saying by a Hungarian news website in an interview on Thursday. "The start of the war has created a new situation for Hungary. We need to adjust Hungary's objectives and the Hungarian interests in this new situation."

But Mr Orban, 58, a master political chameleon who has reinvented himself several times during his career, may find it difficult to untangle his and his country's ties to Russia. And many observers are still suspicious.

"Hungary is always among the last if not the last country to give up resistance to sanctions against Russia," said Andras Biro-Nagy, a political scientist and director of Policy Solutions, a think tank.

"Orban and the Hungarian government always try to play a game where they try to do nothing on Russia until they have no choice. They are always the last ones to fall in line."

Mr Orban began his political career as a young Communist Party activist who had a change of heart against Russia's domination of his country just as Hungary's Soviet-backed regime fell in the late 1980s, reinventing himself as a pro-western and pro-European liberal.

He made his next abrupt U-turn on Russia 12 years ago after a meeting with Mr Putin in Saint Petersburg. Analysts speculate that something happened during the tete-a-tete. After two decades of consistent anti-Russian rhetoric and positions a different man emerged, and there was no more criticism of the Kremlin.

Mr Orban began announcing a raft of new projects with Russia. They included major and ongoing purchases of natural gas from Russia and a multi-billion dollar 2014 loan - equivalent to 10 per cent of Hungary's GDP - to expand a nuclear power plant in collaboration with Rosatom.

"This is how he would link Hungary to the Russian sphere of influence for a long time," said Mr Biro-Nagy.

The chummy relations involved robust financial ties, including the 2019 arrival of the formerly Moscow-based IIB, which has been accused of being a flagship of Russian influence and intelligence, and the 2013 expansion to Hungary of Sberbank, a major Russian bank that was forced file for bankruptcy in the country this week after it came under sanctions.

Meanwhile, wealthy oligarchs began buying up Hungarian residency permits through a golden visa scheme.

Last year, Mr Putin awarded Mr Orban's foreign minister, Peter Szijjarto, the prestigious Russian Order of Friendship for his "great contribution to developing bilateral relations and industrial and investment cooperation".

We have to keep Hungary belonging to the westPeter Marki-Zay, Hungary's opposition leaderOver the last decade, Mr Orban has held more bilateral meetings with Mr Putin than few if any other European leaders; the last meeting was held just days before the war started, with Hungary's leader declaring that his "friend" had said he had no intention of attacking Ukraine.What's more, Mr Orban, the government and pro-government media increasingly started aping Kremlin talking points on hot-button issues, including the EU, Nato, and migration.He and his Fidesz party allies began winning control of major news outlets and targeting civil society groups - often describing them as instruments of "globalists" such as Hungarian-born American philanthropist George Soros. Mr Orban rebranded himself as a populist conservative and began associating with similar figures. He is friendly with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Jair Bolsonaro, the Brazilian president, and ahead of the elections he received the endorsement of former US president Donald Trump. "Orban says he is a populist, he started his career as a Communist, then a liberal, and in my opinion he's a fascist," said Mr Marki-Zay. "He's the ultimate pragmatic. He has no ideology."At the EU and Nato, Hungary was frequently a holdout to moves that would have countered Mr Putin, often voting against measures such as hastening Ukraine's ascension into the western economic and military alliances.The EU and Nato don't trust us as partners because Orban sides with Putin

Benci Tondai, Hungarian lawmaker

There have been numerous reports that European intelligence services have stopped sharing information with Hungary's security services, the TEK, worried that the Kremlin had infiltrated the country's security architecture.

"A lot of people are talking about Hungary's cooperation and dependence with the secret services of Russia," said Ms Virag. "Western secret services are wary of sharing with TEK because they are afraid it will leak to Russia."

In the immediate aftermath of the Ukraine war, Mr Orban's opponents have seized on the Russia connection, and worries that it may now endanger Hungary.

"We can't be trusted in the EU or Nato," Benci Tondai, a member of parliament, told opposition supporters at the Tuesday rally. "They don't trust us as partners. That's because Orban sides with Putin and not with Europe."

Mr Orban has also sought to turn the war to his advantage, feeding on lingering worries about the betrayal of Hungarians by the west during their 1956 uprising against the Soviet Union. He has accused the opposition of being "warmongers" who wanted to drag Hungary into the war by sending Hungarian military personnel and dispatching weapons.

Not even Ukrainians have called for foreign troops. And Mr Orban himself belatedly allowed Nato weapons and war materials into Ukraine. But among both Fidesz supporters and other Hungarians there remains persistent hostility to the west's intentions.

"What Orban has been doing for the last 12 years is arguing that the west cannot be trusted, that we need to rely not only on allies," said Ms Virag.

Using the same argument, Mr Orban has also signed deals with China that have come under criticism, especially a multibillion-dollar high-speed rail project between Budapest and the capital of Serbia, another client of Russia.

"Orban is convinced that the west is in decline and the east is rising and we have to have as good relations with China and Russia as possible," said Mr Biro-Nagy.

But if the vision of a sovereign Hungary able to find a place between east and west bolstered Mr Orban's narrative, the image of him coddling a dictator and alleged war criminal instead of its long-time western allies and partners underscores the opposition's message -that he has so enmeshed Hungary in Mr Putin's designs that only outsiders can extricate it.

"We have to keep Hungary belonging to the west," said Mr Marki-Zay, speaking to reporters. "And a traitor is not acceptable as prime minister of Hungary."

**Load-Date:** March 3, 2022

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[*They fled Putin's war too, but Britain won't help because of their nationality*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KX-25F1-JCS0-D42X-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

October 13, 2022 Thursday

Second Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 17

**Length:** 1668 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN

**Body**

Deborah Amoda's heart still races with fear every time she hears a loud noise. She can't shake the memory of bombs crashing around her, the terror each time the air raid sounded and she had to sprint to the nearest shelter in Kharkiv, her home of three years as she studied medicine.

Six months on from the start of Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, though the 19-year-old Nigerian has escaped to safety, she faces yet more anguish. All she wants is to be with her close family in the UK - but while Ukrainian nationals are welcomed to Britain, Deborah is being blocked from doing so. Instead, she is living hundreds of miles away in an unfamiliar city, alone.

Several weeks ago, alone in her flat in Duisburg, Germany, Deborah heard fireworks going off outside during a festival. She thought the noises were explosions. "The night it happened, I was watching a movie and started hearing, 'Boom, boom, boom.' I had to lay flat on the floor. I called my mum, I was crying. I was telling her I don't want to die."

The UK government announced two designated schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** when the war hit: one allowing refugees to join family members in Britain and the other permitting them to join UK citizens willing to host them. However, they required that the applicant either had a Ukrainian passport themselves or was travelling with or joining a Ukrainian national.

These restrictions fail to take into account Ukraine's international population. There were nearly half a million non-Ukrainians with temporary or permanent residence when the Russian invasion started, including more than 76,000 foreign students, mostly from Africa and southeast Asia. Many had chosen to study in Ukraine because they couldn't access study programmes such as medicine, dentistry and engineering in their home countries, and the Ukrainian university fees are cheaper than in many other European countries.

Data from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) shows 325,000 third-country nationals have fled from Ukraine to neighbouring countries since the start of the war. They have become, in effect, Ukraine's forgotten refugees - though they have fled the same Russian attacks as Ukrainian nationals, they are facing barriers to starting their lives again in the UK and across Europe, an investigation by Lighthouse Reports has found.

The Independent's Refugees Welcome campaign has called for the UK to lead the way in supporting those forced to flee the war in Ukraine.

'I feel very alone'

Deborah's parents and three siblings moved from Nigeria to Sheffield a year ago. They are now settled there: her mother is working in a care home, her father is a factory worker and her younger siblings are in school. But the government's exclusion of third-country national residents in Ukraine means she cannot join them, despite all the hardship she has faced. She describes spending two days sleeping on the floor of a metro station in Kyiv and waiting for hours on platforms in the snow due to difficulties boarding trains out of the country - something she attributes in part to racism.

"I thought applying for the scheme would work. The only logical thing I want to do is to be with my family," says Deborah. "I want to have a normal life back. I want to go to school, I want to study. I want to have goals again. My mum is trying everything, trying to look for every option for how I can join them in the UK, but right now it seems like there's nothing. I try not to let it get to me, but I feel very alone."

The Home Office refuses to say how many people are in the same position as Deborah - while the department publishes data on applications to the schemes from Ukrainians and their family members, those who do not fit this criteria are excluded.

Nonetheless, even those who are related to Ukrainians - indicating that they should be eligible - have a far higher refusal rate than Ukrainian nationals, at 14 per cent compared with 0.4 per cent. A much higher proportion of third-country nationals with Ukrainian family members are also still waiting for a decision on their applications, at 45 per cent compared with 7 per cent.

Fleeing war for the second time

As well as tens of thousands of international students, there were more than 3,000 asylum seekers and refugees in Ukraine when war hit. Many others who moved to Ukraine after fleeing persecution in their own countries are believed to have been on work and business visas.

Kamran Mehdipour, 43, had been living in Kyiv for six years on a business visa when he was forced out of his home for a second time - while this time it was Russian bombs that led him to flee, in 2016 he had been forced to escape Iran after threats from the authorities over the political campaigning of his brother, Peyman, now a refugee in the UK.

Three days after the invasion started, Kamran rushed out of his rental apartment with nothing but a small rucksack and his three beloved dogs - Ice, Snow, and Darchin. He had to leave behind the grocery shop and deli he had set up in the Ukrainian capital.

"We left in a rush. With two friends, I got a lift to a place 25 kilometres from the Polish border, and we walked the rest," he says. "I thought I would be able to go home again soon, but three months after I left, my old neighbour went to pick something up and sent me a picture of my apartment - it had been destroyed by a bomb."

His brother Peyman, now a British citizen who owns a shop owner in Elgin, northern Scotland, contacted the Home Office helpline for advice on how his brother could join him in the UK. He says he was told he could apply under the Ukraine family scheme.

The brothers immediately booked a visa appointment at the visa centre in Berlin and met in Germany to register an application. They then waited for three months to be told they had been refused on the basis that Peyman is not Ukrainian.

While Peyman is trying to appeal, Kamran is living in a makeshift refugee camp in Leer, a small town in northwestern Germany. He sleeps on a camp bed separated from other refugees by thin planks of plywood. Most people there are Ukrainians, who arrive and leave again to a new home within a matter of days, he says. Kamran has been there for more than three months.

"It's not good. I feel lost. I feel I don't belong anywhere," says the 42-year-old. "When I was in Ukraine I was treated like a Ukrainian. I was being taxed like a Ukrainian. But now I'm here with nothing. I share a bathroom: four toilets, six showers between 150 people."

'Cruel and senseless exclusions'

Anais Crane, a caseworker at charity Here for Good, who is representing the brothers, says her team was contacted by several third-country nationals who had been residing in Ukraine lawfully and were now unable to join family in the UK. "In some cases, they have already fled persecution or internal conflicts in their country of origin, only to be forced to flee again - this time from Ukraine," she said. "They cannot return to their country of origin."

A UK government spokesperson said they would not comment on individual cases, but added that the Ukraine schemes were designed for Ukrainian nationals and that non-Ukrainians displaced by the war could apply to come to the UK "through one of our safe and legal routes, including work and study visa schemes".

However, experts point out that these routes are difficult to access. Madeleine Sumption, of the Migration Observatory at Oxford University, says: "In theory non-Ukrainians displaced by the war could apply for other visas, but this is no easy undertaking. Work and study visas in the UK are expensive. And people would either need to secure a skilled job offer from an employer who is a licensed sponsor and is willing to pay the substantial fees, or get admitted to a university or college where they can afford the international student tuition rates. There is no humanitarian visa to come to the UK."

Indeed, no such route is available to Ahmad, 35, who fled from Afghanistan to Ukraine in 2015. He had come under threat from the Taliban because his brother, Idres Bakhshi, had worked for the British army in Helmand Province and was relocated to the UK in 2014. Ahmad built a life for himself in Ukraine -- until the Russian invasion began.

Unable to return to Afghanistan with the Taliban now in power, Ahmad applied to join his brother Idres, 34, who is now a British citizen living in Colchester, under the Ukraine Family Scheme. But after three months, he received a rejection letter stating that he was not eligible because neither of the brothers was related to a Ukrainian.

The 35-year-old is in Hamburg, Germany, with no immigration status. He has requested temporary protection but is still waiting for a decision. He is staying with a friend of a friend but feels he has outstayed his welcome. Idres says his brother spends his days "walking around in the street, basically like a beggar".

"I work full-time," says Idres. "I've been sending him money in Germany. Why should I be sending him money if he could be here, and I have a place for him to live?" he says. "I never ever thought the application would be refused. He lived in Ukraine, I'm a British citizen, I worked for the British army. I was sure it was going to be fine. When I received the refusal I couldn't tell my brother for two days. It was so hard to tell him."

Zehrah Hasan, of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which has been supporting Idres and Mohammad, said the UK government's "piecemeal, discriminatory" Ukrainian refugee policy had led to "heartache, destitution and fear for the many refugees left stranded".

"It cannot be right that young Nigerian students, or repeat-refugees, having already fled war in Afghanistan, have been blocked from joining family in the UK. We know that many refugees are in dire straits in mainland Europe, whereas they have the community support they need to rebuild their lives here in the UK," she added.

"It's time they end the cruel and senseless exclusions built into their refugee policies."

**Load-Date:** October 12, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson news: Michael Gove reveals 'Homes for Ukraine' sponsorship scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650G-MKS1-DY4H-K3TY-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 14, 2022 Monday 5:42 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:9

**Length:** 169 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar,Liam James and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Government launches new website where public can declare interest in opening their homes

**Body**

Housing secretary [*Michael Gove*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/michael-gove) has unveiled the government's "Homes for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) " sponsorship scheme, amid heavy criticism of the UK's visa policy.

With the latest government figures showing Britain has issued just 4,000 visas to ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) , Mr Gove said the scheme will offer those who provide a home for refugees fleeing Vladimir Putin's war a monthly payment of £350.

It comes as [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) plans to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the hope Saudi Arabia can raise its production of oil and gas to make up for a reduced reliance on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Downing Street has said the government will be "raising" [*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) 's execution of 81 men in a single day with the regime in [*Riyadh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/riyadh) , with Mr Johnson's official spokesperson insisting the government does not "shy away" from raising human rights issues with its allies.

Over the weekend, the country's state-run Saudi Press Agency announced that 81 men were executed over a variety of crimes - Saudi Arabia's largest mass execution in recent history.

**Load-Date:** March 14, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson news -live: Sunak hints at cost-of-living help as UK launches first phase of Ukraine scheme*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:651B-HDH1-JBNF-W3F0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 5:52 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 170 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh,Andy Gregory and Eleanor Sly

**Highlight:** The first phase of the Homes for Ukraine programme will launch on Friday

**Body**

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) has hinted there may be help for families battling the cost of living crisis in next week's mini-budget.

Hard-pressed Brits are being squeezed by rising energy bills, sky-rocketing petrol prices and an increase in national insurance contributions. The chancellor told Tory activists at the Conservative conference in Blackpool today: "Where we can make a difference... I'm always going to do that."

It come as the government has ditched plans to limit MPs' earnings from second jobs in a major rethink over the issue which sparked a sleaze scandal at Westminster, prompting [*Sir Keir Starmer*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sir-keir-starmer) to accuse the PM of "breaking his promise yet again".

Meanwhile, from Friday, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** without family members in the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) will be able to apply for visas under the new "Homes for Ukraine" scheme.

More than 150,000 Britons have registered their interest in taking in Ukrainians, and the government is currently working with a number of charities and NGOs to work out the best way to match people with host families.

**Load-Date:** March 18, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson news -live: Seven oligarchs sanctioned by UK amid Home Office visa U-turn*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64YM-S021-JBNF-W1NV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 10, 2022 Thursday 5:54 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:5

**Length:** 176 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar and Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** 'Blood of Ukrainian people is on their hands', says Truss

**Body**

The UK government this morning announced [*sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sanctions) against seven Russian [*oligarchs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oligarchs) , including Chelsea owner [*Roman Abramovich*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roman-abramovich).

The Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) have estimated a £15bn sanction hit in total.

Abramovich joins leading industrialist Oleg Deripaska, worth £2 billion, Rosneft CEO Igor Sechin and Alexei Miller, CEO of energy company Gazprom on the list of newly-sanctioned oligarchs

Foreign secretary Liz Truss said: "Today's sanctions show once again that oligarchs and kleptocrats have no place in our economy or society. With their close links to Putin they are complicit in his aggression.

"The blood of the Ukrainian people is on their hands. They should hang their heads in shame.

"Our support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) will not waver. We will not stop in this mission to ramp up the pressure on the Putin regime and choke off funds to his brutal war machine."

It comes as ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with passports who have relatives in the UK will now be able to come to Britain online, in a Home Office U-turn announced by the home secretary.

**Load-Date:** March 10, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war -live: Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69FW-B311-JBNF-W247-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 23, 2023 Monday 4:08 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:41

**Length:** 7173 words

**Byline:** Maryam Zakir-Hussain,Tara Cobham and Maira Butt

**Highlight:** Moscow’s offensive in Avdiivka sees 90 per cent increase in Russian casualties, Ukraine claims

**Body**

Russian forces have pushed more troops to the frontline in Avdiivka [*despite a failing offensive which has incurred heavy losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainian%20and%20Russian%20forces%20clashed%2082%20times%20in%20a%20single%20day) , the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) has said.

The Ukrainian ministry of defence also claimed the recent Russian assaults in Avdiivka have contributed to “a 90 per cent increase in Russian casualties”.

Avdiivka has become a watchword for resistance, viewed as the gateway to recapturing the Russian-held city of Donetsk and the rest of Donbas.

It comes as the UK defence ministry estimated [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has amassed “150,000-190,000 permanent casualties” in the war with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that the Russian military is deploying personnel from Russian territory directly to the Avdiivka direction to replace personnel losses, according to the ISW.

In other developments,[*six people have been killed in a Russian missile attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) that hit a postal distribution centre in Kharkiv, Ukrainian officials have said, as Kherson has seen a record number of bomb attacks in the past 24 hours.

Key Points

Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive Putin forced to increase number of soldiers on ground as UK estimates death toll Six killed in Russia’s missile attack on Kharkiv postal centre, says Ukraine Ukraine destroys all Russia-launched drones and cruise missile in overnight attacks

Ukraine orders evacuation of 802 children

Ukrainian authorities ordered a mandatory evacuation of 802 children from 23 settlements in Kherson, according to the Reintegration Ministry.

The children with their parents or legal guardians will leave the Beryslav, Kakhovka, and Kherson districts for safer regions, the ministry said on Telegram.

Over 500 Ukrainian children have been [*killed*](https://childrenofwar.gov.ua/en/) and 1,138 wounded since the start of Russia’s full-scale war against Ukraine, according to the Children of War database.

Kremlin rejects claims about Putin’s ill health

Claims that Vladimir Putin is unwell are an “absurd hoax”, the Kremlin’s spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said.

It comes after reports emerged on the Telegram messaging app claiming Putin had suffered a cardiac arrest on Sunday evening.

The channel said Putin was “very ill” and unlikely to live until the end of autumn, with all official meetings conducted by a body double.

Ukraine ‘empowered’ to go after oligarchs

Ukraine feels empowered to go after some of the country’s most corrupt and powerful oligarchs, its justice minister has said.

Ukrainian justice minister Denys Maliuska said: “Everyone was afraid of the consequences of indicting oligarchs but this is no longer the case.”

The country saw a growth in oligarchs after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, when state assets were transferred to private owners, concentrating wealth into the hands of a few owners.

Russia has lost almost 300,000 personnel during war, Ukraine claims

Russia has lost almost 300,000 personnel since the start of the war, Ukraine has claimed.

The Defence Ministry of Ukraine this morning said that [*Russia*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/russia) has lost 295,510 personnel, an increase of 810 since Monday.

It claimed the losses included 5,105 tanks, 7,081 artillery, 320 aircraft and 9,447 vehicles and fuel tanks.

"Just one small positive thought in the morning can change your whole day."Dalai LamaThe combat losses of the enemy from February 24, 2022 to October 24, 2023. [*pic.twitter.com/5jUgdjaHoR*](https://t.co/5jUgdjaHoR) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*October 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1716686620651290964?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Two die in Russian shelling of Ukraine, governor says 08:49 , Alexander Butler Two people have died and a further 14 were injured, including one child, in Russian shelling of Kherson, the local governor claimed.“The Russian military targeted the residential quarters of the populated areas of the region; a critical infrastructure facility and plant in Beryslav; the territory of the park in Kherson.“As a result of the Russian aggression, 2 people died, another 14 were injured, including 1 child,” regional governor Oleksandr Prokudin posted on Telegram. He said Russia has launched 101 attacks, firing 597 shells over the past day.Russia dependent on ‘penal battalions’08:02 , Alexander Butler The Russian Army is dependent on “penal battalions” manned with convicts and regular troops for offensive operations in Ukraine, the UK Ministry of Defence said.“Russia largely continues to rely on specially designated ‘Shtorm-Z’ units for local offensive operations in Ukraine,” it said on X, formerly Twitter.“There is a realistic possibility that Russia originally envisioned them as relatively elite organisations which could seize the tactical initiative.“However, since at least spring 2023, Shtorm-Z have effectively become penal battalions, manned with convicts and regular troops.”Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 24 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/79CDk9T6Ek*](https://t.co/79CDk9T6Ek) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/SbVZv1JTOD*](https://t.co/SbVZv1JTOD) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1716698567908221209?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia destroys three Ukrainian uncrewed boats off Crimea07:35 , Alexander Butler Russian naval forces have destroyed three unmanned Ukrainian boats in the Black Sea, Russia’s defence ministry claimed.“Anti-sabotage missiles and bombs hit the area where the unmanned boats were detected,” the ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.It added that an anti-mining and an “anti-sabotage” operation was being carried out off Sevastopol port, which is home to Russia’s Black Sea Fleet.The Ukrainian ministry of defence has been contacted for comment.Russian-American journalist has pre-trial detention extended07:03 , Maira Butt A Russian-American journalist who is accused of breaking Russia’s law on foreign agents has had her pre-trial detention extended until Monday 5 December according to Reuters. Alsu Kurmasheva is a Prague-based journalist for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) funded by the US Congress and designated as a foregn agent due to foreign funding for activity deemed to be political. A Russian-American journalist who stands accused of breaking Russia’s law on foreign agents had her pre-trial detention extended on Monday until Dec. 5.RFE/RL said Kurmasheva entered Russia on May 20 for a family emergency when she was detained and her passports confiscated. She was charged last week with failure to register as a foreign agent, an offence that carries up to five years in prison. A 61-year-old volunteer who helped hundreds of Ukrainians flee has been arrested by Russia06:09 , Maira Butt A 61 year old Russian man, Alexander Demidenko, has been arrested in Russia’s Belgorod region according to local media reported by Meduza. Demidenko is said to have been abducted on the [*Russia-Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) border on 17 October. He is reported to be a volunteer who has helped hudnreds of [*Ukrainian citizens in Russia*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-anthony-pratt-audio-secrets-b2434681.html%22%20title=%22Key%20revelations%20from%20leaked%20audio%20of%20Australian%20billionaire%20bragging%20about%20what%20Trump%20told%20him) return to Ukraine. His wife Natalia says he was brought to their home briefly on 20 October and that she noticed bruises all over his body. He had reportedly been helping an elderly woman with cancer cross the border when he was arrested. According to Meduza, a Telegram channel Astra, suggests he has been arrested for drinking alcohol in public and has been charged with a felony for arms trafficking. Ukrainian priest among those arrested for theft of £52million jewels05:05 , Maira Butt A [*Ukrainian priest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) is among five arrested for the trafficking of ancient archaeological finds from Ukraine according to Sky News. Spanish police arrested three Spaniards and two Ukrainians in their operation which they say they had been working on for months. The elevel artefacts made of Scythian gold were said to date from between the eighth and fourth centuries BC and are estimated to be worth £52 million. Zelensky prepares for Second Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform04:09 , Maira Butt President [*Volodmyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) has said in a recorded message to the nation: “It is important to keep Ukraine and the defense of freedom and international law in the global spotlight.”He praised the resilience of the Ukrainian people and the said he was “especially grateful” to those fighting at the front in Avdiyivka. He cited a number of international events of [*importance to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-turkey-tayyip-erdogan-nato-b2434512.html%22%20title=%22Turkey's%20president%20submits%20protocol%20for%20Sweden's%20admission%20into%20NATO%20to%20parliament%20for%20ratification) in the future including the Second Parliamentary Summit of the International Crimea Platform. “This time, almost 70 parliaments and parliamentary assemblies representing five continents are taking part in the Summit,” said Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk on the air of the national telethon United News. He said: “Everyone who comes, comes for the sake of Ukraine.”Almost 70 parliaments and parliamentary assemblies representing five continents are taking part in the Summit.Russia handing out more jail sentences under war censorship laws03:09 , Maira ButtThe Moscow Times has reported that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) is now handing out more jail sentences under war censorship laws. The Kommersant business daily reported the increase citing official Supreme Court figures. Russia outlawed the spreading of “deliberately false information” about its military action following its invasion of Ukraine last year. Eight out of 21 convictions for “war fakes” resulted in real jail time according to the report. Kommersant also reported that 15 people were jailed for[*treason i*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/donald-trump-iowa-mark-milley-b2431079.html%22%20title=%22Trump%20calls%20military%20officials%20‘some%20of%20the%20dumbest%20people%20I’ve%20ever%20met’) n 2023, compared to three jail terms from the first half of 2022. Private Russian military company hires female snipers02:09 , Maira Butt An investigation by the IStories outlet has revealed that the Borz Batallion of the [*Russian Defense*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) Ministry-controlled “Private Military Company Redut” has been active in recruiting women into its sniper division. “Initially, we did not have women, only men. Now, we have decided to try out a [*female sniper*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-american-martin-scorsese-max-muslim-b2434682.html%22%20title=%22Movie%20Review:%20'Persian%20Version'%20finds%20laughter,%20tears%20in%20Iranian%20American%20tale%20of%20resilient%20women) squad and a female drone operator squad because women can do it too,” the battalion’s recruiter with the call sign “Vesta” told an IStories journalist, who was posing as a potential recruit.“My task as a detachment commander is to prove that women are created not only for soups and children.”An advertisement for the job offered $2,300 as salary. According to the Russian defence minister, Sergei Shogu, there are 59,000 women in the Russian military. President Zelensky speaks with Saudi prince to “further develop ties" in the region01:04 , Maira Butt Ukraine’s President [*Volodmyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html%22%20title=%22Six%20killed%20and%2016%20injured%20in%20Russian%20missile%20strike%20on%20Kharkiv%20mail%20depot) tweeted about a call with Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman on Monday. He reported that the two discussed developing ties between the two nations as well as the rest of the Gulf region. President Zelensky reported that he has invited a Saudi representative to the next round of peace talks in Malta and vowed to “make the Peace Formula meeting in Jeddah a success”. Regarding the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-turkey-tayyip-erdogan-nato-b2434512.html%22%20title=%22Turkey's%20president%20submits%20protocol%20for%20Sweden's%20admission%20into%20NATO%20to%20parliament%20for%20ratification) said: “I highlighted the need of preventing further escalation of the conflict and civilian casualties.”Energy giants invest in fossil fuels after hike in oil pricesTuesday 24 October 2023 00:09 , Maira Butt Chevron has bought Hess for $53 billion in the second oil merger this month which The Washington Post attributes to a hike in oil prices following [*Russia’s invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) in February 2022. Major energy players are now “flush” with cash following the run-up in oil prices following the onset of the conflict which has caused fuel and oil prices to skyrocket worldwide. Fuel prices spiked more than 40 percent following the February attack before steadying through the following months. However they have been rising more recently due to fears of a broader [*Middle East war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-palestine-gaza-war-update-hamas-b2434221.html%22%20title=%22Israel-Hamas%20war%20live:%20Gaza%20claims%20more%20than%205,000%20people%20killed%20as%20Israel%20hits%20320%20‘military%20targets’) following the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Hungary blocks $500 million aid to Ukraine -againMonday 23 October 2023 23:00 , Maira Butt Hungary has been refusing to allow $500 million in aid to[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) due to its listing of OTP bank in its international sponsors of war list. While negotiations have lasted for months, it appears that the discussions have led nowhere. The European bloc’s chief diplomat, Josep Borrell, confirmed, that the ministerial negotiations in Luxembourg did not bring an agreement. [*Ukraine’s National Agency on Corruption Prevention*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/imran-khan-ap-pakistani-pakistan-tehreekeinsaf-islamabad-b2434301.html%22%20title=%22Pakistani%20court%20indicts%20former%20Prime%20Minister%20Imran%20Khan%20on%20charges%20of%20revealing%20official%20secrets) provisionally removed OTP and five Greek shipping companies from the list in the hope that this would “lead to Hungary’s unblocking of 500 million euros of vital EU military aid for the Ukrainian people, and will also eliminate the possibility of Greece blocking the future EU sanctions package” against Russia.While Hungary’s foreign minister said this was a “step in the right direction”, Hungary are seeking reassurances that the institutions will not be returned to the list once aid is secured. Ukraine orders evacuation of 250 children from settlements for safetyMonday 23 October 2023 22:00 , Maira Butt Ukrainian authorities have ordered the evacuation of over [*250 children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/damien-bendall-terri-harris-derbyshire-killamarsh-derbyshire-constabulary-b2434443.html%22%20title=%22‘Very%20stark’%20probation%20failures%20contributed%20to%20Bendall%20killings,%20coroner%20rules) from across eight settlement in Donestk Oblask over a “critical security situation” the Reintegration Ministry has announced. Authorities say 41 children have been evacuated and all evacuees will be taken to a humanitarian hub before the onset of cold weather. All persons affected, including parents and legal guardians, will be offered shelter and aid. Settlements affected include: Toretsk, Shcherbynivka, Petrivka, Nelipivka, and Pivnichne in the Bakhmut district and Ocheretyne, Katerynivka, and Yelizavetivka in the Pokrovsk district.According to the Children of War database, over [*500 Ukrainian children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) have been killed and over 1,200 have been wounded since hostilities broke out. Investigators suspect ‘deliberate sabotage’ of undersea cablesMonday 23 October 2023 21:15 , Maira Butt Estonia believes damage to a telecommunications cable in the Baltic Sea between Sweden and Estonia is related to damage to a cable and pipeline between Estonia and Finland, according to a statement by Sweden’s government on Monday. Finnish investigators believe there may have been [*deliberate sabotage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-finland-damage-copenhagen-denmark-b2433204.html%22%20title=%22Estonia%20says%20damage%20to%20Finland%20pipeline%20was%20caused%20by%20people,%20but%20it's%20unclear%20if%20it%20was%20deliberate) to subsea gas pipelines and telecommunications cables connecting Finland and Estonia which were damaged on 8 October. Helsinki and Tallinn are looking into the pipeline and cable incident. Last week, Sweden said a third link had been damaged at roughly the same time as the other two.Putin critic refuses to leave cell and misses court hearing in protestMonday 23 October 2023 20:32 , Maira Butt Alexei Navalny, the imprisoned Russian opposition leader, refused to leave his cell on Monday and missed a court hearing in protest as officials took away all of his writing supplies. An ally, Ivan Zhadnov, said security in helmets rushed in at his refusal to cooperate. He was arrested in Moscow in 2021, after returning from Germany where he had recuperated from nerve agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin. He is due to be moved to a “special security” penal colony, a facility with the highest security level in the Russian prison system. Navalny is considered Putin’s fiercest foe campaigning against corruption and organising major anti-Kremlin protests. He has been handed three prison sentences and is currently awaiting trial for charges relating to extremism. Russian forces are heavily shelling a vital road connection to AvdiivkaMonday 23 October 2023 20:00 , Maira Butt Russian forces are focusing their attacks on the eastern front including towns such as Avdiivka and Kupiansk. There has been an escalation in skirmishes between the [*Ukrainian and Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Putin%20pushes%20more%20soldiers%20to%20frontline%20despite%20failing%20offensive) forces with up to 90 confronations over the course of the day on 22 October according to Kyiv officials. According to Vitalii Barabash, the head of the [*Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-kupiansk-lyman-b2430853.html%22%20title=%22Russia%20mounts%20‘intensive’%20offensive%20to%20break%20‘powerful’%20Ukrainian%20defences%20in%20Kupiansk-Lyman) military administration, Russian forces are heavily shelling a vital road connection to the town. This complicates both the evacuation of civilians and the import of humanitarian aid, he told Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty. A spokesperson of Ukraine’s Ground Forces, Volodymyr Fitio, said Russia had failed to achieve any strategic success on the eastern front as Ukrainian forces are holding their defenses.Switzerland shifts right as populists demanding neutral stance in Ukraine win electionMonday 23 October 2023 19:16 , Maira Butt The right-wing Swiss People’s Party (SVP) won 28.6% of the vote in the country’s parliamentary elections on Oct 22. It gives them 62 seats out of 200 in the Swiss National Council, an increase of nine seats from the last election. Members of the SVP have previously boycotted Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky’s speech to the Swiss parliament back in June, claiming it violated the country’s tradition of neutrality. The Swiss parliament has repeatedly voted against proposals to amend rules regarding the export of Swiss-made weapons to Ukraine. $63 million of stolen Ukrainian artefacts discovered in SpainMonday 23 October 2023 19:00 , Maira Butt Approximately $63 million of stolen archaeological treasure from Ukraine has been discovered in Spain. Spanish police have been investigating the illicit trafficking of stolen artefacts since the conflict broke out between Russia and Ukraine and authorities announced the find today. In a joint operation with the the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), the Spanish police seized 11 pieces of Scythian gold that had been “stolen and illicitly exported from Ukraine” in the first few months of 2016.Spanish police have arrested three Spaniards and two Ukrainians in connection with the case. Iran intervenes in talks between Armenia and Azerbaijan as Russia engaged in UkraineMonday 23 October 2023 17:56 , Maira Butt Russia considers itself the security guarantor between Azerbaijan and Armenia which are both former Soviet republics. However, the demands and distractions of its war in Ukraine has led to a weakening of its influence in the South Caucasus. In their absence Iran hosted talks between the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan on Monday, saying they offered an opportunity to bring peace to the South Caucasus after Baku’s forces last month recaptured the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh.The talks in Tehran were also attended by the foreign ministers of Russia and of Turkey, a close ally of Azerbaijan.US wants forfeiture of billionaire Russian oligarch’s $300million superyachtMonday 23 October 2023 17:26 , Maira Butt A Russian billionaire under US sanctions finds himself under threat of permanently losing a $300million superyacht after the US sought forfeiture of the vessel on Monday. Authorities in Fiji seized the 348-foot (106-meter) Amadea yacht pursuant to a U.S. warrant in May 2022 as Washington ramped up sanctions enforcement against people close to Russian President Vladimir Putin, to pressure Moscow to halt its war against Ukraine. The US seeks forfeiture of the yacht with the proceeds of sales being sent to Ukraine.Suleiman Karimov is a Russian oligarch worth $10.7 billion according to Forbes magazine. He was sanctioned by the U.S. Treasury Department in 2014 and 2018 in response to Russia’s activities in Syria and Ukraine. He amassed much of his wealth through a stake in Russian gold producer Polyus which was sanctioned in May 2023.The legal fight over the superyacht is expected to be protracted and lengthy.Ukraine conducts ‘high value’ assassinations within RussiaMonday 23 October 2023 17:14 , Maira ButtThe Washington Post has reported that Ukrainian spies with deep ties to the CIA are waging a “shadow war” against Russia using strategic assassinations of high value targets. Over the past 20 months, the SBU -the Ukrainian security service -and its military counterpart, the GUR, have carried out dozens of assassinations against Russian officials in occupied territories, alleged Ukrainian collaborators, military officers behind the front lines and prominent war supporters deep inside Russia.One high-ranking Ukraine security official told The Washington Post: “We have too many enemies who are more important to neutralize. People who launch missiles. People who committed atrocities in Bucha.”Turkish President Erdogan submits Sweden’s NATO bid to ParliamentMonday 23 October 2023 17:05 , Maira Butt Turkey’s President Tayyib Erdogan has submitted Sweden’s NATO bid to Parliament for ratification. He had previously raised objections over the country’s alleged harbouring of terrorists. Sweden and Finland applied to join NATO last year following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Finland’s membership was sealed in April, in a historic expansion of the alliance, but Sweden’s bid had been held up by Turkey and Hungary.Turkey has NATO’s second largest army and has been seeking US congressional approval for a $20 billion sale of F-16 jets. Erdogan has previously linked Sweden’s NATO bid as US support for its request. Hungary PM blasts EU on anniversary of country’s Anti Soviet uprisingMonday 23 October 2023 16:51 , Maira Butt Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orban compared EU membership with Soviet occupation on the anniversary of the country’s Anti-Soviet uprising. The holiday is commemorated as a freedom fight against Russian repression and Prime Minister Orban’s speech comes as war rages in neighbouring Ukraine where Moscow has occupied large parts of the country and illegally annexed four regions.Mr Orban, widely considered one of Russian President Vladimir Putin’s only allies in the EU, has vigorously lobbied against the bloc imposing sanctions on Moscow, though he has ultimately voted for all sanctions packages.Last week Mr Orban met Mr Putin before an international forum in Beijing, a meeting that focused on Hungary’s access to Russian energy.European leaders, as well as other members of the Nato military alliance such as the United States, expressed concern that he had met Mr Putin even as an international arrest warrant has been issued against him for alleged war crimes in Ukraine.(Associated Press)Ukraine destroys all Russia-launched drones and cruise missile in overnight attacksMonday 23 October 2023 16:05 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukrainian defence systems [*successfully destroyed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) all Russian air weapons fired in the east and south directions, including a cruise missile[*fired overnight*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) , its air force said on Monday.A total of [*14 attack drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) , including 13 Iran-made Shahed drones and one unspecified drone as well as one cruise missile, [*were destroyed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) , the Air Force of the Armed Forces of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) said on its official Telegram channel, lauding Western-supplied air defence systems.“Western weapons have proven and continue to prove their effectiveness on the battlefield,” Mykola Oleshchuk, commander of the air force, wrote in a statement on Telegram.[*Ukraine destroys all Russia-launched drones and cruise missile in overnight attacks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-drone-missiles-attack-b2434294.html) Has the Israel-Gaza conflict just exposed Putin as the Tsar with no clothes?Monday 23 October 2023 15:17 , Maryam Zakir-HussainFrom the recent war between Azerbaijan and Armenia to this conflict in Gaza, the Russian leader’s attempts to cosplay a serious global power player continue to look threadbare and unconvincing when actually put to the test, writes Dr Mark Galeotti:The inevitable concern is that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) will leverage the [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) -Gaza conflict to distract the West from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and weaken its commitment to supporting Kyiv. Yet while Moscow is certainly doing what it can to exploit this crisis, it is also highlighting the fundamental weakness of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s position.Read more here:[*Has the Gaza conflict just exposed Putin as the Tsar with no clothes? | Mark Galeotti*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-putin-gaza-russia-war-b2433974.html) Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 82 times in a single dayMonday 23 October 2023 14:45 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukrainian and Russian forces [*clashed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) more than 80 times on Sunday as [*fierce fighting was witnessed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) in three major fronts that saw the use of guided air missiles, drones, rockets, artillery and mortar shells, military officials in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said.The announcement by Kyiv’s officials comes amid reports that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) rushed more troops to Avdiivka [*to replace their heavy losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2433892.html). Officials have said fighting on [*three fronts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) has remained particularly “hot”.Fighting [*in the direction of Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-avdiivka-b2432934.html) , Marinka and Kupiansk has intensified in the past few months but aggravated assaults have been particularly strong this month as Russian forces are eyeing the capture of Avdiivka.[*Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 82 times in a single day as fighting intensifies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) Spanish police say they have confiscated ancient gold jewelry worth millions taken from UkraineMonday 23 October 2023 14:20 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Spanish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spanish) police said Monday they have confiscated 11 pieces of ancient gold jewelry that were taken out of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) illegally in 2016.A police statement said five people who were attempting to sell the pieces in Spain have been arrested in recent weeks. Those arrested included two Ukrainians, one of them an Orthodox Church priest, and three Spaniards.The jewelry was said to be worth 60 million euros ($64 million) and dated from between the eighth and fourth centuries B.C.[*Spanish police say they have confiscated ancient gold jewelry worth millions taken from Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-spanish-police-kyiv-b2434392.html) Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensiveMonday 23 October 2023 13:50 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian forces have pushed more troops to Avdiivka [*despite a failing offensive which has incurred heavy losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) , the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) has said.The Ukrainian ministry of defence also claimed the recent Russian assaults in Avdiivka have contributed to “a 90 per cent increase in Russian casualties”.Avdiivka has become a watchword for resistance, viewed as the gateway to recapturing the Russian-held city of Donetsk and the rest of Donbas.Ukrainian Tavriisk Group of Forces spokesperson Colonel Oleksandr Shtupun stated that the Russian military is deploying personnel from Russian territory directly to the Avdiivka direction to replace personnel losses, according to the ISW.Putin’s Russia ‘the most heinous evil since WWII’, Ukrainian minister saysMonday 23 October 2023 13:44 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukraine’s minister of foreign affairs, Dmytro Kuleba, has said Vladimir Putin’s Russia “is the most heinous evil the world has witnessed since WWII” in a post on X. He added: “Putin and other Russian perpetrators must face justice for their crimes. They must get out of Ukraine and focus on solving the problems of their own people instead of bringing death and destruction to other nations.”Mr Kuleba also said Russia had spent “around $167 billion” on war against Ukraine between February 2022 and August 2023, according to Forbes Ukraine. Read the full post here:Russia has spent around $167 billion on its full-scale war against Ukraine between February 2022 and August 2023, according to Forbes Ukraine. This includes direct war expenses and lost equipment. Thousands of Russians are slain every week, but their lives are worthless to the…— Dmytro Kuleba (@DmytroKuleba) [*October 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1716399155432575378?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In pictures: Destroyed Russian military vehicles on display in KyivMonday 23 October 2023 13:03 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain People look at destroyed Russian military vehicles on display in front of Saint Michael's Golden-Domed Monastery on a foggy day in Kyiv.Nato may have to deal with more assertive China in far north – reportMonday 23 October 2023 12:36 , Maryam Zakir-HussainIn case you missed it...[*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) and the UK may have to contend with a more assertive presence from [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) in the [*Arctic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/arctic) and High North as sea lanes open up, a report has said.Meanwhile, a US defence adviser to Nato said [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) still has “significant” defence capabilities in the region, which are increasingly engaging in “risky” behaviours like air incursions.The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) think tank launched a report on the UK’s contribution to security in northern [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) on Tuesday.[*Nato may have to deal with more assertive China in far north – report*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/china-russia-europe-nato-arctic-b2431100.html) Kremlin says U.S. can't build 'new world order' that Biden spoke ofMonday 23 October 2023 11:54 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The Kremlin said on Monday that it agreed with U.S. President Joe Biden on the need to build a “new world order”, but that it disagreed that the United States was capable of building it.In a call with reporters, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that the U.S. was talking about an “American-centric” world order that would not exist in future.The exchange was emblematic of a contest, playing out against the background of the Ukraine and Gaza wars, in which Russia is trying to persuade developing countries to join it in building a new world free of U.S. “hegemony”.In a speech on Friday, Biden said the order that had worked well for 50 years after World War Two had “sort of run out of steam” and a new one was needed. He said Americans had “an opportunity to do things, if we’re bold enough and have enough confidence in ourselves, to unite the world in ways that it never has been”.Peskov said Moscow was in rare agreement with Biden about the need for a new order that, in his words, would be “free from the concentration of all mechanisms of world governance in the hands of one state”.But he said Russia disagreed with Biden about the capacity of the United States to build such a system.“In this part we disagree because the United States... no matter what world order they talk about, they mean an American-centric world order, that is, a world that revolves around the United States. It won’t be that way any more.”Six killed and 16 injured in Russian missile strike on Kharkiv mail depotMonday 23 October 2023 11:24 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain A missile strike on a mail depot in the eastern [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) city of [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) has killed six people and injured 16 others, officials said on Sunday.The blast was caused by a Russian S-300 rocket, Kharkiv governor Oleh Syniehubov said in a post on the Telegram messaging app.All of the victims were employees of private Ukrainian postal and courier service Nova Poshta.[*Six killed and 16 injured in Russian missile strike on Kharkiv mail depot*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) Ireland considering time limit on state housing for UkrainiansMonday 23 October 2023 11:06 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ireland is considering limiting the length of time ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** arriving in the country can stay in state housing to three months before they must find their own accommodation, the Irish Examiner reported on Monday, citing a government source.Nearly 100,000 Ukrainians have fled to Ireland since Russia‘s invasion began in February 2022, which the government says equates to 1.6% of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Europe. By September, there were around 72,000 in state-provided accommodation.There are currently no limits on how long ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** can stay there, but the system has been stretched for months amid a wider housing shortage, with arrivals at times having to stay in makeshift facilities such as sports halls or even in tents.The change being considered would apply to new arrivals who would have to find private rental accommodation or move into a property pledged for use by homeowners after three months, the Irish Examiner reported.A spokesperson for the department of integration said the government was keeping its approach under review, taking account of the need to shift towards a more sustainable medium-term approach similar to that adopted elsewhere around the European Union.No decision has been taken on a change to the current policy, the spokesperson said.The US quietly delivered new long-range ATACMS missiles to Ukraine. Why the sudden secrecy over aid?Monday 23 October 2023 10:49 , Maryam Zakir-HussainIn case you missed it...Ukrainian [*special forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/special-forces) reported last week that they had struck two Russian military airfields, following the first-time deployment of long-range ballistic [*missiles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/missiles) supplied by the [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us). The details of the weapons’ delivery has been shrouded in secrecy – unlike previous aid provided to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) from the [*Biden Administration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/biden-administration). The missiles – which Ukraine has reportedly been petitioning the US to deliver for months – may prove key to helping Ukrainian forces in the months of conflict ahead.Here’s what we know:[*The US quietly delivered long-range missiles to Ukraine. Why the sudden secrecy?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ukraine-atacms-missiles-b2432252.html) Ukraine destroys all Russia-launched drones and cruise missile in overnight attacksMonday 23 October 2023 10:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukrainian defence systems [*successfully destroyed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) all Russian air weapons fired in the east and south directions, including a cruise missile[*fired overnight*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) , its air force said on Monday.A total of [*14 attack drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) , including 13 Iran-made Shahed drones and one unspecified drone as well as one cruise missile, [*were destroyed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) , the Air Force of the Armed Forces of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) said on its official Telegram channel, lauding Western-supplied air defence systems.“Western weapons have proven and continue to prove their effectiveness on the battlefield,” Mykola Oleshchuk, commander of the air force, wrote in a statement on Telegram.However, debris from a downed drone struck a warehouse and damaged it at the Black Sea port of Odesa, officials said.[*Ukraine destroys all Russia-launched drones and cruise missile in overnight attacks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-drone-missiles-attack-b2434294.html) Russian court extends detention of US journalistMonday 23 October 2023 10:23 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain A Russian-American journalist who stands accused of breaking Russia‘s law on foreign agents had her pre-trial detention extended on Monday until 5 December. Alsu Kurmasheva is a Prague-based journalist for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), which is funded by the U.S. Congress and designated by Russia as a foreign agent, meaning it gets foreign funding for activity deemed to be political.She is the second U.S. journalist to be arrested and charged in Russia since the start of its war in Ukraine, which has plunged relations between Moscow and Washington to their lowest level in more than 60 years.After Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich was arrested in March on spying charges, which he denies, almost all other U.S. journalists left Russia. Washington has repeatedly urged other Americans to leave.The U.S. State Department said last week that the proceedings against Kurmasheva appeared to be “another case of the Russian government harassing U.S. citizens”. The Kremlin denied that and called the comment inappropriate.Kurmasheva, who holds U.S. and Russian passports, entered Russia on May 20 to deal with a family emergency, RFE/RL said. As she awaited her return flight on June 2, she was detained and her passports were confiscated.She was fined for failing to register her U.S. passport with Russian authorities, and charged last week with failure to register as a foreign agent, an offence that carries up to five years in prison.Ukrainians prepare firewood and candles to brace for a winter of Russian strikes on the energy gridMonday 23 October 2023 10:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain In the humble backyard of a destroyed house, a 13-year-old chops firewood to get ready for winter. His mother, Tetiana Yarema, has been preparing for months as she remembers last winter’s Russian strikes on the energy infrastructure that plunged Ukraine into darkness.“Those were dark days. I didn’t want anything. I just wanted to pack my things and go abroad,” said Yarema, 48, who says she ended up staying because of her son’s insistence.For the Yarema family, like millions of other Ukrainians touched by Russia’s war on Ukraine, winter is an especially challenging time.Read more here:[*Ukrainians prepare firewood and candles to brace for a winter of Russian strikes on the energy grid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-sales-kyiv-people-b2433883.html) Russia to return four Ukrainian children to their families as part of Qatari-brokered dealMonday 23 October 2023 09:36 , Maryam Zakir-HussainIn case you missed it...Four [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are to be to be returned to their families from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in a deal brokered by [*Qatar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/qatar). The youngest is two years old, while the oldest is 17.A seven-year-old boy [*returned to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-war-latest-b2430834.html) on Monday via Estonia after he was reunited with his grandmother in Qatar’s Moscow embassy last week, the official said. The two-year-old boy was handed over to Qatari diplomats in Moscow on Monday, and a nine-year-old boy and a 17-year-old girl are due to be handed over this week, the official said.The Ukrainian Presidential Office said the children would all be home soon.[*Russia to return four Ukrainian children to their families as part of Qatari deal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-children-russia-return-qatar-family-b2430984.html) Aftermath of Russian missile strike on Ukraine mail depot that killed six in KharkivMonday 23 October 2023 09:28 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Six people died in a missile strike late on Saturday night (21 October) on a mail depot in the city of [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Another 14 people were injured in the blast, which is believed to have been caused by a Russian S-300 [*rocket*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rocket) , Kharkiv governor Oleh Syniehubov said on social media.All of the victims were [*employees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/employees) of private Ukrainian postal and [*courier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/courier) Nova Poshta.In a statement, the company said that the air raid siren had sounded just moments before the attack, leaving those inside the depot with no time to reach shelter.Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky described the strike as an attack on an “ordinary civilian object.”[*Aftermath of Russian missile strike on Ukraine mail depot that killed six*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-kharkiv-strike-mail-depot-b2434032.html) Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 82 times in a single dayMonday 23 October 2023 09:05 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukrainian and Russian forces [*clashed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) more than 80 times on Sunday as [*fierce fighting was witnessed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kharkiv-misile-strike-mail-depot-b2434107.html) in three major fronts that saw the use of guided air missiles, drones, rockets, artillery and mortar shells, military officials in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said.The announcement by Kyiv’s officials comes amid reports that [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) rushed more troops to Avdiivka [*to replace their heavy losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2433892.html). Officials have said fighting on [*three fronts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) has remained particularly “hot”.Fighting [*in the direction of Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-avdiivka-b2432934.html) , Marinka and Kupiansk has intensified in the past few months but aggravated assaults have been particularly strong this month as Russian forces are eyeing the capture of Avdiivka.[*Ukrainian and Russian forces clashed 82 times in a single day as fighting intensifies*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) Teenager schools government on Russian poisoning risk as Lords warned UK is ‘unprepared’Monday 23 October 2023 08:45 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The British government has been accused of failing to address the rising threat of political [*poisonings*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poisoning) in the UK after an A-Level student presented a report to the [*House of Lords*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/house-of-lords) highlighting its inaction.Labour peer Baroness Kennedy KC, who chaired the panel in the Palace of Westminster on Thursday, highlighted Sophia Browder’s “revelatory” research but added it was “embarrassing” for the government that a 17 year-old was having to point out its shortcomings.Sophia is the daughter of financier Bill Browder, formerly the largest portfolio investor in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) before being declared a national security threat by [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) in 2005.[*Teenager schools government on Russian poisoning risk as Lords warned UK ‘unprepared’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-vladimir-putin-poisoning-litvinenko-b2433268.html) The leaders of Ukraine and Russia assess their resources as their war heads into winterMonday 23 October 2023 08:34 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he spoke by phone with U.S. President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) about Washington’s future support for Kyiv, and [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) visited a military base near the Ukrainian border, as the warring countries laid plans for the winter and next year’s combat operations.Almost 20 months of war have sapped both sides’ military resources. The fighting is likely to settle into positional and attritional warfare during the approaching wintry weather, analysts say, with little change along the more than 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line.Zelenskyy said late Thursday he spoke to Biden about “a significant support package” for Ukraine. Western help has been crucial for Ukraine’s war effort.[*The leaders of Ukraine and Russia assess their resources as their war heads into winter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-vladimir-putin-ukraine-joe-biden-b2433071.html) A price cap on Russian oil aims to starve Putin of cash. But it's largely been untested. Until nowMonday 23 October 2023 08:02 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain For months after Ukraine’s Western allies limited sales of Russian oil to $60 per barrel, the price cap was still largely symbolic. Most of [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ‘s crude — its main moneymaker — cost less than that.But the cap was there in case oil prices rose — and would keep the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) from pocketing extra profits to fund its war in Ukraine. That time has now come, putting the price cap to its most serious test so far and underlining its weaknesses.Russia’s benchmark oil — often exported with Western ships required to obey sanctions — has traded above the price cap since mid-July, pumping hundreds of millions of dollars a day into the Kremlin’s war chest.[*A price cap on Russian oil aims to starve Putin of cash. But it's largely been untested. Until now*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-moscow-vladimir-putin-kremlin-international-monetary-fund-b2434238.html) Putin forced to increase number of soldiers on ground as UK estimates death tollMonday 23 October 2023 07:37 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Vladimir Putin has been forced to increase the number of soldiers on the ground as Russia has amassed “150,000-190,000 permanent casualties” in the war with Ukraine, the UK ministry of defence has estimated. The Ukrainian ministry of defence also claimed the recent Russian assaults in Avdiivka have contributed to “a 90 per cent increase in Russian casualties”.Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 22 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/weRQDP6Fwr*](https://t.co/weRQDP6Fwr) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/9eCmqEJw8k*](https://t.co/9eCmqEJw8k) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 22, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1715968466501472576?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

What happened on Sunday?

Russian forces aiming to contain a four-month-old Ukrainian counteroffensive maintained unrelenting pressure on Sunday on the shattered town of Avdiivka in the east and intensified shelling in the southern area of Kherson.

Russia has focused on the industrial east since pulling back from a failed advance on Kyiv at the start of the February 2022 invasion and its forces have tried to maintain positions in Kherson since abandoning the region’s main town late last year.

The General Staff of Ukraine‘s Armed Forces, in its evening report, said Ukrainian forces repelled nearly 20 Russian attacks around Avdiivka, its buildings now largely reduced to shells. Russian air strikes hit nearby villages, it said.

Avdiivka has become a watchword for resistance, viewed as the gateway to recapturing the Russian-held city of Donetsk and the rest of Donbas --made up of Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

It was briefly seized in 2014 when Russian-backed separatists captured swathes of eastern Ukraine, but was later retaken by Ukrainian forces who, in the ensuing nine years, have built solid fortifications.

**Load-Date:** October 24, 2023

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[*Simon Coveney visiting Poland as Ukraine crisis continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6519-XN01-JBNF-W33G-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 18, 2022 Friday 1:01 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 191 words

**Byline:** Dominic McGrath

**Highlight:** The Foreign Affairs Minister will meet Polish counterpart Minister Zbigniew Rau in Warsaw.

**Body**

The [*Irish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/irish) Foreign Affairs Minister is visiting [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , a country that is hosting a significant proportion of the millions of Ukrainians who have fled the war.

During his visit to the capital [*Warsaw*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warsaw) , [*Simon Coveney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/simon-coveney) will meet Polish counterpart Zbigniew Rau to discuss the crisis at the country's border.

Mr Coveney will also meet a representative of the UN refugee agency and members of the Irish community in Poland supporting refugees.

Nearly two million people have crossed into Poland from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the Russian invasion began three weeks ago.

Mr Coveney said: "As this devastating conflict enters its fourth week I am glad to have this opportunity to visit Poland to discuss perspectives on the crisis with Minister Rau.

"I also look forward to meeting with a number of organisations on the ground who are supporting those fleeing Ukraine."

The visit to Poland comes after US President Joe Biden used St Patrick's Day events to praise Irish efforts to take in ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

The Republic of Ireland has taken in more than 7,000 refugees from Ukraine, with those arriving offered PPS numbers to allow them to work and claim social welfare.

**Load-Date:** March 17, 2022

**End of Document**



[*In Pictures: Royal reunion on day two of Jubilee celebration*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65KV-3MW1-DY4H-K3CK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 3, 2022 Friday 4:43 PM GMT

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**Section:** UK; Version:1

**Length:** 198 words

**Byline:** Pa

**Highlight:** A service of thanksgiving saw Harry and Meghan make their first public appearance during their trip to the UK.

**Body**

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex joined the Prince of Wales, the [*Duchess of Cornwall*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duchess-of-cornwall) and the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge as nearly 40 royals gathered for a celebration of the Queen in St Paul's Cathedral in London.

Although the Queen had opted to watch the service from her Windsor Castle home after suffering some discomfort during public events on Thursday, [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) and Meghan's first public appearance during their return visit to the UK was welcomed by many.

The National Service of Thanksgiving on Friday fell on the second day of commemorations marking the monarch's milestone 70-year reign.

Before the service, an honour guard made up of members of the Royal Navy, British Army and Royal Air Force lined the steps on either side of the Great West Door of St Paul's - although the warm London temperatures proved difficult for some in full dress uniform.

Later, the [*Princess Royal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princess-royal) travelled to Scotland where she marked her mother's milestone by feeding penguins and meeting young ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** on a visit to Edinburgh Zoo.

The Queen was celebrated at other [*Jubilee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jubilee) events around the country, and as a keen horseracing fan she was missed by the crowds at the Epsom Derby Festival.

**Load-Date:** June 3, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Trump news - live: Mo Brooks says then-president asked him to rescind 2020 election and put him back in office*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-6TK1-JBNF-W016-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 23, 2022 Wednesday 4:14 AM GMT

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**Section:** US POLITICS,AMERICAS,WORLD; Version:12

**Length:** 198 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh and Oliver O'Connell

**Highlight:** Follow live updates here

**Body**

Donald Trump has withdrawn his endorsement from Alabama congressman and Senate candidate Mo Brooks, citing his longtime ally's "horrible mistake" of suggesting that Republicans need to move on from the claim that the 2020 election was stolen.

Mr Trump accused the congressman of "going woke" in a lengthy statement this morning. He raised the possibility of retracting his endorsement in a recent interview, after which Mr Brooks released an ad boasting of his appearance at the rally outside the White House before the 6 January Capitol riot.

And on another front, Mr Trump and his children Donald Jr and Ivanka have filed an appeal in their fight against the New York attorney general's attempt to depose them as part of a civil investigation into the Trump Organization.

Ms Trump has stepped up in the effort to support ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** by sending 1 million meals to Poland for distribution through charitable partners and aid workers on the ground there and in Ukraine.

Finally, in an unexpected development over the weekend, disgraced ex-Trump campaign manager [*Paul Manafort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/paul-manafort) , who has links to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , was stopped from taking a flight from [*Miami*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/miami) to [*Dubai*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dubai) because of an invalid passport.

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Kyiv mocks Putin’s ‘loneliest little tank in world’ seen at Victory Day parade*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6868-6BX1-DY4H-K0CD-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 9, 2023 Tuesday 4:22 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:32

**Length:** 6626 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Maryam Zakir-Hussain

**Highlight:** Ukrainian defence ministry wishes ‘best of luck’ to the lone tank displayed by Kremlin

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s defence ministry has ridiculed the display of a single Soviet-era tank by [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) at the grand Victory Day celebrations attended by [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin).

“This ‘Victory Day’ [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) had exactly one tank rolling down Russian Red Square. A T-34, first produced in 1940. To the loneliest little tank in the world, best of luck,” the ministry said in a video, calling it a tribute to Russia.

Mr Putin held the much awaited annual celebration of victory in the Second World [*War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) by parading troops across Red Square yesterday while simultaneously firing cruise missiles at [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv).

In a fiery 10-minute speech in front of the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) ’s walls, the Russian president thundered against “Western global elites” and said civilisation was at “a decisive turning point”.

This comes as the Pentagon confirmed Ukraine’s claim to have downed a Russian Kinzhal missile, touted by Moscow as being capable of reaching unstoppable hypersonic speeds.

“I can confirm that they did down a Russian missile by employing the Patriot missile defence system,” press secretary Pat Ryder said.

Key Points

Ukraine mocks Putin’s ‘loneliest little tank in the world’ Russian mercenary chief says he's been told to stay in Bakhmut or be branded traitor Russia launches new attack on Ukraine on Moscow's 'sacred' day Russia fails to capture Bakhmut ahead of Victory Day Putin mocked after single tank turns up for Russian Victory Day parade West is sowing ‘Russophobia’ in Victory Day speech, Putin says

Ukraine mocks Putin’s Victory Day parade: ‘Loneliest little tank in the world'

Ukraine’s Ministry of Defence has ridiculed the display of a single tank by Moscow at the grand Victory Day celebrations attended by Vladimir Putin.

“This ‘Victory Day’ Russia had exactly one tank rolling down Russian Red Square. A T-34, first produced in 1940. To the loneliest little tank in the world, best of luck," the ministry said in a video, calling it a tribue to Russia.

We watched russia's "Victory Day" parade today with great interest. Our tribute: [*pic.twitter.com/56evOrTcnn*](https://t.co/56evOrTcnn) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*May 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1656009079830061075?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia paraded lone tank to avoid domestic criticism, says MoD 06:55 , Arpan Rai Russia chose to display just a single vintage T-34 from a ceremonial unit in its Victory Day parade and, despite heavy losses in Ukraine, could have fielded more armoured vehicles, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.“The authorities likely refrained from doing so because they want to avoid domestic criticism about prioritising parades over combat operations,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update.The make-up of Russia’s annual Victory Day parade in Red Square highlighted the material and strategic communications challenges the military is facing 15 months into the war in Ukraine, it added.“Over 8,000 personnel reportedly took part in the parade, but the majority were auxiliary, paramilitary forces, and cadets from military training establishments,” the ministry said, pointing that the only personnel from deployable formations of regular forces were contingents of Railway Troops and military police.Russia says ‘enemy’ drone shot down, no injuries06:42 , Arpan Rai Russia’s air defence forces have shot down an “enemy” drone in the Kursk region bordering Ukraine, its governor said on Wednesday.The falling debris from the drone has damaged a gas pipeline and a house, the governor said.“Debris fell in the village of Tolmachevo. No one was hurt,” the regional governor, Roman Starovoyt, said on the Telegram messaging app.A single tank, fewer soldiers and no flypast in Putin’s Victory Day parade06:17 , Arpan Rai After Russia attacked Ukraine with its latest barrage of cruise missiles, Vladimir Putin made an angry speech to mark Victory Day in Moscow, hitting out at Western countries for starting what he claims is a “real war” against Russia.However, in a sign of the toll his invasion of Ukraine has taken on Russia’s forces, the annual military parade across Red Square was pared back, as Moscow throws manpower and weaponry at the frontlines following an underwhelming winter campaign and an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive.Read the full story here:[*Vladimir Putin gives angry speech at stripped-back Victory Day parade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-red-square-b2335690.html) Journalist working for AFP killed in rocket attack in Ukraine05:41 , Arpan Rai French international news agency Agence France-Presse has confirmed the death of its Ukraine video coordinator in a rocket attack near the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut. Arman Soldin, 32, was with a team of AFP journalists traveling with Ukrainian soldiers when the group came under fire with Grad rockets, the agency said. The rest of the AFP team was uninjured.“His death is a terrible reminder of the risks and dangers faced by journalists every day covering the conflict in Ukraine,” said AFP chairman Fabrice Fries.AFP said it was “devastated” at Soldin’s death and “all of our thoughts go out to his family and loved ones.”At least 10 media workers have been killed while covering the war in Ukraine, according to Reporters Without Borders (RSF) and the Committee to Protect Journalists.Pentagon says Ukraine downed 'hypersonic' missile with Patriot04:22 , Arpan Rai Pentagon press secretary Pat Ryder says he can confirm Ukraine’s claim to have downed a Russian Kinzhal missile, touted by Moscow as being capable of reaching unstoppable hypersonic speeds.Mr Ryder said the feat was accomplished using a US Patriot defence system, and that Washington will continue to support Kyiv with military aid to defend itself against Russian cruise missiles and Iranian drones.“I can confirm that they did down a Russian missile by employing the Patriot missile defence system. As you know, that – that system is part of a broader range of air defence capabilities that the United States and the international community have provided to Ukraine. I listed out some of those, you know, as part of their multi-layered integrated air defence capability,” the Pentagon official said in a press briefing.He added: “And so as secretary [Lloyd] Austin highlighted about three weeks ago at the Ukraine Defence Contact Group, the US, our allies, our partners, we’re going to continue to rush ground-based air defence capabilities and munitions to help Ukraine control its sovereign skies and to help Ukraine defend its citizens from Russian cruise missiles and Iranian drones.”“And again, as evidenced by today’s USAI (Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative) announcement and the procurement of additional air defence systems and munitions, this is something that we’re going to keep after both in the near term and the long term,” Mr Ryder said.There is some debate over whether the Kinzhal missile is truly hypersonic, though it was described as being the first hypersonic weapon launched against Ukraine by Russia last year. Moscow says it can achieve speeds up to Mach 10, but a Nato report has indicated it may actually be significantly slower than that.Britain set to ban Russia’s Wagner Group – report04:02 , Arpan Rai Britain is set to formally classify Russia’s mercenary force Wagner Group as a terrorist organisation, rolling out financial sanctions and other penalties against the private militia.The Home Office has been building a case for two months and proscription was “imminent” within weeks, reported The Times, citing a government source.If the branding as terror group is confirmed, it would be a criminal offence to belong to Wagner, attend its meetings, encourage support for it or carry its logo in public.Wagner mercenaries have led Russia’s months-long assault on the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut along with its military activities in Africa.Under these sanctions by the UK, Wagner’s ability to raise money will be served a blow if any of the finances were channeled through the British financial institutions.“Suspicions” about Wagner helping move money out of Britain after financial sanctions were imposed on Russian oligarchs and allies of Russian president Vladimir Putin have been rife, the newspaper said, citing a government source.Britain’s Home Office said it was looking into the Times report.Pakistan plans Russian-Saudi oil ‘cocktail’ to help cut energy costs03:00 , Liam James Pakistan is planning to blend newly purchased Russian crude with Arabian light crude in order to create a mixture that will be more easily processed by the nation’s oil refineries, Pakistan’s energy minister said on Tuesday.The country is planning to purchase Russian crude oil at a discount as high prices caused by geopolitical tensions have caused fuel prices to more than double in Pakistan.Western countries that have imposed a $60 per barrel price cap on Russian oil as part of sanctions on Moscow for its invasion of Ukraine say that the cap is also forcing Russia to sell oil to developing countries at lower prices.Russia’s heavier grades of crude oil are more difficult to process in Pakistan’s refineries, which are configured to process lighter Arabian crudes, Petroleum Minister Musadik Malik told Reuters in an interview in Washington on Tuesday.Estonians gather on riverbank for peek of Russian Victory Day concert02:00 , Liam James After Estonia banned Soviet Victory Day celebrations, several hundred people in the Russian-speaking town of Narva watched celebrations across the river which separates it from Russia.A large stage and a screen was set up near the river in Russia, 200 metres away from the river promenade where people gathered with binoculars and flowers and clapped to the music.Thousands would gather in Narva each year on 9 May, when Russia celebrates Soviet Victory Day to mark the end of World War Two in Europe, but the events were banned after Russia invaded Ukraine last year, and Soviet war monuments were removed from the town.Governments in Estonia, like the other Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania, see the Soviet victory in 1945 as a renewal of the brutal occupation of their lands, which were annexed into Soviet Union in 1940. Now members of Nato and the European Union, they are among the staunchest supporters of Ukraine and critics of Russia.‘No guarantee’ Ukraine counteroffensive will be success, says UK’s Cleverly01:00 , Liam James Ukraine has “consistently outperformed” expectations in its response to Russia’s invasion, Britain’s foreign secretary said, before warning there are no “guarantees” it will make gains in its forthcoming counteroffensive.Speaking during a visit to the US, James Cleverly said international allies must remain “resolute” in their support of the country regardless of the outcome.He said: “Of course there has been an economic impact on the people of the United States and the United Kingdom -this is not a by-product of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, this is part of the conflict.“We should recognise that if we do not re-establish the principles of the UN carter, the foundation stone of peace in the post-Second World War era, that powerful nations cannot invade their neighbours with impunity, the world will be more dangerous, more expensive, more difficult.“So this is not just about Ukraine, though the Ukrainians have been suffering enormously and its right that we defend them, it is about us, and it is in our interest as well as in the Ukrainians’ interest that we stay resolute in our support”.US announces £1bn aid for UkraineWednesday 10 May 2023 00:00 , Liam James The United States announced on Tuesday a new $1.2 (£1bn) billion military aid package for Ukraine that will include aircdefense systems, ammunition and funds for training, the Pentagon said.Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funds will be used to purchase the weapons, allowing President Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry rather than pull them from US stocks. Delivery of the weapons and systems depends on their availability and production timeline.In the package, Ukraine will receive additional air defense systems and munitions as well as the technology to integrate Western air defense launchers, missiles and radars with Ukraine‘s native defense systems. The funds will pay for 155-mm Howitzer ammunition, counter-drone ammunition, satellite imagery and various types of training, the Pentagon said.Eurovision support gives ‘power’ to Ukraine, says contest winnerTuesday 9 May 2023 23:00 , Liam James Support to Ukraine from Eurovision fans gives “power” to the country, a former winner has said.Ruslana, who won for Ukraine at the 2004 song contest, appeared in an English National Opera Does Eurovision performance at the fan village at Liverpool’s Pier Head on Tuesday.The singer, who lives in Kyiv, told the PA news agency: “It’s very difficult to tell you about the emotions I have inside.“My heart is in Ukraine, my heartbeat vibration is in Ukraine all the time.“Let’s help Ukraine to win. It’s very important.“It doesn’t matter what you want to do or how, which way you will choose to do that.“Send your vibration from the heart, this is the biggest power. It gives us a big power.”AFP journalist killed in UkraineTuesday 9 May 2023 22:00 , Liam James Arman Soldin, a 32-year-old video journalist for Agence France Presse (AFP) in Ukraine, was killed on Tuesday by Grad rocket fire near Chasiv Yar, in eastern Ukraine, AFP said on Twitter, citing AFP colleagues who witnessed the incident.The attack happened in the town’s outskirts close to Bakhmut, the epicenter of the fighting in eastern Ukraine for several months, AFP added.Soldin was with four colleagues, who are all unhurt. They were with Ukrainian soldiers during the attack, AFP said on Twitter.“All of our thoughts go out to his family and loved ones,” AFP said.We are devastated to learn of the death of AFP video journalist Arman Soldin in eastern Ukraine today. All of our thoughts go out to his family and loved ones. [*pic.twitter.com/T2y449o1Ry*](https://t.co/T2y449o1Ry) — AFP News Agency (@AFP) [*May 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/AFP/status/1655991467968430084?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Zaporizhzhia situation deteriorating, says report

The situation at Europe’s largest nuclear power plant, Zaporizhzhia in Ukraine, is deteriorating, Germany’s Funke Media Group reported.

According to Ukraine‘s state-owned operating company Energoatom, Russia is bringing more troops and military vehicles to the site of the nuclear power plant.

“The situation of equipment and personnel is deteriorating,” Energoatom president Petro Kotin told Funke.

Russia began evacuating civilians from nearby settlements over the weekend, while the head of a UN nuclear watchdog said he was increasingly worried about the situation at the Russian-occupied plant.

Yesterday, Russian officials told the Tass news agency that the nuclear reactors were being temporarily shut down, claiming that the move was taken out of fear of Ukrainian attacks.

UK ‘would welcome’ Chinese intervention in Ukraine

The UK would welcome an intervention by Chinese president Xi Jinping to help broker a peace deal between Ukraine and Russia, according to the foreign secretary.

Speaking during a visit to the US, James Cleverly said Britain would not be critical if Mr Xi chose to use his “significant degree of influence” with Russian president Vladimir Putin to bring about a “just and sustainable” peace settlement.

The cabinet minister also warned the West that it had to be ready for the expected spring offensive by Kyiv to fail to make a decisive breakthrough against Russia’s troops.

Taking questions during an event hosted by the Atlantic Council, Mr Cleverly was asked for his view on whether the West should be open to Beijing playing a role in trying to co-ordinate a ceasefire in eastern Europe.

Mr Xi is thought to be on good terms with Mr Putin, having visited Moscow in March.

Victory Day parade in pictures

Victory Day, the holiday commemorating the Soviet triumph in World War Two, is the most important day in the calendar in Russia under Vladimir Putin.

The centrepiece of celebrations is the president’s speech in Moscow, accompanied by a parade in Red Square.

This year’s parade was full of traditional pomp but unmistakably scaled down from previous years. In place of phalanxes of modern battle tanks, a single World War Two-vintage T-34 tank rolled across the square. The usual fighter jet flyover was cancelled.

Lukashenko’s ropey Victory Day appearance sparks health rumours

Belarusian leader Alexander Lukashenko had to be driven a short distance to an event during Tuesday’s Victory Day celebrations in Moscow and skipped a lunch hosted by Russian president Vladimir Putin.

Lukashenko, a close Putin ally, looked tired and a little unsteady on his feet, and a bandage was visible on his right hand. His appearance sparked speculation online about his health, though he otherwise showed no obvious sign of being unwell.

Video footage showed the 68-year-old chatting with Putin and army top brass after the annual parade on Red Square and then taking a lift to the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier nearby while Putin walked there with the leaders of Armenia and five Central Asian countries.

He rejoined the others to lay flowers at the Tomb beside the Kremlin, only about 300 metres from the spot where they had earlier watched the parade marking the anniversary of the Soviet Union’s victory over Nazi Germany in 1945.

In a rare departure from custom, the Belarusian president then missed the state lunch hosted by Putin in the Kremlin and attended by the other leaders.

Zelensky says Russia has ‘failed to capture Bakhmut’

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Moscow had failed to capture Bakhmut despite a self-imposed deadline to give Putin a battlefield trophy in time for the holiday.

Moscow regards capturing Bakhmut as a stepping stone towards taking other cities in Ukraine’s industrial east.

Ukraine said its air defences had shot down 23 of 25 Russian cruise missiles fired chiefly at the capital Kyiv overnight, and there were no reported casualties.

Russia’s defence ministry said it had “launched a concentrated strike using high-precision, long-range sea and air-based weapons aimed against enemy barracks and ammunition depots”.

After a weeks-long hiatus, Russia in late April resumed its tactic of long-range missile strikes against Ukraine and has launched a flurry of attacks in recent days.

The day provided Zelensky an opportunity to demonstrate Ukraine’s clear break from Moscow by hosting von der Leyen.

“Our efforts for a united Europe, for security and peace, need to be as strong as Russia’s desire to destroy our security, our freedom, our Europe,” Zelensky said at their joint press conference in Kyiv.

Russia’s increasing diplomatic isolation has drawn Moscow closer to China, and Chinese Foreign Minister Qin Gang said on Tuesday that Beijing would maintain lines of communication with all parties to the war in Ukraine in seeking a ceasefire.

“As a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and responsible major country, China will neither watch the fire from the other bank nor add fuel to the fire,” Qin told reporters alongside German counterpart Annalena Baerbock during a visit to Berlin.

Putin’s Victory Day Speech

Putin struck a rousing note in his Victory Day speech, saying all of Russia was praying for its heroes at the front and concluding with a cheer for “Russia, for our valiant Armed Forces, for victory!”

After he spoke, a band struck up and cannon fired a salute. Soldiers marched through Red Square followed by armoured vehicles and nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missiles.

But the Moscow parade was much shorter than usual. Security concerns following attacks including drones that exploded over the Kremlin citadel last week meant parades in some other cities were scaled back or called off. Traditional “Immortal Regiment” processions, in which people carry portraits of relatives who fought against the Nazis, were cancelled.

In Kyiv there were no reported casualties from Russia’s latest volley of air strikes on the capital. Debris fell on a house in the Holosiivskyi district in the southwest of Kyiv but caused little damage, Mayor Vitalii Klitschko said. Debris lay in a road in Kyiv’s central Shevchenkivskyi district.

“As at the front, the plans of the aggressor failed,” said Sergei Popko, head of the Kyiv city military administration.

Russia has stepped up its attacks in anticipation of a Ukrainian counteroffensive, after Moscow’s winter campaign captured little territory despite the bloodiest ground combat in Europe since World War Two.

Russia marks the Nazi surrender of May 8, 1945 on the following day, because it took effect when it was already after midnight in Moscow. Ukraine symbolised its break from Moscow on Monday by announcing it was shifting its observance to May 8.

Instead, Kyiv proclaimed May 9 as Europe Day, a date observed by the EU to commemorate the post-war integration movement that led to the founding of the European Union.

“Kyiv, as the capital of Ukraine, is the beating heart of today’s European values,” von der Leyen said at her news conference with Zelenskiy. “Courageously, Ukraine is fighting for the ideals of Europe that we celebrate today.”

A single tank, fewer soldiers and no flypast: Putin gives angry speech at stripped-back Victory Day parade

Russia attacked Ukraine with its latest barrage of cruise missiles, before Vladimir Putin made an angry speech to mark Victory Day in Moscow – hitting out at Western countries for starting what he claims is a “real war” against his nation (Chris Stevenson writes).

However, in a sign of the toll that his invasion of Ukraine has taken on Russia’s forces, the annual military parade across Red Square was pared back as Moscow throws manpower and weaponry at the frontlines following an underwhelming winter offensive and an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive.

“Today civilisation is once again at a decisive turning point,” Mr Putin said as he again sought to defend his invasion of Ukraine by painting Russia as being cornered by “Western global elites”.

“A real war has been unleashed against our motherland,” he said.

The most abiding image of the parade, part of commemorations of the Soviet victory over the Nazi’s in the Second World War that have become a centrepiece of Putin’s time in office, was of a single T-34 Soviet-era tank rolling down the road near the start of what is usually a show of Russian military might. The T-34 has traditionally opening the display, but it is usually accompanied by more modern battle tanks, such as the T-14 Armata and a T-74, both of which have been used in Ukraine.

Click here to read on:

[*Vladimir Putin gives angry speech at stripped-back Victory Day parade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-red-square-b2335690.html)

Tuesday recap: Putin thunders against “Western global elites”

Russia fired cruise missiles at Kyiv and paraded troops across Moscow’s Red Square for its annual celebration of victory in World War Two, pared back amid shortages of manpower and arms at the front after a failed winter campaign in Ukraine.

In a fiery 10-minute speech in front of the Kremlin, President Vladimir Putin thundered against “Western global elites” and said civilisation was at “a decisive turning point”.

“A real war has been unleashed against our homeland,” said the Russian leader, who last year ordered what the West calls an unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, destroying cities and killing thousands of civilians.

Underlining how the war has isolated Russia from most of Europe and pushed Ukraine closer to the West, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was visiting Kyiv, where she called Ukraine “the beating heart of today’s European values”.

The holiday commemorating the Soviet victory in World War Two is the most important day in the calendar in Russia under Putin, who casts his invasion of Ukraine as analogous to Russia’s fight against the Nazis. Ukraine, which suffered proportionally greater losses than Russia in World War Two, calls that an abuse of shared history to justify aggression.

The parade was full of traditional pomp but unmistakably scaled down from previous years. In place of phalanxes of modern battle tanks, a single World War Two-vintage T-34 rolled across Red Square. The usual fighter jet flyover was cancelled.

Putin’s message was also undermined by a new profanity-laced tirade from the boss of Russia’s Wagner private army directed at Moscow’s generals for failing to give his forces enough weapons.

“A combat order came yesterday which clearly stated that if we leave our positions (in Bakhmut), it will be regarded as treason against the motherland,” Yevgeny Prigozhin said in an audio message. “(But) if there is no ammunition, then we will leave our positions and be the ones asking who is really betraying the Motherland.”

US disrupts long-running Russian cyberespionage campaign

The US Justice Department says it has disrupted a long-running Russian cyberespionage campaign that stole sensitive information from computer networks in dozens of countries, including the U.S. and other NATO members.

Prosecutors linked the spying operation to a unit of Russia’s Federal Security Service, or FSB, and accused the hackers of stealing documents from hundreds of computer systems belonging to governments of NATO members, an unidentified journalist for a U.S. news organization who reported on Russia, and other select targets of interest to the Kremlin.

“For 20 years, the FSB has relied on the Snake malware to conduct cyberespionage against the United States and our allies — that ends today,” Assistant Attorney General Matthew Olsen, the head of the Justice Department’s National Security Division, said in a statement.

The specific targets were not named in court papers, but U.S. officials described the espionage campaign as “consequential,” having successfully exfiltrated sensitive documents from NATO countries and also targeted U.S. government agencies and others in the U.S.

The Russian operation relied on the malicious software known as Snake to infect computers, with hackers operating from what the Justice Department said was a known FSB facility in Ryazan, Russia.

U.S. officials said they’d been investigating Snake for about a decade and came to regard it as the most sophisticated malware implant relied on by the Russian government for espionage campaigns. They said Turla, the FSB unit believed responsible for the malware, had refined and revised it multiple times as a way to avoid being shut down.

The Justice Department, using a warrant this week from a federal judge in Brooklyn, launched what it said was a high-tech operation using a specialized tool called Perseus that caused the malware to effectively self-destruct. Federal officials said they were confident that, based on the impact of its operation this week, the FSB would not be able to reconstitute the malware implant.

Japan working towards opening of NATO liaison office in Tokyo

Japan is working towards the opening of a NATO liaison office in Tokyo, Japan’s ambassador to the U.S. Koji Tomita said on Tuesday.

Tomita made the comment at an event hosted by the National Press Club in Washington when asked about a report in the Nikkei Asia this month saying that the U.S.-led alliance was planning to open such an office, its first in Asia, to facilitate consultations in the region.

“The point you mentioned is one of the things that we are working on to strengthen our partnership. But I really haven’t heard any final confirmation of that, but we are working in that direction,” he said.

NATO has not confirmed the Nikkei report, saying it would not go into details of NATO allies’ ongoing deliberations.

Tomita, who was briefing on the G7 summit Japan will host in Hiroshima from May 19-21, said the meeting would be looking for closer alignment of the group’s approach towards China.

Nikkei Asia said the liaison office was due to open next year and would enable discussions with NATO’s security partners, such as South Korea, Australia and New Zealand, with geopolitical challenges from China and Russia in mind.

NATO chief Jens Stoltenberg visited Japan in January and pledged with Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to strengthen ties in the face off “historic” security challenges, citing Russia‘s invasion of Ukraine and China’s rising military power.

After the Nikkei Asia report,

China said “high vigilance” was needed in the face of NATO’s “eastward expansion.”

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-invade-ukraine-why-b2335363.html)

Britain asks companies to supply long-range missiles for Ukraine

A British-led group of European countries has asked for expressions of interest to supply Ukraine with missiles with a range of up to 300 km (190 miles) in what would be another step-up in military support for Kyiv against Russia‘s invasion.

The call for responses from companies who could provide such missiles was included in a notice posted last week by the International Fund for Ukraine -a group of countries including Britain, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden -set up to send weapons to Kyiv.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence, which administers the fund, asked companies to get in touch if they could provide missiles that can be launched from land, sea or air with a payload of between 20 and 490 kg (44 and 1,078 pounds).

The notice asked for other desirable requirements including a “low probability of intercept”, “mission planning capability”, and “air defence penetration methods to increase probability of successful strike”. The notice said companies that responded would be contacted from June 5.

A British official said no final decision had been made to send missiles with these capabilities to Ukraine.

The Washington Post reported details of the procurement notice earlier on Tuesday.

Britain and other Western countries have scaled up their pledges of military aid for Ukraine this year.

Britain said in January it would send 14 of its main Challenger 2 battle tanks to Ukraine. Other nations including the United States and Germany subsequently committed to supply tanks.

Yuriy Sak, an adviser to Ukraine‘s defence minister, told Reuters that Kyiv had no concrete information about the UK-led effort to supply long-range missiles, but that Ukraine had for months been consistently appealing to Western governments to provide long-range weapons.

“We would welcome it if the UK takes on a leadership role with the long-range missiles, in the same way they did with the Challenger 2 main battle tanks,” he said.

Bank apologises after mortgage refused over ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

[*A bank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/halifax) has issued an apology after rejecting a homeowner’s mortgage application due to them hosting two ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees).

A mother and her young daughter have been staying in an annexe at Dominik Zaum’s family home since June 2022.

Fixed-rate mortgage deals leapt up in the wake of last autumn’s disastrous mini-budget, with many predicting they will continue to edge up even further as the Bank of England looks set to hike interest rates.

When his mortgage came up for renewal, Mr Zaum, like many others, begun shopping around for a new deal – and eventually applied for one with Halifax, he told BBC Radio 4’s Money Box programme.

Emily Atkinson reports:

[*Bank apologises after mortgage refused over* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/halifax-mortgage-refused-ukraine-refugees-b2334762.html)

Russian mercenary chief says he's been told to stay in Bakhmut or be branded traitor

The head of Russia‘s Wagner mercenary force fighting in eastern Ukraine said on Tuesday said he had been told he and his men would be regarded as traitors if they abandoned their positions in the city of Bakhmut.

But Yevgeny Prigozhin said for the second time in a matter of days that his forces would leave Bakhmut if they did not receive the ammunition they needed to press the battle.

He delivered his latest tirade in a profanity-laced audio message which coincided with Russia marking the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two with its traditional parade on Moscow’s Red Square.

“A combat order came yesterday which clearly stated that if we leave our positions (in Bakhmut), it will be regarded as treason against the motherland. That was the message to us,” Prigozhin said.

“(But) if there is no ammunition, then we will leave our positions and be the ones asking who is really betraying the Motherland. Apparently, the one (betraying the Motherland) is the person who signed it (the order to supply too little ammunition.”

He said his forces would stay in Bakhmut and keep insisting they get their ammo “for a few more days”.

Prigozhin has previously accused the defence ministry of deliberately starving his forces of ammunition. The ministry has said it is working to ensure all battlefield units have what they need.

Late on Monday, Prigozhin said there were signs the ammunition problem was being solved but on Tuesday he said the size of the shipment had been slashed.

“They’ve given us only 10% of what we asked for. We’ve been deceived,” he said.

Watch: Putin accuses the West of ‘creating a real cult of Nazism’

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) said the [*West*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/west) is “creating a real cult of [*Nazism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nazism) ” as he delivered an angry Victory Day speech in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ’s [*Red Square*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/red-square).

The Russian president also accused the “Western elite and globalists” of encouraging “Russophobia” as he addressed crowds on Tuesday 9 May.

“We see that in a number of countries, they are destroying the memorials to the [*Soviet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet) fighters, to the great generals, they are creating a real cult of Nazism,” Mr Putin said.

He also suggested the “mocking of the memory of past generations is a real crime”.

[*Watch: Putin accuses the West of ‘creating a real cult of Nazism’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russia-ukraine-war-vladimir-putin-b2335397.html)

The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary

It was a month into Vladimir Putin’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Russian forces had withdrawn from around Kyiv and in their wake Bel Trew and her team stumbled on a body by an abandoned Russian camp.

His hands were tied. He had been burned and shot in the back. Soldiers said he was a teenager.

As Bel tried to find out who he was and what had happened, she uncovered a nightmare world: a nation struggling to find thousands of its missing and to identify its dead.

The Body in the Woods by Bel Trew is[*streaming now on Independent TV and on your smart TV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/independent-tv-download-smart-tv-how-b2287476.html).

[*The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-documentary-crimes-b2291759.html)

The scale of the attack underlines the importance of the next phase in this war

The dozens of drones fired at [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is a sign of the crucial juncture we have reached in the invasion.

Vitali Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, described it as the “biggest” such attack he had seen, with airstrikes and missiles also used on other cities. It was the fourth such attack on the capital in little more than a week, although Mr Klitschko said all the drones aimed at the city had been shot down.

[*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) has stepped-up its long-range assault ahead of an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive. The drone attacks followed a lull in the wave of Russian airstrikes.

Russia is due to commemorate Victory Day on Tuesday, which marks the victory of the Soviet Union over the Nazis in the Second World War. It is an important occasion in the country and has only increased in significance for [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) and the Kremlin since Moscow started its invasion of Ukraine last February.

[*Scale of drone attack on Ukraine underlines importance of the next phase in this war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-russia-victory-day-putin-b2335097.html)

Russia says it launched missiles against Ukraine overnight

Russia‘s defence ministry said on Tuesday its forces had launched missile strikes at targets across Ukraine overnight, disrupting Kyiv’s supplies of ammunition to the frontline and troop movements, Russian news agencies reported.

The defence ministry also said fighting continued in the western part of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, which Russian forces have been trying for months to seize in one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

Russia launches mass drone attacks on Ukraine ahead of Victory Day holiday

Russia launched its biggest swarm of drone attacks on Ukraine on Monday as it also prepared for annual commemorations marking the defeat of Nazi Germany in the Second World War.

Vitali Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, said Russia fired 60 Iranian-made kamikaze drones at Ukrainian targets, including 36 at the capital. All those fired at Kyiv had been shot down he said, although debris hit apartments and other buildings, injuring at least five people.

“This was the most massive drone attack on the capital during the entire war,” Mr Klitschko, the former heavyweight boxing champion, said.

The assault is part of a renewed Russian air campaign unleashed 10 days ago after a lull since early March.

[*Russia launches huge drone attacks on Ukraine ahead of Victory Day holiday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kyiv-drones-russia-moscow-victory-day-bakhmut-b2335039.html)

Ukraine discusses integration with EU

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said he discussed European integration, defence matters and sanctions against Russia at talks on Tuesday with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

After talks held in Kyiv as Russia celebrated the anniversary of the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two, Zelensky said he expected the European Union to soon approve more sanctions on Russia over Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Ukraine says Russia still pounding Bakhmut, has failed to capture it

The Ukrainian military said on Tuesday Russian forces were still attacking the eastern city of Bakhmut, missing a deadline to capture it before the May 9 holiday celebrated in Moscow as Victory Day.

A Ukrainian general said on Sunday that Russian forces were hoping to capture Bakhmut before the annual holiday when Russia marks the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany in World War Two.

“The enemy has not taken Bakhmut,” Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesman for Ukraine‘s eastern command, said by telephone. “There are no significant changes in positions.”

Ukraine‘s military is preparing a widely anticipated counteroffensive to try to recapture Russian-occupied territory in the south and east.

Russian and Ukrainian forces have been fighting over Bakhmut for months. Russia sees capturing Bakhmut as a stepping stone to taking other Ukrainian cities.

**Load-Date:** May 10, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Boris Johnson news - live: Zelensky echoes Churchill in address to Commons*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-0N91-JBNF-W4GR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 6:41 AM GMT

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**Section:** UK POLITICS,UK; Version:15

**Length:** 193 words

**Byline:** Liam James,Sam Hancock and Eleanor Sly

**Highlight:** Home secretary's claims of an already-operating hub have been debunked

**Body**

[*Ukraine's*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) president Volodymyr Zelensky addressed UK MPs in the Commons via video link with a speech that echoed that of former UK Prime Minister Winston Churchill.

In the speech, Mr Zelensky thanked the Boris Johnson for the UK's help so far, but called for more to be done. He said: "Please increase the pressure of sanctions against this country [Russia] and please recognise this country as a terrorist country."

Meanwhile, Priti Patel has been condemned by cross-party MPs for telling the Commons on Monday that a visa centre had been set up in [*Calais*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/calais) to help ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** trying to enter the UK - a claim now known to be false.

[*Roger Gale*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/roger-gale) , a senior MP in the home secretary's own party, went as far as suggesting she should resign over the matter. "The home secretary said yesterday that a visa centre had already been set up in Calais," he said. "This was untrue and under any normal administration that would be a resigning matter."

The news comes after No 10 admitted that [*Ukrainians trapped in Calais would need to travel 70 miles to Lille*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/russia-ukraine-crisis-refugees-visa-calais-b2031004.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20refugees%20trapped%20in%20Calais%20told%20to%20make%2070-mile%20journey%20to%20Lille%20to%20apply%20for%20UK%20visas) to find out if they are even eligible to be given a UK visa, despite Ms Patel's claims 24 hours earlier.

**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*AP News Digest 3:25 am*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6544-MT11-JBNF-W1WW-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 31, 2022 Thursday 6:49 AM GMT

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

**Length:** 1791 words

**Byline:** Via AP news wire

**Body**

Here are the AP's latest coverage plans, top stories and promotable content. All times EDT. For up-to-the minute information on AP's coverage, visit Coverage Plan at [*https://newsroom.ap.org*](https://newsroom.ap.org).

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ONLY ON AP

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OCEAN-FISHERIES-ARMED-CONFLICT - An Associated Press review of conflict databases compiled by non-governmental organizations, government data, and media reports found in the past five years more than 360 instances of state authorities ramming or shooting at foreign fishing boats, sometimes leading to deaths. In that same time, another 850 foreign fishing boats were seized by authorities and systematically crushed, blown up, or sunk. By Helen Wieffering. SENT: 2,350 words, photos. An abridged version of 1,750 words is also available.

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TOP STORIES

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RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR - The Ukrainian president said his country's defense against the [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invasion is at a "turning point" and again pressed the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) for more help, hours after the Kremlin's forces reneged on a pledge to scale back some of their operations. Russian bombardment of areas around Kyiv and the northern city of Chernihiv and intensified attacks elsewhere in the country further undermined hopes for progress toward ending the brutal war. Talks between [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and Russia were set to resume Friday by video. By Nebi Qena and Yuras Karmanau. SENT: 1,150 words, photos, videos. With RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-THE-LATEST.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE INVASION-US REFUGEES - As the United States prepares to accept 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** following Russia's invasion, existing communities in cities like Sacramento and Seattle are already mobilizing to provide food, shelter and support to those fleeing the war. Ukrainian groups in the U.S., including churches, are already providing support to people entering the country through informal channels, including on visas that will eventually expire or by flying to Mexico and crossing over the border. By Kathleen Ronayne. SENT: 990 words, photos, video. Also see MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR below. For full coverage.

VIRUS OUTBREAK-UNWINDING COVID - When the end of the COVID-19 pandemic comes, it could create major disruptions for a cumbersome U.S. health care system made more generous, flexible and up-to-date technologically through a raft of temporary emergency measures. Winding down those policies could begin as early as the summer. By Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar. SENT: 1,080 words, photos.

BIDEN-OIL RESERVES - President Joe Biden is preparing to order the release of up to 1 million barrels of oil per day from the nation's strategic petroleum reserve in a bid to control energy prices, according to two people familiar with the decision who spoke on the condition of anonymity to preview it. By Zeke Miller and Josh Boak. SENT: 340 words, photo. UPCOMING: 700 words after 1:30 speech.

FEDERAL RESERVE-INCLUSIVE RECOVERY - America's hiring boom of the past year has narrowed racial disparities in unemployment. Yet the Federal Reserve's ongoing interest rate hikes - shaping up to be the steepest in 15 years - threaten to reverse that progress. The Fed's rate hikes will mean higher borrowing rates that could hobble the job market and undercut a goal the Fed unveiled two years ago: To keep rates ultra-low for as long as possible, to help less advantaged workers, who often don't benefit much from job growth until late in an economic expansion. By Economics Writer Christopher Rugaber. SENT: 1,320 words, photos.

OSCARS-CHRIS ROCK - [*Chris Rock*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chris-rock) received several standing ovations before he told one joke at his first comedy show since Will Smith slapped him in the face onstage at the Oscars. Rock only briefly addressed the slap to the sold out crowd in Boston, saying he was "still kind of processing what happened." By Michael Casey. SENT: 890 words, photos, video. With OSCARS-WILL SMITH - Academy: Will Smith refused to leave Oscars after Rock slap.

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MORE ON RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

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RUSSIAN-UKRAINE-WAR-SEAFOOD - The worldwide seafood industry is girding for price hikes, supply disruptions and potential job losses as new rounds of economic sanctions on Russia make key species such as cod and crab harder to come by. SENT: 780 words, photo.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-BRITISH SPY CHIEF - Demoralized Russian soldiers in the Ukraine were refusing to carry out orders and sabotaging their own equipment and had accidentally shot down their own aircraft, a U.K. intelligence chief said. SENT: 240 words, photo.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-RUBLE RECOVERY - The Russian ruble has bounced back to almost its full value since before the West imposed economic sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine. That could be a sign that the sanctions in their current form may not be enough to hurt Russia as badly as the West would like. SENT: 1,150 words, photo.

RUSSIA-UKRAINE-WAR-CONGRESS - Ukrainian lawmakers are urging the U.S. Congress to quickly provide more military aid and impose stiffer sanctions as they work to push the Russians from their country. By Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro. SENT: 980 words, photos, video.

MARINE CHARGED-RUSSIA - The parents of a Marine veteran imprisoned in Russia met at the White House with Biden. SENT: 350 words, photos.

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TRENDING NEWS

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FACEBOOK-TIKTOK-RIVALRY - Facebook resorts to old smear tactics against TikTok. SENT: 350 words, photo.

MISSING WOMAN-NORTHERN NEVADA - Body of missing Nevada woman found, suspect charged. SENT: 700 words, photos, video.

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WASHINGTON

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FEC-CLINTON HILLARY - Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and the Democratic National Committee have agreed to pay $113,000 to settle a Federal Election Commission investigation into whether they violated campaign finance law by misreporting spending on research that eventually became the infamous Steele dossier. SENT: 470 words, photo.

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NATIONAL

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SEVERE WEATHER - A line of severe storms packing isolated tornadoes and high winds ripped across the Deep South overnight, toppling trees and power lines and leaving homes and businesses damaged as the vast weather front raced across several states. SENT: 780 words, photos.

DEATH ROW MARRIAGE-OKLAHOMA - A 32-year-old paralegal who has spent more than a decade visiting people imprisoned on death row and advocating for an end to capital punishment has wed a 59-year-old condemned man in Oklahoma. SENT: 1,020 words, photos, video.

MICHIGAN GOVERNOR-[*KIDNAPPING*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) PLOT - Four men charged with conspiring to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer must decide whether they will testify in their own defense as the trial moves toward the finish line. SENT: 530 words, photos, video. UPCOMING: Trial resumes 8:30 a.m.

HERMIT EVICTED - A former hermit in New Hampshire who went back to live on the wooded property he was ordered to leave realizes that his time there is drawing to a close. SENT: 610 words, photos.

NAVY PLANE CRASH - A U.S. Navy aircraft with three people aboard crashed in waters near the Eastern Shore boundary of Virginia and Maryland, killing one, authorities said. SENT: 330 words, photos.

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INTERNATIONAL

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ISRAEL-PALESTINIANS - Israeli forces raided a refugee camp in the occupied West Bank, setting off a gun battle in which a Palestinian teenager was killed and several others were wounded, the Palestinian Health Ministry said. SENT: 600 words, photos.

NEW-ZEALAND-PRIME-MINISTER-THREATS - A New Zealand man was sentenced to one year in prison for threatening to kill Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern. SENT: 360 words, photo.

CHINA-PLANE CRASH - Chinese officials said that the search for wreckage in last week's crash of a China Eastern Boeing 737-800 is basically done and that more than 49,000 pieces of debris had been found. SENT: 370 words, photos.

CHINA-AFGHANISTAN - Chinese leader Xi Jinping issued strong backing for Afghanistan at a regional conference, while making no mention of human rights abuses by the country's Taliban leaders. SENT: 420 words, photo. With AFGHANISTAN U.N. seeks record $4.4 billion for Afghans struggling under Taliban.

INDIA-RHINO CENSUS-PHOTO GALLERY - One-horned rhinos in Indian park saved by mud, guns. SENT: 350 words, photos.

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BUSINESS/ECONOMY

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OPEC-OIL PRICES - It's decision time again for the OPEC+ group of oil-producing countries, and it's expected to approve only a modest increase. UPCOMING: 500 words, photos by 4 a.m.

FINANCIAL MARKETS - Asian stock markets sank after Chinese manufacturing weakened and Russian shelling around Ukraine's capital shook hopes of progress in peace talks. By Business Writer Joe McDonald. SENT: 470 words, photos. With CHINA-MANUFACTURING - China manufacturing weakens as anti-virus controls tighten.

AMAZON-UNION-ELECTIONS - An independent group formed by former and current Amazon workers is trying to unionize a company warehouse in New York City. By Business Writer Haleluya Hadero. SENT: 990 words, photos, video.

CONSUMER SPENDING - The Commerce Department issues its February report on consumer spending, which accounts for roughly 70 percent of U.S. economic activity. By Economics Writer Paul Wiseman. UPCOMING: 130 words after release of report at 8:30 a.m., then expanded, photo.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS - The Labor Department reports on the number of people who applied for unemployment benefits last week. By Business Writer Matt Ott. UPCOMING: 130 words after release of report at 8:30 a.m., photo.

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SPORTS

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BUCCANEERS-ARIANS RETIRES - Bruce Arians unexpectedly retired as coach of the Tampa Bay Buccaneers, a stunning move that the 69-year-old who guided the team to its second Super Bowl title says is not related to health. By Sports Writer Fred Goodall. SENT: 940 words, photos.

US-COSTA RICA The United States men are returning to the World Cup after the anguish of missing the 2018 tournament, clinching a berth for this year's championship in Qatar despite a 2-0 loss to Costa Rica on the final night of qualifying. By Sports Writer Ronald Blum. SENT: 900 words, photos.

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ARTS/ENTERTAINMENT

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FILM-BRUCE WILLIS - Bruce Willis is stepping away from acting after a diagnosis of aphasia, a condition that causes loss of the ability to understand or express speech, his family said. By Film Writer Jake Coyle. SENT: 330 words, photo. With BRUCE WILLIS-APHASIA-EXPLAINER - Brain condition sidelining Willis has many causes.

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HOW TO REACH US

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At the Nerve Center, Jerome Minerva can be reached at 800-845-8450 (ext. 1600). For photos, Wally Santana (ext. 1900). For graphics and interactives, ext. 7636. Expanded AP content can be obtained from [*http://newsroom.ap.org*](http://newsroom.ap.org). For access to AP Newsroom and other technical issues, contact [*apcustomersupport@ap.org*](mailto:apcustomersupport@ap.org) or call 844-777-2006.

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[*Celebrating 50 people who make life better for others*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:668R-9C61-JCS0-D2FG-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 13

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**Body**

Today The Independent publishes its annual Happy List, honouring 50 remarkable Britons whose kindness, ingenuity and dedication make them some of the country's most inspirational individuals.

The 50 people here have been chosen by a panel from scores of nominations received from the readers of The Independent. They include a couple who have fostered more than 250 vulnerable children and a man who donated his house to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and who has since developed a network to support the resettlement of more than 100 people fleeing the war. They appear in alphabetical order, as it would be impossible to measure the successes of these individuals against each other.

The Independent's Happy List was founded in 2008 as an antidote to the many awards that glorify wealth or celebrity. Instead, it shines a light on ordinary people who do amazing things for important causes and inspire positive change. This year, the 14th edition, is once again presented in partnership with GoFundMe, the world's largest online fundraising platform.

From the outbreak of war in Ukraine to the spiralling cost of living crisis, the past 12 months have seen unprecedented global uncertainty and turmoil. The people chosen to be on this year's Happy List prove that there is power in working together, and that kindness is not a finite resource.

Harriet Asher

Harriet has so far helped to resettle more than 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK. The Hampshire mother of three visited Ukraine soon after war broke out and was shocked by the lack of transport links out of the country. She joined what she calls "a large network of volunteers - everyday people, not charities - from medics to drivers, to help take people to safety". Harriet, 39, set up a GoFundMe page which raised more than £25,000 in just 48 hours to help pay for coach travel, flights, safe houses or hotels for anyone trying to escape the conflict. She says "this journey has been a complete privilege for me and I couldn't feel luckier about all the extraordinary people I have met along the way".

Banji Alexander

Former southeast London primary school teacher Banji wrote a children's book aimed at gently tackling Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in the black and minority ethnic community and promoting children's mental health. "I was aware that vaccination uptake was considerably lower in some demographics within the Bame community, and I wanted to do something to help," says Banji, who also wanted to help children conceptualise everything they had experienced during the pandemic. He started writing Lockdown Looms, which explores a seven-year-old child's experience of the pandemic, during the second lockdown in 2020.

Gavin Auty

Gavin launched a bike recycling scheme during lockdown and has since fixed over 300 bikes for people across Yorkshire. Gav's Bikes started when he realised his neighbours were about to throw away a neglected bike. "I really don't like waste and couldn't see something that just needed a little fixing go to landfill," says Gavin. The initiative has raised more than £5,000 for cancer research and local charities, and donated bikes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK. This February, Gavin also launched a football team to raise money for food vouchers and presents for families at Christmas. "The project just means so much to me," he says. "I feel it has given me a purpose in life and I want to keep going for as long as I can."

Ali Beg

Having grown up, studied and started his career in Southampton, British Pakistani Ali realised that the Pakistani community - although the area's largest ethnic group - was often the lowest achievers. Determined to try and improve their opportunities and overcome barriers, Ali began volunteering at a local radio station for ethnic communities where he launched the station's first British Pakistani show, featuring health and welfare advice. It led him to set up his own community radio station, Awaaz Southampton, which aims to link and strengthen communities across the UK. The person who nominated Ali says: "Most of the volunteers at Awaaz have been refused training or volunteering at other radio stations. Thanks to Ali, many now have their own radio shows. Ali truly brings the beauty of life out in every individual."

Jane Flint Bridgewater

"The Happy List wouldn't be complete without Jane," says one person who nominated this longstanding volunteer from Stourbridge in the West Midlands. For the past 13 years, the mother of twins has given up her time to help Twins Trust, which supports families with twins, triplets or more. Jane has volunteered for the charity's helpline, Twinline, clocking up more than 1,000 hours of calls. "Jane is welcoming and empathetic - a great listener, always ready to lend a sympathetic ear. Anyone who speaks with her through Twinline will attest that she's one of the most positive people you'll ever encounter."

Rupert Brooke

Aged just seven, Rupert became the youngest person to cycle the 200 miles from London to Paris in just four days. Rupert, from Eaton in Leicestershire, has already raised more than £42,000 for the Children's Bereavement Centre, which supported him when his father Tom died in a tragic work accident when Rupert was just four years old. One person who nominated Rupert says: "His courage and determination inspire others. His mantra is 'I don't care about things, I just want to make people happy'." He has also raised nearly £9,000 for a local hospice.

Vicky Burford

"Vicky is an inspiration", says her colleague Claire Baggott. As co-founder and chairperson of the charity PANS PANDAS UK, Vicky works to advocate for, and support those living with, these neuropsychiatric conditions. Triggered by a misdirected immune response, PANS and PANDAS result in a constellation of devastating symptoms. "She is the glue that holds together thousands of families and fights for change so that young people living with these conditions get the correct care. Vicky is patient, incredibly kind, knowledgeable, diplomatic, compassionate and driven. Her enthusiasm and energy are driving forward much-needed change in the UK, both for individual families and systematically across health, social care and education systems."

Iain Butterworth

Scarborough's Iain felt so "helpless" as Russia's war unfolded in Ukraine, he decided to offer up his house to those fleeing the conflict. "I had planned to rent it out for profit, but in these terrible times, there are more important things," says Iain, who housed two Ukrainian families and set up a Facebook page called the Scarborough Sunflower Appeal to help cover the costs of essential furniture and utility bills, and for donations of food, clothes, toiletries and bedding. The group has grown and now supports more than 100 Ukrainians resettled in the Scarborough area with face-to-face group English lessons, social events, and weekly drop-in meetings to offer advice on benefits, education, health and employment. Iain continues to fundraise to expand the support to both sponsors and guests.

Beryl Carr

At 100 years old, Londoner Beryl is the NHS's oldest volunteer. She started volunteering at Ealing Hospital's League of Friends cafe after relocating to the capital when she was widowed in 2003 and looking for a way to meet new people. She began giving up her time to work in the cafe and has since served teas and snacks to thousands of hospital patients and visitors. She continues to volunteer once a month, giving four hours of her time a week. The grandmother of one says: "I can't think of anything worse than spending all day in front of the television."

Tomson Chauke

"Tomson spreads so much joy with his enthusiasm and zest for life," says one of the people who nominated him. Tomson, who lives in Reading, has been a British resident for almost 20 years after leaving Zimbabwe during the early 2000s. As well as volunteering at Reading Refugee Support Group, where he runs a football team, he also works at Prior's Court, a residential special school for young people with complex autism. "Tomson has transformed the lives of many of Prior's Court young people, forming incredible relationships with them. Any time spent with Tomson is a happy experience."

Gary Colet

In 2020, Gary was the first Covid patient to arrive in intensive care at Barnet Hospital. After six weeks in a coma and a further stay in hospital, Gary was discharged home. The Mill Hill resident has since gone on to raise more than £10,000 for the Royal Free Charity, with fundraising efforts including a London to Brighton bike ride while still suffering from long Covid. "Gary is one incredible man," says his nominator. "He is a true inspiration to others and gives up his time to speak to other Covid patients about his recovery and to give them advice. Nothing is too much for him, and I would love him to be recognised for his bravery and hard work."

Jessie Davies

Welsh social media influencer Jessie - who has had a stutter since the age of four - is raising awareness of speech impediments through her TikTok videos. The films, which have been viewed more than 58 million times, are helping to educate people about the condition. Jessie, from Cynon Valley, set up her TikTok account last year to record videos of herself approaching people in public to tackle her anxiety. After receiving an overwhelming response from viewers, Jessie has dedicated her platform to helping others with speech impediments, deepening people's understanding of how common stammers are and explaining how people can be supportive of people with impediments, particularly by encouraging patience and improved listening.

Bianca Effemey

In 2004, while working as a receptionist at Kingston Hospital paediatrics, Bianca noticed that small things make a huge difference to families in crisis following a significant diagnosis. She set up Momentum Children's Charity with the mission of ensuring that no family with a seriously ill child has to cope alone. The person who nominated Bianca says: "She has this special gift of knowing just what a family needs, be that creative therapy for a child struggling with their illness or fast-tracking counselling sessions for grieving parents." The charity currently supports more than 350 families across west London, Surrey and Sussex, with services including counselling, creative therapies, experiences and respite breaks. They also improve the environment for children treated in hospital with refurbishments that transform bare, clinical areas into bright, child-friendly spaces.

James Elliott

Known as The Canoe River Cleaner, James has been regularly cleaning Grimsby's River Freshney since 2020 to provide a clean habitat for wildlife and promote the riverside green spaces for residents to enjoy. It began as a pandemic hobby while James was on partial furlough, carrying out his first river clean in his vessel on Boxing Day in 2020 and removing 20 bags of rubbish. He was inspired to make the project a long-term one and has since received backing from local businesses and the wider community, who are helping sponsor a team of volunteers who can support the efforts. James also informs locals about river safety and swimming guidance.

Simon Gossling

Simon, from Cheltenham, launched a nationwide school uniform recycling initiative to help parents cut the cost of buying school uniforms, recycle outgrown clothes and reduce large amounts of waste going to landfill. Uniformerly is a free online marketplace where parents, schools and Parents and Teachers Associations can buy, sell, give away and recycle outgrown uniforms direct to other parents. Members from more than 3,800 schools across the UK are now registered and Simon is also working alongside school uniform suppliers and local authorities to improve sustainability, social inclusion, and child poverty prevention.

Luke Grenfell-Shaw

In 2018, Luke was diagnosed with stage four cancer aged just 24. Fast forward to 2020 and he set off to cycle from Bristol to Beijing to show what you can achieve when living with cancer. Luke, from Bristol, completed the 30,000km, cycling through 29 countries, and raising more than £125,000 for charities including Young Lives vs Cancer. "What Luke has achieved is remarkable," says one of the many who nominated him. "But the hope he has also given to others is indescribable. Along the way, Luke inspired so many people, and had more people living with cancer join him on his tandem bike - and all with a smile."

Gillian Gaunt

"Selfless, determined and kind," is how Gillian is described by one of those who nominated her. "She really does put smiles on the faces of people who are experiencing severe disadvantage." Gillian runs the St Giles Pantry service in Leeds, where subscribers pay a weekly subscription of £3.50 and in return are able to access affordable, nutritious food as well as added support and advice to help them move towards independence. The service aims to empower people to overcome barriers in order to break the cycle of poverty.

Louise Goulden

Founder and chief executive of charity The Together Project, Louise aims to boost wellbeing, reduce loneliness and foster stronger, happier communities through intergenerational experiences. Activities range from arts and crafts sessions that pair children with care home residents, to a music group aimed at children up to four years old, their grown-ups and older people. "Louise works super hard to bring happiness to everyone," says one of the many who nominated her. "Some of my happiest moments have been at The Together Project sessions." Another says: "Louise's contribution to communities and her positive attitude are truly inspirational. She lights up rooms with her beautiful smile and sense of calm. She's made such a difference to so many people's lives and she is the embodiment of joy."

Theo Harvey

Theo lost his sight after developing a brain tumour aged nine and has since spent months in hospital for treatment of benign tumours. Inspired to help others living with sight loss, 15-year-old Theo set out to fundraise to name as many guide dog puppies as he can for Guide Dogs. So far Theo, who currently has a buddy dog from the charity and hopes to have his own guide dog one day, has raised more than £10,000 to name puppies Theo, Harvey, William - after his grandfather - and Kit, after his brother. Theo, who lives in Aberdeenshire, raises money through running challenges and tandem bike rides and is well on track to naming his fifth puppy.

Brynn Hauxwell

Teenager Brynn has taken part in long-distance wheelchair challenges since 2020 to fundraise for Ability Shetland, the charity that helped to support him in his love for getting outdoors. Brynn, 17, has autism, ADHD, severe asthma and fixed ankle contractures, and relies on a wheelchair to get around. Determined to give back to the charity, in 2020 he decided to push himself 1,679 miles - a distance equivalent to the length of Shetland's coastline. The following year he wheeled the distance of 16-half marathons in the month leading up to his 16th birthday. This year he set himself the challenge of travelling the 84-mile Hadrian's Wall Trail. Brynn, who lives on Shetland, has inspired followers on social media by promoting inclusivity, particularly in sport.

Hussein Mohamud Hussein

Refugee Hussein came to the UK in 1999, aged nine, after his parents sent him to live with his uncle to escape conflict in Somalia. Growing up in Lambeth, south London, he joined a Somali-run football club called Waaberi FC, but in 2009 the club disbanded due to a lack of funding. In 2015, Hussein set up Streatham FC, a community football team and charity that aims to support East African communities living in London. Today Hussein trains children aged between six and 19, about 80 per cent of whom are from single-parent, low-income households. About 70 kids play regularly and, during last summer's school holidays, the club ran a football programme for 2,035 kids, with help from council funding, to encourage healthy living and strengthen confidence.

Stuart Hutton-Brown

Blackpool-based Stuart founded Counselling in the Community to help make talking therapy more accessible to adults, children and young people in the city. Since 2017 the donation-based service has enabled more than 130 people to receive counselling every week. Each person pays a small donation - dependent on personal circumstances - to keep the initiative running. The social enterprise has so far worked with more than 930 adults and provided more than 6,000 hours of counselling in 2021. With his hub currently at capacity, Stuart is fundraising to establish a second centre in Blackpool, which would also serve as a wider community hub.

Lola Idris-Debayo

Londoner Lola founded the Lolo Foundation 15 years ago to provide frontline support to vulnerable people across the city. Lola, originally from Nigeria, experienced homelessness when first moving to the UK 30 years ago and decided to support others in a similar position. Twice a month, the foundation hosts food-donation points, providing food for hundreds of people, including Lola's home-cooked Nigerian meals. Lola has also expanded the foundation to Nigeria, where four times a year it provides humanitarian assistance for some of the most vulnerable people in Lagos. "I am passionate about taking care of people," she says. "I know what it is to be vulnerable. I want to use this platform to call on everybody that cares about humanity to support us so we can continue to feed and support these people. We are the change that is needed."

Geraint John

After a five-month charity cycle ride around the UK last year, Geraint was horrified by the amount of beach litter he saw. The 51-year-old, from Maesteg in Bridgend, has since embarked on a 700-mile clean-up of Wales' coastline, single-handedly clearing tons of litter from beaches and inspiring others to join him in tackling plastic pollution. Geraint, who started his "mammoth" journey in the Mumbles, Swansea, on 13 May, is also fundraising through this challenge to buy a boat that will enable him to visit more inaccessible coastal areas to collect litter.

Oscar Jones

After watching medics save the life of footballer Christian Eriksen after a heart attack last year, Oscar was inspired to raise money to buy defibrillators in his local area. Oliver, from Cheshire, set himself the task of running a mile a day for 26 days. Initially, he hoped to get enough money to buy one defibrillator, but, after smashing his initial target, he will be able to buy 10. Thus far he has raised more than £8,500.

Carole Ann Kelly

Jolly Josh is a charity based in Rochdale that provides dedicated peer support and safe spaces for children with disabilities, complex and special needs and their families or carers. Founded by Carole in 2017, exactly one month after her son Joshua James died aged just 15 months, Jolly Josh now has its own bespoke premises with a hydro pool, accessible changing places and the latest technology to support families and provide them with the environment they need. One person who nominated Carole says: "Thanks to Carole's tireless fundraising, the charity now supports local families and children to connect and thrive."

Jacob Kelly

When schools closed during the pandemic, Oxford University student Jacob put out a call for tutors on social media. He quickly set up the Coronavirus Tutoring Initiative (CTI), which has since seen more than 4,000 volunteer university students provide more than 50,000 hours of free, online one-on-one tutoring for school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK. Jacob, from Surrey, has since wound down CTI and turned his attention to the educational attainment gap, which has widened since Covid and continues to grow. Tutor the Nation is a new charity carrying on the work of CTI, encouraging anyone interested in providing free tuition to sign up to help pupils in state-sector schools.

Paul Llewlyn

Paul, from St Helens, has been hailed a local hero for supporting those in need through Sexton Avenue Community Allotment Garden. The plot of land had been closed to the public for more than a decade until Paul and a small team of volunteers decided to transform it into a garden that could be enjoyed by everyone. The space is now a thriving community hub, which runs gardening open days and support sessions for community groups including St Helens Autism and Asperger Society, St Helens Community Adult Learning, St Helens Youth Justice Service and Parr Mothers and Toddlers Group. The team also run a food bank five days a week, which helps to feed more than 100 people, and a school uniform recycling scheme.

Nina Lopes

When Nina was diagnosed with stage 4 triple negative metastatic breast cancer, just months after receiving the all-clear from her first cancer diagnosis, she decided to dedicate her time to raising awareness of secondary breast cancer. Nina, from Croydon, has called for a greater understanding of the symptoms, for GPs to pay more attention to young women's concerns, and for a system whereby GPs aren't the only gateway to cancer referrals. "Doctors are so quick to dismiss us, but it's killing young women," says Nina. There are an estimated 35,000 people living with secondary breast cancer in the UK. Nina's friend Ruth has set up a GoFundMe fundraiser to pay for Nina to enjoy some special times with her loved ones.

Fruzsina Marjan

Last year Fruzsina founded Heritage Charity London, which is dedicated to improving the lives of disengaged and disadvantaged children through initiatives outside of school hours. They include sports, creative arts, life skills and team-building, as well as providing mental health support to teachers and students. The person who sent the nomination says: "Fruzsina understands the implications of unequal access to education, and subsequently raised funds for providing educational programmes to the more disadvantaged, who would otherwise have not been able to access any extracurricular support like the wealthier can. She's dedicated all her time and energy to ensuring that all children are placed on an equal footing in life to become whoever they wish to be. In a short time, she has managed to dramatically change the lives and futures of children."

Emma Marshall

Emma, from Leeds, is a play specialist who works at the children's cardiology ward at Leeds General Infirmary. The person who nominated Emma says: "She is a wonderfully smiley and happy person who goes out of her way to make all of the young patients feel at ease and happy during their time on the heart unit." As well as entertaining the children, Emma also teaches them strategies to cope with the stresses involved in being an inpatient, such as regular blood tests. "She brightens up the ward with her gorgeous smile and fabulous zest for her very important role. The ward would be a dull place without her."

Kat Mayer

Originally from Macclesfield, Kat is part of a dynamic team who launched the biggest community land buyout in the south of Scotland. The ambitious fundraising project in Langholm, Dumfries and Galloway, set out to double the size of Tarras Valley Nature Reserve to 10,500 acres, not only to protect wildlife but also to boost plans for community regeneration. The initial aim, to crowdfund £200,000, was quickly surpassed - and the team has since successfully raised £2.2m thanks to large private donations and a thriving GoFundMe fundraiser. The reserve will now focus on nature-based tourism opportunities, which will in turn create local jobs alongside helping to counter the nature and climate emergencies.

Lesley McCormack

Lesley, 39, has dedicated the last 16 years to supporting people with a learning disability at Mencap in the Wigan area. Lesley, who lives in Liverpool, is described as being "immensely passionate about her job in social care" and someone who went "above and beyond through the pandemic, taking extra shifts when people were isolating, picking up shopping and dropping off food parcels and PPE to those who needed it - or just touching base with other carers to ensure they were okay". Lesley even gave up Christmas Day with her family in order to be there for the people with a learning disability whom she supports.

Diane and Patrick McCourt

Husband and wife Diane and Patrick, from Larne, have fostered more than 250 vulnerable children in Northern Ireland over the past 40 years. Since 1978 they have opened up their home to children of all ages, and for a range of care periods - from several weeks and months, while children are in the process of moving to permanent homes, through to years of fostering and adoption. With the need for foster carers a matter of urgency in Northern Ireland, the McCourts are passionate about the importance of foster care and its benefits. "We just see it as part of our life," says Diane. "We have been lucky to have had these children in our life and I suppose that's why we still foster today. It is worth noting that there is a real need for foster parents in Northern Ireland, and perhaps this award might make people see how we have loved doing this and might make someone else consider doing it in their life."

Tim Morfin

As a youth worker 23 years ago, Tim noticed a lot of teenagers weren't attending school, so he worked with them to get them back into education. He went on to found charity Transforming Lives for Good (TLG), which now runs alternative provision (AP) schools across the UK to give young people a future. Alongside this, the charity runs an early intervention programme in a bid to reach children at a younger age. Volunteers delivered 5,727 hours of coaching to kids in school last year, and the organisation is known for its innovation and development of leaders. One of those who nominated Tim says: "His life is the epitome of brightening up children's lives - giving happiness! Under his inspirational leadership, the organisation has grown from a small church project to a national movement."

Angelina Namiba

When Angelina was diagnosed with HIV in 1993, it was widely believed to be a death sentence. Ever since, Angelina, from east London, has dedicated her life to reducing the stigma around the virus. She is a founding member of the 4M Network of Mentor Mothers living with HIV, a patron of the National HIV Nurses Association, a member of the Women's Network of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and a member of the organising committee of the International annual Women and HIV Workshop. She has also been a community representative for the British HIV Association. "Angelina is a true leader and immensely loved and respected. I would just love the wider world to know what an amazing woman she is," says her nominator. Today, 99 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women who follow a treatment plan will not pass the infection on.

James Pearson

East Lothian's James Pearson learnt "magnet fishing" - tying a high-powered magnet onto a rope and throwing it into water - by watching YouTube videos. He was hailed a local hero for using the technique to remove anything in the River Esk that might cause harm to local wildlife, such as shopping trolleys, bikes, scooters and other metal debris. James, 46, set up Magnet Fishing Scotland - the only group legally allowed to magnet fish the Scottish canal system - after making contact with Magnet Fishing Edinburgh. James says: "I see this as giving something back to our brilliant community, and if it gets a few people out and into the fresh air then that's a bonus."

Maria Revell

Along with a team of volunteers, Maria, 59, collects furniture and other waste left on streets or outside homes in her local area of Jaywick, Essex, before taking it to the local rubbish dump. In January, council officials told her that dropping off other people's rubbish amounted to fly-tipping, and banned her from every refuse site in Essex. Maria, who battles fibromyalgia which causes her chronic muscle pain, is undeterred and continues to do what she can to keep Jaywick tidy, by helping to repair and clean up properties.

Marcus Roberts

The Felix Project is a London-based food waste redistribution charity set up in 2016 to help people struggling to access fresh food. Marcus has volunteered with the charity since day one, helping it to grow from a small depot in west London to four huge depots, served by 50 vans and 4,000 volunteers. It now runs Felix's Kitchen, which cooks up to 5,000 healthy meals a day from surplus food received from suppliers. The person who nominated Marcus says: "With huge bonhomie he has worked tirelessly to ensure The Felix Project continues to grow and expand its fight against food waste across the whole of London, helping to feed hundreds of thousands of Londoners every year."

Dr Moonsang Seo

"Staff and patients love Moon's indomitable spirit and can-do attitude, and he brightens up even the darkest of days," says one of the many who nominated Moonsang, who works at Great Ormond Street Hospital. "He is the heart of the team," says another, who describes how he has organised flash mobs, virtual tours of staff homes, sing-and-dance-alongs and more to help to engage and support the busy team as they cope with stressful working conditions. Moonsang does this alongside his job as service manager at the NIHR Great Ormond Street Hospital clinical research facility, which brings research opportunities to children with rare or complex conditions, many of whom have no conventional treatment options.

Charan Singh Sekhon

Charan is chair of Seva Trust UK, a charity he founded with the mission of transforming lives through education and social initiatives. During the pandemic, Charan launched an emergency support project to help the elderly, vulnerable, homeless and international students. Charan led a large team of volunteers working in Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire to provide those in need with food and other essential items. Previously Charan played an important role in establishing a new Sikh temple in Kempston, Bedford, where he served as an assistant secretary for more than 15 years. Charan and his team have supported more than 500 disadvantaged children in northern India in the last six years.

Jeff and Chloe Smith

Jeff and daughter Chloe founded charity bigmoose with the goal being to help people with their mental health, prevent suicide and reduce homelessness. The charity was set up in tribute to Jeff's best friend, Gary "moose" Cloonan, and aims to get people back into work through bigmoose coffee co and also to provide therapy for people who are struggling with their mental health. This year they are aiming to raise £1m for therapy and early and timely intervention.

Asghar Shah

Asghar has been running the Peace Centre food bank in Portsmouth since 2017, even recruiting a team of volunteers to deliver food parcels to families who cannot collect them themselves. The community-based food hub is not financially supported by the council, but through donations from local people and supermarkets. It serves more than 35 vulnerable families on a weekly basis - most of whom have young children - as well as supporting homeless people. Asghar also runs pensioner coffee mornings to help reduce isolation and arranges group litter picking sessions. "He gives so much of himself to his community and was essential to many vulnerable people during the pandemic," says the person who nominated him.

Michelle Southern

For many homeless people, their pet is hugely important to them, yet they may find it impossible to access veterinary care, or face being separated from their animals when accessing temporary housing. Michelle founded Street Paws in Newcastle in 2016, to provide free accessible vet care and support services to homeless people and their pets across the UK. One person who put Michelle forward for the Happy List says: "She works tirelessly to make sure that the human-animal bond is not broken. She knows how important it is to keep people and their pets together."

Leo Street

Leo, a 13-year-old Scout, slept outside in a hammock every night of 2021 to raise money for Shout, the UK's first free 24/7 confidential mental health text service. Leo endured a heatwave, snow, -5C temperatures and even Covid. "I hope my efforts bring happiness to those struggling in difficult times," says Leo, who lives in Swanley, Kent. He has so far raised more than £8,000, which will help Shout train 32 new volunteers who will take 6,400 text conversations with children and adults battling suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety and loneliness. This October, Leo will cycle 461 miles from Kent to Scotland as his next fundraising challenge for Shout.

Kevin Webber

After being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2014, Kevin was given just two years to live. Since then he has dedicated his life to making memories and raising awareness and funds for Prostate Cancer UK by undertaking multiple ultra-running challenges. Kevin, from Epsom in Surrey, has completed the epic Marathon des Sables in the Sahara Desert four times, as well as endurance races across snow, tundra and through jungles. Along the way, he has inspired thousands of others to "make the most of it", and has helped raise close to £1m.

Emily Wheeler

Interior stylist and former social worker Emily is the founder of Furnishing Futures, a charity that fully furnishes and decorates the homes of women and children who have escaped domestic abuse and have been rehoused in empty flats and houses in London. Social housing is given without any flooring, curtains, white goods and furnishings. Emily created the charity supported by a collective of interior stylists, designers, retailers and brands who donate items that cannot be sold and would otherwise go to landfill. The charity works alongside families and designers to fully furnish the homes with everything the families need, and is currently transforming a women's refuge in northeast London with the interior designer Rebecca Wakefield.

Arif Voraji

Supporting homeless people in Leicester gain permanent accommodation is a passion for Arif, who founded Help the Homeless Leicester in 2018. Since then the initiative has helped more than 220 people find a permanent address. Arif also established a food bank during the pandemic which is used by more than 200 people on a weekly basis, and every Friday he distributes food and home-cooked meals to homeless people in the city centre. Arif says he had to act when he saw people living on the streets struggling in freezing temperatures. "I went onto eBay and bought lots of clothing and started to help people from the boot of my car in November 2014," he says. "It has naturally grown from there, and I hope that Help the Homeless will grow from here and hopefully, in the future, we can expand to other cities that need our service."

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[*Happy List 2022: The Independent celebrates 50 inspirational people making life better for others*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:668H-WCK1-DY4H-K1YW-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Body**

Today The Independent publishes its annual Happy List, honouring 50 remarkable Britons whose kindness, ingenuity and dedication make them some of the country’s most inspirational individuals.

The 50 people here have been chosen by a panel from scores of nominations received from the readers of The Independent. They include a 100-year-old NHS volunteer, a couple who have fostered more than 250 vulnerable children and a man who donated his house to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, and who has since developed a network to support the resettlement of more than 100 people fleeing the war.

They appear in alphabetical order, as it would be impossible to measure the successes of these individuals against each other.

The Independent’s Happy List was founded in 2008 as an antidote to the many awards that glorify wealth or celebrity. Instead, it shines a light on ordinary people who do amazing things for important causes and inspire positive change.

This year, the 14th edition, is once again presented in partnership with [*GoFundMe*](https://www.gofundme.com/en-gb) , the world’s largest online fundraising platform.

From the outbreak of war in Ukraine to the spiralling cost of living crisis, the past 12 months have seen unprecedented global uncertainty and turmoil. The people chosen to be on this year’s Happy List prove that there is power in working together, and that kindness is not a finite resource.

Read about all 50 of them below:

Harriet Asher

Harriet has so far helped to resettle more than 500 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK. The Hampshire mother of three visited Ukraine soon after war broke out and was shocked by the lack of transport links out of the country. She joined what she calls “a large network of volunteers – everyday people, not charities – from medics to drivers, to help take people to safety”. Harriet, 39, set up a [*GoFundMe page*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-harriet-pay-for-ukrainian-flights-to-london) which raised more than £25,000 in just 48 hours to help pay for coach travel, flights, safe houses or hotels for anyone trying to escape the conflict. She says “this journey has been a complete privilege for me and I couldn’t feel luckier about all the extraordinary people I have met along the way”.

Banji Alexander

Former southeast London primary school teacher Banji [*wrote a children’s book*](https://banjialexander.com) aimed at gently tackling Covid-19 vaccine hesitancy in the black and minority ethnic community and promoting children’s mental health. “I was aware that vaccination uptake was considerably lower in some demographics within the Bame community, and I wanted to do something to help,” says Banji, who also wanted to help children conceptualise everything they had experienced during the pandemic. He started writing Lockdown Looms, which explores a seven-year-old child’s experience of the pandemic, during the second lockdown in 2020.

Gavin Auty

Gavin launched a bike recycling scheme during lockdown and has since fixed over 300 bikes for people across Yorkshire. Gav’s Bikes started when he realised his neighbours were about to throw away a neglected bike. “I really don’t like waste and couldn’t see something that just needed a little fixing go to landfill,” says Gavin. The initiative has raised more than £5,000 for cancer research and local charities, and donated bikes to ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK. This February, Gavin also launched a football team to raise money for food vouchers and [*presents for families at Christmas*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/e5fzbp-gavs-bikes-christmas-fundraiser). “The project just means so much to me,” he says. “I feel it has given me a purpose in life and I want to keep going for as long as I can.”

Ali Beg

Having grown up, studied and started his career in Southampton, British Pakistani Ali realised that the Pakistani community – although the area’s largest ethnic group – was often the lowest achievers. Determined to try and improve their opportunities and overcome barriers, Ali began volunteering at a local radio station for ethnic communities where he launched the station’s first British Pakistani show, featuring health and welfare advice. It led him to set up his own community radio station,[*Awaaz Southampton*](https://www.awaazfm.co.uk) , which aims to link and strengthen communities across the UK. The person who nominated Ali says: “Most of the volunteers at Awaaz have been refused training or volunteering at other radio stations. Thanks to Ali, many now have their own radio shows. Ali truly brings the beauty of life out in every individual.”

Jane Flint Bridgewater

“The Happy List wouldn’t be complete without Jane,” says one person who nominated this longstanding volunteer from Stourbridge in the West Midlands. For the past 13 years, the mother of twins has given up her time to help [*Twins Trust*](https://twinstrust.org/) , which supports families with twins, triplets or more. Jane has volunteered for the charity’s helpline, Twinline, clocking up more than 1,000 hours of calls. “Jane is welcoming and empathetic – a great listener, always ready to lend a sympathetic ear. Anyone who speaks with her through Twinline will attest that she’s one of the most positive people you’ll ever encounter.”

Rupert Brooke

Aged just seven, Rupert became the youngest person to cycle the 200 miles from London to Paris in just four days. Rupert, from Eaton in Leicestershire, has already raised more than £42,000 for the [*Children’s Bereavement Centre,*](https://www.childrensbereavementcentre.co.uk) which supported him when his father Tom died in a tragic work accident when Rupert was just four years old. One person who nominated Rupert says: “His courage and determination inspire others. His mantra is ‘I don’t care about things, I just want to make people happy’.” He has also [*raised nearly £9,000*](https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/rupert-brooke) for a local hospice.

Vicky Burford

“Vicky is an inspiration”, says her colleague Claire Baggott. As co-founder and chairperson of the charity [*PANS PANDAS UK,*](https://www.panspandasuk.org) Vicky works to advocate for, and support those living with, these neuropsychiatric conditions. Triggered by a misdirected immune response, PANS and PANDAS result in a constellation of devastating symptoms. “She is the glue that holds together thousands of families and fights for change so that young people living with these conditions get the correct care. Vicky is patient, incredibly kind, knowledgeable, diplomatic, compassionate and driven. Her enthusiasm and energy are driving forward much-needed change in the UK, both for individual families and systematically across health, social care and education systems.”

Iain Butterworth

Scarborough’s Iain felt so “helpless” as Russia’s war unfolded in Ukraine, he decided to offer up his house to those fleeing the conflict. “I had planned to rent it out for profit, but in these terrible times, there are more important things,” says Iain, who housed two Ukrainian families and set up a Facebook page called the Scarborough Sunflower Appeal to help cover the costs of essential furniture and utility bills, and for donations of food, clothes, toiletries and bedding. The group has grown and now supports more than 100 Ukrainians resettled in the Scarborough area with face-to-face group English lessons, social events, and weekly drop-in meetings to offer advice on benefits, education, health and employment. Iain [*continues to fundraise*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/help-support-ukrainian-refugees-in-scarborough) to expand the support to both sponsors and guests.

Beryl Carr

At 100 years old, Londoner Beryl is the NHS’s oldest volunteer. She started volunteering at Ealing Hospital’s League of Friends cafe after relocating to the capital when she was widowed in 2003 and looking for a way to meet new people. She began giving up her time to work in the cafe and has since served teas and snacks to thousands of hospital patients and visitors. She continues to volunteer once a month, giving four hours of her time a week. The grandmother of one says: “I can’t think of anything worse than spending all day in front of the television.”

Tomson Chauke

“Tomson spreads so much joy with his enthusiasm and zest for life,” says one of the people who nominated him. Tomson, who lives in Reading, has been a British resident for almost 20 years after leaving Zimbabwe during the early 2000s. As well as volunteering at Reading Refugee Support Group, where he runs a football team, he also works at [*Prior’s Court*](https://www.priorscourt.org.uk) , a residential special school for young people with complex autism. “Tomson has transformed the lives of many of Prior’s Court young people, forming incredible relationships with them. Any time spent with Tomson is a happy experience.”

Gary Colet

In 2020, Gary was the first Covid patient to arrive in intensive care at Barnet Hospital. After six weeks in a coma and a further stay in hospital, Gary was discharged home. The Mill Hill resident has since gone on to raise more than £10,000 for the Royal Free Charity, with fundraising efforts including a London to Brighton bike ride while still suffering from long Covid. “Gary is one incredible man,” says his nominator. “He is a true inspiration to others and gives up his time to speak to other Covid patients about his recovery and to give them advice. Nothing is too much for him, and I would love him to be recognised for his bravery and hard work.”

Jessie Davies

Welsh social media influencer Jessie – who has had a stutter since the age of four – is raising awareness of speech impediments through her TikTok videos. The films, which have been viewed more than 58 million times, are helping to educate people about the condition. Jessie, from Cynon Valley, set up her TikTok account last year to record videos of herself approaching people in public to tackle her anxiety. After receiving an overwhelming response from viewers, Jessie has dedicated her platform to helping others with speech impediments, deepening people’s understanding of how common stammers are and explaining how people can be supportive of people with impediments, particularly by encouraging patience and improved listening.

Bianca Effemey

In 2004, while working as a receptionist at Kingston Hospital paediatrics, Bianca noticed that small things make a huge difference to families in crisis following a significant diagnosis. She set up [*Momentum Children’s Charity*](https://www.momentumcharity.org/) with the mission of ensuring that no family with a seriously ill child has to cope alone. The person who nominated Bianca says: “She has this special gift of knowing just what a family needs, be that creative therapy for a child struggling with their illness or fast-tracking counselling sessions for grieving parents.” The charity currently supports more than 350 families across west London, Surrey and Sussex, with services including counselling, creative therapies, experiences and respite breaks. They also improve the environment for children treated in hospital with refurbishments that transform bare, clinical areas into bright, child-friendly spaces.

James Elliott

Known as The Canoe River Cleaner, James has been regularly cleaning Grimsby’s River Freshney since 2020 to provide a clean habitat for wildlife and promote the riverside green spaces for residents to enjoy. It began as a pandemic hobby while James was on partial furlough, carrying out his first river clean in his vessel on Boxing Day in 2020 and removing 20 bags of rubbish. He was inspired to make the project a long-term one and has since received backing from local businesses and the wider community, who are helping sponsor a team of volunteers who can support the efforts. James also informs locals about river safety and swimming guidance.

Simon Gossling

Simon, from Cheltenham, launched a nationwide school uniform recycling initiative to help parents cut the cost of buying school uniforms, recycle outgrown clothes and reduce large amounts of waste going to landfill. [*Uniformerly*](https://uniformerly.co.uk) is a free online marketplace where parents, schools and Parents and Teachers Associations can buy, sell, give away and recycle outgrown uniforms direct to other parents. Members from more than 3,800 schools across the UK are now registered and Simon is also working alongside school uniform suppliers and local authorities to improve sustainability, social inclusion, and child poverty prevention.

Luke Grenfell-Shaw

In 2018, Luke was diagnosed with stage four cancer aged just 24. Fast forward to 2020 and he set off to cycle from Bristol to Beijing to show what you can achieve when living with cancer. Luke, from Bristol, completed the 30,000km, cycling through 29 countries, and raising more than £125,000 for charities including [*Young Lives vs Cancer.*](https://www.younglivesvscancer.org.uk/) “What Luke has achieved is remarkable,” says one of the many who nominated him. “But the hope he has also given to others is indescribable. Along the way, Luke inspired so many people, and had more people living with cancer join him on his tandem bike – and all with a smile.”

Gillian Gaunt

“Selfless, determined and kind,” is how Gillian is described by one of those who nominated her. “She really does put smiles on the faces of people who are experiencing severe disadvantage.” Gillian runs the St Giles Pantry service in Leeds, where subscribers pay a weekly subscription of £3.50 and in return are able to access affordable, nutritious food as well as added support and advice to help them move towards independence. The service aims to empower people to overcome barriers in order to break the cycle of poverty.

Louise Goulden

Founder and chief executive of charity [*The Together Project*](https://thetogetherproject.org.uk/) , Louise aims to boost wellbeing, reduce loneliness and foster stronger, happier communities through intergenerational experiences. Activities range from arts and crafts sessions that pair children with care home residents, to a music group aimed at children up to four years old, their grown-ups and older people. “Louise works super hard to bring happiness to everyone,” says one of the many who nominated her. “Some of my happiest moments have been at The Together Project sessions.” Another says: “Louise’s contribution to communities and her positive attitude are truly inspirational. She lights up rooms with her beautiful smile and sense of calm. She’s made such a difference to so many people’s lives and she is the embodiment of joy.”

Theo Harvey

Theo lost his sight after developing a brain tumour aged nine and has since spent months in hospital for treatment of benign tumours. Inspired to help others living with sight loss, 15-year-old Theo set out to fundraise to name as many guide dog puppies as he can for Guide Dogs. So far Theo, who currently has a buddy dog from the charity and hopes to have his own guide dog one day, has raised more than £10,000 to name puppies Theo, Harvey, William – after his grandfather – and Kit, after his brother. Theo, who lives in Aberdeenshire, raises money through running challenges and tandem bike rides and is well on track to naming his fifth puppy.

Brynn Hauxwell

Teenager Brynn has taken part in long-distance wheelchair challenges since 2020 to fundraise for [*Ability Shetland*](https://www.abilityshetland.com) , the charity that helped to support him in his love for getting outdoors. Brynn, 17, has autism, ADHD, severe asthma and fixed ankle contractures, and relies on a wheelchair to get around. Determined to give back to the charity, in 2020 he decided to push himself 1,679 miles – a distance equivalent to the length of Shetland’s coastline. The following year he wheeled the distance of 16-half marathons in the month leading up to his 16th birthday. This year he set himself the challenge of travelling the 84-mile Hadrian’s Wall Trail. Brynn, who lives on Shetland, has inspired followers on social media by promoting inclusivity, particularly in sport.

Hussein Mohamud Hussein

Refugee Hussein came to the UK in 1999, aged nine, after his parents sent him to live with his uncle to escape conflict in Somalia. Growing up in Lambeth, south London, he joined a Somali-run football club called Waaberi FC, but in 2009 the club disbanded due to a lack of funding. In 2015, Hussein set up [*Streatham FC*](https://streathamfc.com/) , a community football team and charity that aims to support East African communities living in London. Today Hussein trains children aged between six and 19, about 80 per cent of whom are from single-parent, low-income households. About 70 kids play regularly and, during last summer’s school holidays, the club ran a football programme for 2,035 kids, with help from council funding, to encourage healthy living and strengthen confidence.

Stuart Hutton-Brown

Blackpool-based Stuart founded [*Counselling in the Community*](https://www.shbi.org.uk) to help make talking therapy more accessible to adults, children and young people in the city. Since 2017 the donation-based service has enabled more than 130 people to receive counselling every week. Each person pays a small donation – dependent on personal circumstances – to keep the initiative running. The social enterprise has so far worked with more than 930 adults and provided more than 6,000 hours of counselling in 2021. With his hub currently at capacity, Stuart is fundraising to establish a second centre in Blackpool, which would also serve as a wider community hub.

Lola Idris-Debayo

Londoner Lola founded the Lolo Foundation 15 years ago to provide frontline support to vulnerable people across the city. Lola, originally from Nigeria, experienced homelessness when first moving to the UK 30 years ago and decided to support others in a similar position. Twice a month, the foundation hosts food-donation points, providing food for hundreds of people, including Lola’s home-cooked Nigerian meals. Lola has also expanded the foundation to Nigeria, where four times a year it provides humanitarian assistance for some of the most vulnerable people in Lagos. “I am passionate about taking care of people,” she says. “I know what it is to be vulnerable. I want to use this platform to call on everybody that cares about humanity to support us so we can continue to feed and support these people. We are the change that is needed.”

Geraint John

After a five-month charity cycle ride around the UK last year, Geraint was horrified by the amount of beach litter he saw. The 51-year-old, from Maesteg in Bridgend, has since embarked on a 700-mile clean-up of Wales’ coastline, single-handedly clearing tons of litter from beaches and inspiring others to join him in tackling plastic pollution. Geraint, who started his “mammoth” journey in the Mumbles, Swansea, on 13 May, is also fundraising through this challenge to buy a boat that will enable him to visit more inaccessible coastal areas to collect litter.

Oscar Jones

After watching medics save the life of footballer Christian Eriksen after a heart attack last year, Oscar was inspired to raise money to buy defibrillators in his local area. Oliver, from Cheshire, set himself the task of running a mile a day for 26 days. Initially, he hoped to get enough money to buy one defibrillator, but, after smashing his initial target, he will be able to buy 10. Thus far he [*has raised more than £8,500*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/oscars-run-for-a-team-defibrillator).

Carole Ann Kelly

[*Jolly Josh*](https://www.jollyjosh.co.uk) is a charity based in Rochdale that provides dedicated peer support and safe spaces for children with disabilities, complex and special needs and their families or carers. Founded by Carole in 2017, exactly one month after her son Joshua James died aged just 15 months, Jolly Josh now has its own bespoke premises with a hydro pool, accessible changing places and the latest technology to support families and provide them with the environment they need. One person who nominated Carole says: “Thanks to Carole’s tireless fundraising, the charity now supports local families and children to connect and thrive.”

Jacob Kelly

When schools closed during the pandemic, Oxford University student Jacob put out a call for tutors on social media. He quickly set up the Coronavirus Tutoring Initiative (CTI), which has since seen more than 4,000 volunteer university students provide more than 50,000 hours of free, online one-on-one tutoring for school pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds across the UK. Jacob, from Surrey, has since wound down CTI and turned his attention to the educational attainment gap, which has widened since Covid and continues to grow. Tutor the Nation is a new charity carrying on the work of CTI, encouraging anyone interested in providing free tuition to sign up to help pupils in state-sector schools.

Paul Llewlyn

Paul, from St Helens, has been hailed a local hero for supporting those in need through Sexton Avenue Community Allotment Garden. The plot of land had been closed to the public for more than a decade until Paul and a small team of volunteers decided to transform it into a garden that could be enjoyed by everyone. The space is now a thriving community hub, which runs gardening open days and support sessions for community groups including St Helens Autism and Asperger Society, St Helens Community Adult Learning, St Helens Youth Justice Service and Parr Mothers and Toddlers Group. The team also run a food bank five days a week, which helps to feed more than 100 people, and a school uniform recycling scheme.

Nina Lopes

When Nina was diagnosed with stage 4 triple negative metastatic breast cancer, just months after receiving the all-clear from her first cancer diagnosis, she decided to dedicate her time to [*raising awareness of secondary breast cancer*](https://www.instagram.com/frodayss/?hl=en). Nina, from Croydon, has called for a greater understanding of the symptoms, for GPs to pay more attention to young women’s concerns, and for a system whereby GPs aren’t the only gateway to cancer referrals. “Doctors are so quick to dismiss us, but it’s killing young women,” says Nina. There are an estimated 35,000 people living with secondary breast cancer in the UK. Nina’s friend Ruth has set up [*a GoFundMe fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/living-list?utm_medium=referral&utm_source=unknown&utm_campaign=comms_gfm+living-list) to pay for Nina to enjoy some special times with her loved ones.

Fruzsina Marjan

Last year Fruzsina founded [*Heritage Charity London*](https://heritagecharity.org) , which is dedicated to improving the lives of disengaged and disadvantaged children through initiatives outside of school hours. They include sports, creative arts, life skills and team-building, as well as providing mental health support to teachers and students. The person who sent the nomination says: “Fruzsina understands the implications of unequal access to education, and subsequently raised funds for providing educational programmes to the more disadvantaged, who would otherwise have not been able to access any extracurricular support like the wealthier can. She’s dedicated all her time and energy to ensuring that all children are placed on an equal footing in life to become whoever they wish to be. In a short time, she has managed to dramatically change the lives and futures of children.”

Emma Marshall

Emma, from Leeds, is a play specialist who works at the children’s cardiology ward at Leeds General Infirmary. The person who nominated Emma says: “She is a wonderfully smiley and happy person who goes out of her way to make all of the young patients feel at ease and happy during their time on the heart unit.” As well as entertaining the children, Emma also teaches them strategies to cope with the stresses involved in being an inpatient, such as regular blood tests. “She brightens up the ward with her gorgeous smile and fabulous zest for her very important role. The ward would be a dull place without her.”

Kat Mayer

Originally from Macclesfield, Kat is part of a dynamic team who launched [*the biggest community land buyout*](https://www.langholminitiative.org.uk) in the south of Scotland. The ambitious fundraising project in Langholm, Dumfries and Galloway, set out to double the size of Tarras Valley Nature Reserve to 10,500 acres, not only to protect wildlife but also to boost plans for community regeneration. The initial aim, to crowdfund £200,000, was quickly surpassed – and the team has since successfully raised £2.2m thanks to large private donations and [*a thriving GoFundMe fundraiser*](https://www.gofundme.com/f/langholm-moor-community-buyout-2). The reserve will now focus on nature-based tourism opportunities, which will in turn create local jobs alongside helping to counter the nature and climate emergencies.

Lesley McCormack

Lesley, 39, has dedicated the last 16 years to supporting people with a learning disability at [*Mencap*](https://www.mencap.org.uk) in the Wigan area. Lesley, who lives in Liverpool, is described as being “immensely passionate about her job in social care” and someone who went “above and beyond through the pandemic, taking extra shifts when people were isolating, picking up shopping and dropping off food parcels and PPE to those who needed it – or just touching base with other carers to ensure they were okay”. Lesley even gave up Christmas Day with her family in order to be there for the people with a learning disability whom she supports.

Diane and Patrick McCourt

Husband and wife Diane and Patrick, from Larne, have fostered more than 250 vulnerable children in Northern Ireland over the past 40 years. Since 1978 they have opened up their home to children of all ages, and for a range of care periods – from several weeks and months, while children are in the process of moving to permanent homes, through to years of fostering and adoption. With the need for foster carers a matter of urgency in Northern Ireland, the McCourts are passionate about the importance of foster care and its benefits. “We just see it as part of our life,” says Diane. “We have been lucky to have had these children in our life and I suppose that’s why we still foster today. It is worth noting that there is a real need for foster parents in Northern Ireland, and perhaps this award might make people see how we have loved doing this and might make someone else consider doing it in their life.”

Tim Morfin

As a youth worker 23 years ago, Tim noticed a lot of teenagers weren’t attending school, so he worked with them to get them back into education. He went on to found charity Transforming Lives for Good (TLG), which now runs alternative provision (AP) schools across the UK to give young people a future. Alongside this, the charity runs an early intervention programme in a bid to reach children at a younger age. Volunteers delivered 5,727 hours of coaching to kids in school last year, and the organisation is known for its innovation and development of leaders. One of those who nominated Tim says: “His life is the epitome of brightening up children’s lives – giving happiness! Under his inspirational leadership, the organisation has grown from a small church project to a national movement.”

Angelina Namiba

When Angelina was diagnosed with HIV in 1993, it was widely believed to be a death sentence. Ever since, Angelina, from east London, has dedicated her life to reducing the stigma around the virus. She is a founding member of the [*4M Network of Mentor Mothers living with HIV*](https://4mmm.org/) , a patron of the [*National HIV Nurses Association*](https://www.nhivna.org/) , a member of the [*Women’s Network of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists*](https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/patients/rcog-womens-network/) , and a member of the organising committee of the International annual [*Women and HIV Workshop*](https://academicmedicaleducation.com/meeting/hiv-and-women-2022). She has also been a community representative for the [*British HIV Association*](https://www.bhiva.org/). “Angelina is a true leader and immensely loved and respected. I would just love the wider world to know what an amazing woman she is,” says her nominator. Today, 99 per cent of HIV-infected pregnant women who follow a treatment plan will not pass the infection on.

James Pearson

East Lothian’s James Pearson learnt “magnet fishing” – tying a high-powered magnet onto a rope and throwing it into water – by watching YouTube videos. He was hailed a local hero for using the technique to remove anything in the River Esk that might cause harm to local wildlife, such as shopping trolleys, bikes, scooters and other metal debris. James, 46, set up Magnet Fishing Scotland – the only group legally allowed to magnet fish the Scottish canal system – after making contact with Magnet Fishing Edinburgh. James says: “I see this as giving something back to our brilliant community, and if it gets a few people out and into the fresh air then that’s a bonus.”

Maria Revell

Along with a team of volunteers, Maria, 59, collects furniture and other waste left on streets or outside homes in her local area of Jaywick, Essex, before taking it to the local rubbish dump. In January, council officials told her that dropping off other people’s rubbish amounted to fly-tipping, and banned her from every refuse site in Essex. Maria, who battles fibromyalgia which causes her chronic muscle pain, is undeterred and continues to do what she can to keep Jaywick tidy, by helping to repair and clean up properties.

Marcus Roberts

[*The Felix Project*](file:///C:\Users\Emma\Downloads\www.thefelixproject.org) is a London-based food waste redistribution charity set up in 2016 to help people struggling to access fresh food. Marcus has volunteered with the charity since day one, helping it to grow from a small depot in west London to four huge depots, served by 50 vans and 4,000 volunteers. It now runs Felix’s Kitchen, which cooks up to 5,000 healthy meals a day from surplus food received from suppliers. The person who nominated Marcus says: “With huge bonhomie he has worked tirelessly to ensure The Felix Project continues to grow and expand its fight against food waste across the whole of London, helping to feed hundreds of thousands of Londoners every year.”

Dr Moonsang Seo

“Staff and patients love Moon’s indomitable spirit and can-do attitude, and he brightens up even the darkest of days,” says one of the many who nominated Moonsang, who works at Great Ormond Street Hospital. “He is the heart of the team,” says another, who describes how he has organised flash mobs, virtual tours of staff homes, sing-and-dance-alongs and more to help to engage and support the busy team as they cope with stressful working conditions. Moonsang does this alongside his job as service manager at the NIHR Great Ormond Street Hospital clinical research facility, which brings research opportunities to children with rare or complex conditions, many of whom have no conventional treatment options.

Charan Singh Sekhon

Charan is chair of [*SEVA Trust UK*](https://www.sevatrustuk.org) , a charity he founded with the mission of transforming lives through education and social initiatives. During the pandemic, Charan launched an emergency support project to help the elderly, vulnerable, homeless and international students. Charan led a large team of volunteers working in Bedfordshire, Milton Keynes and Hertfordshire to provide those in need with food and other essential items. Previously Charan played an important role in establishing a new Sikh temple in Kempston, Bedford, where he served as an assistant secretary for more than 15 years. Charan and his team have supported more than 500 disadvantaged children in northern India in the last six years.

Jeff and Chloe Smith

Jeff and daughter Chloe founded charity bigmoose with the goal being to help people with their mental health, prevent suicide and reduce homelessness. The charity was set up in tribute to Jeff’s best friend, Gary “moose” Cloonan, and aims to get people back into work through bigmoose coffee co and also to provide therapy for people who are struggling with their mental health. This year they are aiming to raise £1m for therapy and early and timely intervention.

Asghar Shah

Asghar has been running the Peace Centre food bank in Portsmouth since 2017, even recruiting a team of volunteers to deliver food parcels to families who cannot collect them themselves. The community-based food hub is not financially supported by the council, but through donations from local people and supermarkets. It serves more than 35 vulnerable families on a weekly basis – most of whom have young children – as well as supporting homeless people. Asghar also runs pensioner coffee mornings to help reduce isolation and arranges group litter picking sessions. “He gives so much of himself to his community and was essential to many vulnerable people during the pandemic,” says the person who nominated him.

Michelle Southern

For many homeless people, their pet is hugely important to them, yet they may find it impossible to access veterinary care, or face being separated from their animals when accessing temporary housing. Michelle founded [*Street Paws*](file:///C:\Users\Emma\Downloads\www.streetpaws.co.uk) in Newcastle in 2016, to provide free accessible vet care and support services to homeless people and their pets across the UK. One person who put Michelle forward for the Happy List says: “She works tirelessly to make sure that the human-animal bond is not broken. She knows how important it is to keep people and their pets together.”

Leo Street

Leo, a 13-year-old Scout, slept outside in a hammock every night of 2021 to raise money for [*Shout*](https://giveusashout.org/) , the UK’s first free 24/7 confidential mental health text service. Leo endured a heatwave, snow, -5C temperatures and even Covid. “I hope my efforts bring happiness to those struggling in difficult times,” says Leo, who lives in Swanley, Kent. He has so far raised more than £8,000, which will help Shout train 32 new volunteers who will take 6,400 text conversations with children and adults battling suicidal thoughts, depression, anxiety and loneliness. This October, Leo will cycle 461 miles from Kent to Scotland as his next fundraising challenge for Shout.

Kevin Webber

After being diagnosed with advanced prostate cancer in 2014, Kevin was given just two years to live. Since then he has dedicated his life to making memories and raising awareness and funds for [*Prostate Cancer UK*](https://prostatecanceruk.org/) by undertaking multiple ultra-running challenges. Kevin, from Epsom in Surrey, has completed the epic Marathon des Sables in the Sahara Desert four times, as well as endurance races across snow, tundra and through jungles. Along the way, he has inspired thousands of others to “make the most of it”, and has helped raise close to £1m.

Emily Wheeler

Interior stylist and former social worker Emily is the founder of [*Furnishing Futures*](https://furnishingfutures.org) , a charity that fully furnishes and decorates the homes of women and children who have escaped domestic abuse and have been rehoused in empty flats and houses in London. Social housing is given without any flooring, curtains, white goods and furnishings. Emily created the charity supported by a collective of interior stylists, designers, retailers and brands who donate items that cannot be sold and would otherwise go to landfill. The charity works alongside families and designers to fully furnish the homes with everything the families need, and is currently transforming a women’s refuge in northeast London with the interior designer Rebecca Wakefield.

Arif Voraji

Supporting homeless people in Leicester gain permanent accommodation is a passion for Arif, who founded [*Help the Homeless Leicester*](https://twitter.com/homelessleics?lang=en) in 2018. Since then the initiative has helped more than 220 people find a permanent address. Arif also established a food bank during the pandemic which is used by more than 200 people on a weekly basis, and every Friday he distributes food and home-cooked meals to homeless people in the city centre. Arif says he had to act when he saw people living on the streets struggling in freezing temperatures. “I went onto eBay and bought lots of clothing and started to help people from the boot of my car in November 2014,” he says. “It has naturally grown from there, and I hope that Help the Homeless will grow from here and hopefully, in the future, we can expand to other cities that need our service.”

**Load-Date:** August 30, 2022

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[*Inside Politics: Kyiv rocked by fresh bombardment but Russian advance stalled*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650R-8K01-DY4H-K0P4-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 1836 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Explosions heard in capital as US says Kremlin's military offensives remained stalled after making little progress over the weekend, writes Matt Mathers

**Body**

Have we, in the west, greatly overestimated Vladimir Putin? The Russian president and former KGB agent has, over the past two decades, acquired almost mythic status as a master strategist. Yet as we enter day 20 of the Kremlin's invasion of Ukraine, Putin's troops have so far failed to capture the capital, Kyiv. Beset by logistical problems and stiff Ukrainian resistance, the judo black belt's forces have resorted to indiscriminate bombing campaigns in several other cities, including Mariupol, many parts of which now resemble scenes from a disaster film.

Following two weeks of repeated denials, we've now had the first concession from Moscow that its [*invasion isn't going exactly to plan.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvcHV0aW4tdmlrdG9yLXpvbG90b3YtdWtyYWluZS1pbnZhc2lvbi1iMjAzNTg5MS5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B5536bf89&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=BtJko0XmlIkuX8p6a5yAPn%2F%2FsDYf3%2FJquR29nnMANbU%3D&reserved=0) "Yes, not everything is going as fast as we would like," Viktor Zolotov, the head of Russia's National Guard and a member of the Kremlin's security council, said, perhaps unwittingly, during a church service on Sunday, organised to help the military fight off Ukraine's "evil forces".

Russia has far more military firepower than Ukraine, and might well still achieve its objectives, albeit just over a longer timeframe. But history is littered with examples of smaller armies driving out invaders; the former Soviet Union's humiliating withdrawal from Afghanistan in 1989 is just one. Whatever the conclusion of the war in Ukraine, the first 20 days of the conflict have served at the very least to dispel the image of Putin as a master tactician - not to mention strengthening western alliances.

Inside the bubble

Chief politics commentator John Rentoul on what to look out for:

Cabinet meets this morning. The prime minister will host leaders of Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, and Sweden at Lancaster House. The Commons sits from 11.30am with Treasury questions followed by a general debate on Ukraine. Look out for news lines from the Public Administration and Constitutional Affairs Committee, which will take evidence from 10am from Sir Philip Mawer and Sir Alex Allan, the two most recent independent advisers on ministerial interests.

Coming up:

- Europe minister James Cleverly on BBC Radio 4 Today at 8.20am

- Shadow leveling up secretary Lisa Nandy on Times Radio Breakfast at 8.35am

Daily Briefing

ADVANCE STALLED: Putin's forces have continued shelling Kyiv this morning; multiple explosions have been heard and at least two residential buildings set on fire, although reports in the past few hours say one of those has been extinguished. Evacuation corridors for civilians to get out of Sumy in the northeast are in place between 9am and 9pm local time tonight. According to the general staff of Ukraine's armed forces, Russian soldiers have also begun a renewed assault on the important port city of Mariupol in the south, where the first convoy of civilians has been able to escape, and unleashed new artillery strikes on Kharkiv in the east. But overall, nearly all of the Kremlin's military offensives remained stalled after making little progress over the weekend, according to a senior US defence official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the Pentagon's assessment. Russian troops were still about 9 miles (15km) from the centre of Kyiv, the official added. The latest negotiations between the two countries, held by video Monday, ended without a breakthrough after several hours, with an aide to Volodymyr Zelensky saying the negotiators took "a technical pause" and planned to meet again later today. Zelesnky himself is due to address the US Congress later. We'll have all the [*latest updates on our liveblog.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ldXJvcGUvdWtyYWluZS1ydXNzaWEtd2FyLWxhdGVzdC1wdXRpbi16ZWxlbnNreS1jaGluYS1uYXRvLWIyMDM1ODk2LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bef58fb65&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=oAta8JXWki2HZDBsAjAd%2BwkqNF4FzXCPcHSsJZnOWm4%3D&reserved=0) STOP THE WAR: There has been a significant level of opposition to Putin's war domestically and the Russian president faced yet another embarrassing moment yesterday when a journalist burst onto the country's most-watched live nightly newscast with a [*protest sign condemning the war in Ukraine.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy93b3JsZC9ydXNzaWEtcHJvdGVzdC1uZXdzLXVrcmFpbmUtd2FyLWIyMDM1NzE3LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B3bebc502&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=QX1xg2YpqU29NMaqkIl%2B4CqQx2MLABPEStj490eviR8%3D&reserved=0) In the footage, an anchor is reading the news on Monday when the woman shows up in the background holding a sign that says "NO WAR". "Stop the war. Don't believe propaganda. They're lying to you," the sign reads. According to Financial Times Moscow bureau chief Max Seddon - himself citing Russian media sources - the woman is Marina Ovsyannikova, an editor at Channel One - a key arm of the Kremlin's propaganda machine. She has reportedly already been arrested and charged with "discrediting the Russian armed forces". Channel One's legal defence foundation is planning on defending her against the charges. Meanwhile, on the ground in Ukraine, thousands of protesters [*took to the streets in the occupied city of Kherson*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9raGVyc29uLXByb3Rlc3RlcnMtYmxhY2stc2VhLXBlb3BsZS1iMjAzNDkyOS5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B14d08148&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=VPq6rAutemWCZgHkptKhI87egmt%2BYqsr2YZI9mBWuEI%3D&reserved=0) to show their support for president Zelensky. Artem Ivanov, 42, said Russian soldiers shot bullets into the air as people congregated in the city centre at midday on Sunday. HOMES FOR UKRAINE: After coming under increasing pressure for weeks to take a more compassionate approach to those fleeing the conflict, the government launched its 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme yesterday and by 9.30pm last night, some [*43,000 people had registered their interest*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy91ay1ob21lcy1mb3ItdWtyYWluZS1yZWZ1Z2Vlcy1iMjAzNTUxMS5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B1c069897&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=xBec%2BN%2BCPHEq4%2Ft4Al91AEMIEUQjcIkGa0xtzGdXerY%3D&reserved=0) in taking in a refugee. Michael Gove, the levelling up secretary, told MPs it will allow Ukrainians with no family links to come to the UK and benefit from "unrestricted access" to benefits, employment and healthcare. He added there would be "no limit" to the number of Ukrainians who can benefit from the scheme. Nearly three million people have fled Ukraine since Putin's tank rolled in on 24 February and civilians have continued to find themselves caught up in the fighting. Under the new scheme, sponsors can provide a route for Ukrainians without family ties to come to the UK for the first time. Sponsors can be of any nationality as long as they have permission to be in the UK for at least six months. Those putting up refugees can receive a tax-free monthly payment of £350 for each family they look after. More details of the scheme can be found [*here.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ292LnVrL2dvdmVybm1lbnQvbmV3cy9ob21lcy1mb3ItdWtyYWluZS1zY2hlbWUtbGF1bmNoZXM%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Ba84244b3&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=yQPaPQ3gxRHI%2FpeL4Qivm60KYi4XXN1WvV1BXvZb5OU%3D&reserved=0) Critics and opposition MPs described the scheme as a "DIY assignment" scheme because the government will play [*no role on matching refugees to hosts.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy91a3JhaW5lLXJlZnVnZWVzLXNwb25zb3JzaGlwLXNjaGVtZS1taWNoYWVsLWdvdmUtdWstYjIwMzU2NTguaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Be3daddb7&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=SOTk5JgQ1m14zGlwcP0k%2BO8HUnAjRvlpPqlCQ3uU3So%3D&reserved=0) SANCTIONS LATEST: Boris Johnson's government is poised to i[*mpose further sanctions against Russian oligarchs*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLXNhbmN0aW9ucy1ydXNzaWEtdWtyYWluZS1iMjAzNTY1MS5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bd05d54f7&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=tSaDMsjj3UhkvTh%2B9N2nwAnZR3M7tOHwGA2EYtak6Y0%3D&reserved=0) and organisations linked to Putin as MPs fast-track key legislation. It comes as the long-awaited Economic Crime Bill - designed to tackle "dirty money" in Britain, according to ministers - cleared its parliamentary hurdles on Monday evening. With the Bill having received Royal Assent, the government can now announce a raft of new sanctions, targeting those close to the Russian president as the Kremlin continues to wage war on Ukraine. Elsewhere, the prime minister is urging the west to end its "addiction" to Russian energy as he prepares to head to Saudi Arabia to push for increased oil and gas production. Later, the PM is set to travel to Saudi for talks with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in the hope the kingdom can increase its production of oil and gas to make up for reduced reliance on Russia. In an article for the Daily Telegraph, Johnson said western leaders had made a "terrible mistake" by letting Putin "get away with" annexing Crimea in 2014 and subsequently becoming "more dependent" on Russian power sources. Meanwhile, campaigners are calling on the PM to [*scrap plans for a post-Brexit trade accord with Saudi Arabia*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9zYXVkaS1hcmFiaWEtYnJleGl0LXRyYWRlLW9pbC1ib3Jpcy1qb2huc29uLXVrLWIyMDM1NjIwLmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B95c00723&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=cFjlU9GvYZeEnBjps5MjeX6wHUAecmnirJs0rxq51wQ%3D&reserved=0) amid concern about the government's mass executions. The oil-rich autocracy executed 81 people over the weekend, thought to be the largest such killing in the country's history. CLIMATE CONCERNS: Johnson has told oil and gas companies he wants to "remove barriers" to increased[*extraction of fossil fuels from the North Sea as part of his plan to wean the UK off reliance on Russian energy.*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvbmV3cy91ay9wb2xpdGljcy9lbmVyZ3ktb2lsLWdhcy11a3JhaW5lLWJvcmlzLWpvaG5zb24tYjIwMzU0MDguaHRtbA%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Baa43ec14&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=oZzemHreR1pjD4x2wAj6%2B7g%2FaUM%2BM8XbnA3t%2BlD4eOg%3D&reserved=0) In a Downing Street roundtable with bosses of giants including BP and Shell, the prime minister said he wanted to accelerate investment and development of domestic gas supplies and ensure new projects come on stream more quickly.The development was the latest evidence of how UK energy policy has been turned on its head by Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, just months after the PM's publication of an ambitious strategy to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. Johnson last week announced the UK would cease use of Russian oil - but not gas - by the end of 2022, but made clear that homegrown hydrocarbons are expected to take up much of the slack. Environmentalists warned that global warming targets risk being pushed to the side in the race to break the energy dominance which allows Putin to fund his military adventure. 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%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvdG9waWMvcmVmdWdlZXMtd2VsY29tZS0w%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B87f4b261&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=KhfOBiJtG1Buor8wCkDRvLIptPS2AXnx%2FwphpdLThSo%3D&reserved=0) . To sign the petition [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuY2hhbmdlLm9yZy9wLzEwZG93bmluZ3N0cmVldC11cmdlbnQtc3VwcG9ydC1mb3ItdWtyYWluaWFuLXJlZnVnZWVz%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bfb71e08f&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=M04xjud8n5MsaDIPgG%2FHLaZImdgHzfauBAqQAYjZyRo%3D&reserved=0) . If you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZ29mdW5kbWUuY29tL3JlZnVnZWVzd2VsY29tZQ%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B25786411&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=XBL5u%2FgqsgZYa9soLj59Ohsa2ee%2BhY9PAbgrcO6Gjiw%3D&reserved=0) for our GoFundMe page. On the record "I would like to say that yes, not everything is going as fast as we would like. But we are going towards our goal step by step and victory will be for us, and this icon will protect the Russian army and accelerate our victory."Viktor Zolotov, the head of Russia's National Guard, admits invasion is not going to plan.From the Twitterati"In a world with so little good news it's genuinely heart-warming to hear 20,000 British people have filled in the forms starting the process of taking ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in their homes."FT chief politics correspondent Jim Pickard.Essential readingBel Trew, The Independent: [*Surrounded by yes men, Putin has a lot in common with Gaddafi*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy9wdXRpbi11a3JhaW5lLWdhZGRhZmkteWVzLW1lbi1iMjAzNTE3MC5odG1s%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8Bb4a6e2b2&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=n6Ao4GR7kSZ4BsMaXcTercgg08Ln6xnooV6VrRF6KM4%3D&reserved=0) Sandra Khadhouri & Therese O'Donoghue, The Independent: [*Post-Brexit unity in Europe is essential - and war in Ukraine proves this*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuaW5kZXBlbmRlbnQuY28udWsvaW5kZXBlbmRlbnRwcmVtaXVtL3ZvaWNlcy93YXItdWtyYWluZS1ldXJvcGUtYnJleGl0LXVuaXR5LWIyMDM1Mjc1LmhlbWw%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B36e5a927&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=ghKrCZvlO93fohDFAAUMRyP2TuPAcfV69bj8XosbkWM%3D&reserved=0) William Hague, The Times: [*Putin's hollow regime could quickly collapse*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhldGltZXMuY28udWsvYXJ0aWNsZS9wdXRpbnMtaG9sbG93LXJlZ2ltZS1jb3VsZC1xdWlja2x5LWNvbGxhcHNlLWhyOGNyNzlzMg%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B651a7645&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=fYq3FVdhBXmPiid3Nc5w%2Bs96mlkdIMMAFxzPZApBvA8%3D&reserved=0) Tom McTague, The Atlantic: [*Why the west might have to offer Putin a way out*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly93d3cudGhlYXRsYW50aWMuY29tL2ludGVybmF0aW9uYWwvYXJjaGl2ZS8yMDIyLzAzL3dlc3Qtc2F2ZS1wdXRpbi1ydXNzaWEtdWtyYWluZS82MjcwNTEv%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B3b9ff587&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=51q1UcensdLXhBdghte%2FZ8LkcFN6rtEaQbbFjFfdOxU%3D&reserved=0)

Sign up [*here*](https://eur02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Flink.e.independent.co.uk%2Fclick%2F27027029.36187%2FaHR0cHM6Ly9ldXIwMi5zYWZlbGlua3MucHJvdGVjdGlvbi5vdXRsb29rLmNvbS8_%2F60e43ebbdee86338952c5eb8B66f3732f&data=04%7C01%7Cmatt.mathers%40independent.co.uk%7C22080cdaf23445f3210708da065cd277%7C0f3a4c644dc54a768d4152d85ca158a5%7C0%7C0%7C637829292997242179%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000&sdata=jOhlxgw72QQvzpmIAkLg3DcfLEv8AcXra4NrwFDNZU%3D&reserved=0) to receive this free briefing in your email inbox each weekday

**Load-Date:** March 15, 2022

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[*Ukraine’s forgotten refugees: They fled Putin’s war too – but Britain won’t help because of their nationality*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:66KS-41B1-DY4H-K1CR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

October 12, 2022 Wednesday 4:12 PM GMT

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:4

**Length:** 1708 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Refugees Welcome: Non-Ukrainian nationals who escaped the same invasion have been cut out of the schemes offering sanctuary. Now they find themselves alone with nowhere to turn, reports May Bulman

**Body**

Samantha’s\* heart still races with fear every time she hears a loud noise. She can’t shake the memory of bombs crashing around her, the terror each time the air raid sounded and she had to sprint to the nearest shelter in Kharkiv, her home of three years as she studied medicine.

Six months on from the start of Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, though the 19-year-old Nigerian has escaped to safety, she faces yet more anguish. All she wants is to be with her close family in the UK -but while Ukrainian nationals are welcomed to Britain, Samantha is being blocked from doing so. Instead, she is living hundreds of miles away in an unfamiliar city, alone.

Several weeks ago, alone in her flat in Duisburg, Germany, Samantha heard fireworks going off outside during a festival. She thought the noises were explosions. “The night it happened, I was watching a movie and started hearing, ‘Boom, boom, boom.’ I had to lay flat on the floor. I called my mum, I was crying. I was telling her I don’t want to die.”

The UK government announced two designated schemes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** when the war hit: one allowing refugees to join family members in Britain and the other permitting them to join UK citizens willing to host them. However, they required that the applicant either had a Ukrainian passport themselves or was travelling with or joining a Ukrainian national.

These restrictions fail to take into account Ukraine’s international population. There were nearly half a million non-Ukrainians with temporary or permanent residence when the Russian invasion started, including more than 76,000 foreign students, mostly from Africa and southeast Asia. Many had chosen to study in Ukraine because they couldn’t access study programmes such as medicine, dentistry and engineering in their home countries, and the Ukrainian university fees are cheaper than in many other European countries.

Data from the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) shows 325,000 third-country nationals have fled from Ukraine to neighbouring countries since the start of the war. They have become, in effect, Ukraine’s forgotten refugees – though they have fled the same Russian attacks as Ukrainian nationals, they are facing barriers to starting their lives again in the UK and across Europe, an investigation by Lighthouse Reports has found.

The Independent’s Refugees Welcome campaign has called for the UK to lead the way in supporting those forced to flee the war in Ukraine.

‘I feel very alone’

Samantha’s parents and siblings moved from Nigeria to Sheffield a year ago. They are now settled there: her parents have jobs and her younger siblings are in school. But the government’s exclusion of third-country national residents in Ukraine means she cannot join them, despite all the hardship she has faced. She describes spending two days sleeping on the floor of a metro station in Kyiv and waiting for hours on platforms in the snow due to difficulties boarding trains out of the country – something she attributes in part to racism.

“I thought applying for the scheme would work. The only logical thing I want to do is to be with my family,” says Samantha. “I want to have a normal life back. I want to go to school, I want to study. I want to have goals again. My mum is trying everything, trying to look for every option for how I can join them in the UK, but right now it seems like there’s nothing. I try not to let it get to me, but I feel very alone.”

The Home Office refuses to say how many people are in the same position as Samantha – while the department publishes data on applications to the schemes from Ukrainians and their family members, those who do not fit this criteria are excluded.

Nonetheless, even those who are related to Ukrainians -indicating that they should be eligible -have a far higher refusal rate than Ukrainian nationals, at 14 per cent compared with 0.4 per cent. A much higher proportion of third-country nationals with Ukrainian family members are also still waiting for a decision on their applications, at 45 per cent compared with 7 per cent.

Fleeing war for the second time

As well as tens of thousands of international students, there were more than 3,000 asylum seekers and refugees in Ukraine when war hit. Many others who moved to Ukraine after fleeing persecution in their own countries are believed to have been on work and business visas.

Kamran Mehdipour, 43, had been living in Kyiv for six years on a business visa when he was forced out of his home for a second time – while this time it was Russian bombs that led him to flee, in 2016 he had been forced to escape Iran after threats from the authorities over the political campaigning of his brother, Peyman, now a refugee in the UK.

Three days after the invasion started, Kamran rushed out of his rental apartment with nothing but a small rucksack and his three beloved dogs -Ice, Snow, and Darchin. He had to leave behind the grocery shop and deli he had set up in the Ukrainian capital.

“We left in a rush. With two friends, I got a lift to a place 25 kilometres from the Polish border, and we walked the rest,” he says. “I thought I would be able to go home again soon, but three months after I left, my old neighbour went to pick something up and sent me a picture of my apartment -it had been destroyed by a bomb.”

His brother Peyman, now a British citizen who owns a shop owner in Elgin, northern Scotland, contacted the Home Office helpline for advice on how his brother could join him in the UK. He says he was told he could apply under the Ukraine family scheme.

The brothers immediately booked a visa appointment at the visa centre in Berlin and met in Germany to register an application. They then waited for three months to be told they had been refused on the basis that Peyman is not Ukrainian.

While Peyman is trying to appeal, Kamran is living in a makeshift refugee camp in Leer, a small town in northwestern Germany. He sleeps on a camp bed separated from other refugees by thin planks of plywood. Most people there are Ukrainians, who arrive and leave again to a new home within a matter of days, he says. Kamran has been there for more than three months.

“It’s not good. I feel lost. I feel I don’t belong anywhere,” says the 42-year-old. “When I was in Ukraine I was treated like a Ukrainian. I was being taxed like a Ukrainian. But now I’m here with nothing. I share a bathroom: four toilets, six showers between 150 people.”

‘Cruel and senseless exclusions’

Anais Crane, a caseworker at charity Here for Good, who is representing the brothers, says her team was contacted by several third-country nationals who had been residing in Ukraine lawfully and were now unable to join family in the UK. “In some cases, they have already fled persecution or internal conflicts in their country of origin, only to be forced to flee again – this time from Ukraine,” she said. “They cannot return to their country of origin.”

A UK government spokesperson said they would not comment on individual cases, but added that the Ukraine schemes were designed for Ukrainian nationals and that non-Ukrainians displaced by the war could apply to come to the UK “through one of our safe and legal routes, including work and study visa schemes”.

However, experts point out that these routes are difficult to access. Madeleine Sumption, of the Migration Observatory at Oxford University, says: “In theory non-Ukrainians displaced by the war could apply for other visas, but this is no easy undertaking. Work and study visas in the UK are expensive. And people would either need to secure a skilled job offer from an employer who is a licensed sponsor and is willing to pay the substantial fees, or get admitted to a university or college where they can afford the international student tuition rates. There is no humanitarian visa to come to the UK.”

Indeed, no such route is available to Ahmad, 35, who fled from Afghanistan to Ukraine in 2015. He had come under threat from the Taliban because his brother, Idres Bakhshi, had worked for the British army in Helmand Province and was relocated to the UK in 2014. Ahmad built a life for himself in Ukraine -– until the Russian invasion began.

Unable to return to Afghanistan with the Taliban now in power, Ahmad applied to join his brother Idres, 34, who is now a British citizen living in Colchester, under the Ukraine Family Scheme. But after three months, he received a rejection letter stating that he was not eligible because neither of the brothers was related to a Ukrainian.

The 35-year-old is in Hamburg, Germany, with no immigration status. He has requested temporary protection but is still waiting for a decision. He is staying with a friend of a friend but feels he has outstayed his welcome. Idres says his brother spends his days “walking around in the street, basically like a beggar”.

“I work full-time,” says Idres. “I’ve been sending him money in Germany. Why should I be sending him money if he could be here, and I have a place for him to live?” he says. “I never ever thought the application would be refused. He lived in Ukraine, I’m a British citizen, I worked for the British army. I was sure it was going to be fine. When I received the refusal I couldn’t tell my brother for two days. It was so hard to tell him.”

Zehrah Hasan, of the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, which has been supporting Idres and Mohammad, said the UK government’s “piecemeal, discriminatory” Ukrainian refugee policy had led to “heartache, destitution and fear for the many refugees left stranded”.

“It cannot be right that young Nigerian students, or repeat-refugees, having already fled war in Afghanistan, have been blocked from joining family in the UK. We know that many refugees are in dire straits in mainland Europe, whereas they have the community support they need to rebuild their lives here in the UK,” she added.

“It's time they end the cruel and senseless exclusions built into their refugee policies.”

This article was amended on 11 March 2024 to change the name of one individual (\*) to protect their identity .

**Load-Date:** March 11, 2024

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[*NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68GF-3191-DY4H-K48J-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

June 16, 2023 Friday 4:27 PM GMT

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

**Length:** 2123 words

**Byline:** The Associated Press

**Highlight:** Social media users shared a range of false claims this week

**Body**

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

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Claims misrepresent 1,850 boxes of Biden documents at Delaware university

CLAIM: President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) withheld 1,850 boxes of classified documents from his time as vice president.

THE FACTS: The National Archives and Records Administration says the boxes of files referenced in that figure are actually Biden’s Senate papers, which are housed at the University of Delaware. The federal agency told the [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) that the files of Congress members are considered their personal property and are not subject to the same restrictions as presidential records, which are considered government property. While the FBI has searched the Delaware university records as part of a larger search for classified documents, there is no evidence they were withheld from authorities in any way. As former President [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) faces federal charges of illegally hoarding White House documents, he has repeatedly drawn comparisons to the boxes of government records kept by Biden as proof he’s being unfairly persecuted. “By the way, Biden’s got 1,850 boxes,” Trump said at a recent campaign rally in Georgia. “He’s fighting them on the boxes. He doesn’t want to give the boxes and then they say, ‘Trump is obstructioning’.” On social media, supporters have echoed the figure. But the 1,850 boxes referred to in these claims are being falsely conflated with classified documents from Biden’s time as vice president that have been found in other locations, such as one of his former office in Washington and his Delaware home. Instead, the university documents are from the Democrat’s many years serving in Congress as a U.S. senator from Delaware, according to NARA and the University of Delaware. Biden donated the files to his alma mater more than a decade ago. Daniel Holt, an assistant historian in the U.S. Senate’s Historical Office, also cited the chamber’s website, which states that “records created and maintained within a senator’s office are the property of the senator." David Super, a professor of law and economics at Georgetown University’s law school, added that the documents Biden provided to the university aren’t subject to the Presidential Records Act, which Trump and his allies have frequently and misleadingly invoked. “Mr. Biden was incapable of creating records of his own presidency before he was elected president,” he wrote in an email. While the records are not currently available to the public, there is no indication Biden has resisted the FBI’s efforts to review or retrieve documents from the university — nor any other location where the agency has been investigating, added Super. Indeed, the White House disclosed in January that a lawyer for Biden had located what was described as a “small number” of classified documents from his time as vice president during a search of a former office space in Washington. The documents were turned over to the Justice Department, as were an additional batch found at Biden’s house in Wilmington, Delaware. The agency, which didn’t respond to emails seeking comment, also searched the documents at the University of Delaware this past winter, the AP reported at the time. So far, it hasn’t announced any findings from this location. A White House spokesperson declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice, which didn’t immediately respond. Peter Bothum, a spokesperson for the University of Delaware, similarly deferred questions to the Justice Department, which oversees the FBI. But he also noted the university has created a website with additional details about the Biden senate papers in its holdings. The more than 1,850 boxes of archival records arrived at the university library in June 2012 and cover Biden’s nearly four decades in the Senate from 1973 to 2009. A spokesperson for Trump’s campaign didn’t respond to an email seeking comment. On Tuesday, the Republican pleaded not guilty in Miami federal court to 37 counts related to the mishandling of sensitive government records.

— Associated Press writer Philip Marcelo in New York contributed this report.

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Massachusetts church was not holding same-sex wedding when it was hit by lightning and burned down

CLAIM: A church in Boston was hosting a same-sex wedding ceremony when it was hit by lightning, sparking a fire that left no survivors.

THE FACTS: The First Congregational Church in the town of Spencer — which is in central Massachusetts, not the Boston area — did burn down on June 2 after it was hit by lightning. But there was no wedding being held at the time, nor any injuries reported, the local fire chief told the AP. The church caught fire on a Friday afternoon earlier this month when a storm was moving through the area, the AP reported. Social media users initially shared video of the church engulfed in flames with posts containing homophobic rhetoric and criticizing the church’s stance on LGBTQ+ issues. The church’s Facebook page has published positive messages about Pride month in the past. But in recent days, some users shared the footage with false claims that the blaze took place in Boston and that it occurred amid a same-sex wedding ceremony. A video shared on TikTok and Twitter shows the steeple of a church building ablaze as it slowly falls to the ground. “Church burnt down by a lightening, in Boston, In the USA, during a marriage ceremony of homosexual couple. No survival from the participants,” reads one post on Twitter, misspelling “lightning.” However, the historic church in Spencer — about 10 miles (16 kilometers) west of Worcester — was closed when the fire broke out, not hosting a wedding, according to Spencer Fire Chief Robert Parsons. No injuries were reported in the fire, which drew nearly 100 firefighters from close to 20 departments. “There was no wedding going on and actually the church was closed up and locked. No one was working in the church,” Parsons said in an email. Parsons and the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services also confirmed the cause of the fire was a lightning strike. Jake Wark, a spokesperson for the Massachusetts fire service, said state police fire investigators worked with local officials to determine that the lightning started a blaze in the building’s attic, which rapidly spread through the wood-framed structure. Parsons previously told the AP that the building was a total loss.

— Associated Press writer Karena Phan in Los Angeles contributed this report.

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Fabricated Trump Truth Social post about [*Walt Nauta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/walt-nauta) circulates after court appearance

CLAIM: A screenshot shows a Truth Social post from former President Donald Trump saying his personal aide and alleged co-conspirator Walt Nauta was the one who packed up his “personal papers” when he left the White House.

THE FACTS: The image is fabricated and Trump never posted such a statement on Truth Social. Many social media users shared the bogus post as real after Trump pleaded not guilty to dozens of felony counts accusing him of hoarding classified documents, suggesting it showed the former president was pointing the finger at Nauta for possessing any classified documents. Nauta, Trump’s valet before joining him as personal aide in Mar-a-Lago, was indicted last week on charges that he moved boxes of documents at Trump’s direction and then misled the FBI about it. Nauta did not enter a plea Tuesday because he did not have a local lawyer with him. The post circulating on social media shows Trump’s Truth Social profile. “Many people are saying the theft of Nuclear and Military Secrets is a very serious crime,” it begins. The post goes on to say that Trump asked his “LOYAL aide Walt Nauta” to pack personal documents before leaving the White House and is confident Nauta didn’t “place any Nuclear Secrets” inside because he knew that would get the former president in “trouble.” “So let’s just see what Judge Cannon says. Good Luck, Walt! We are behind you all the way!” it ends. While Trump did publish a flurry of posts on his social media platform about the case before and after his court appearance, the post shown in the image was not one of them. Trump’s campaign did not immediately return a request for comment, but the supposed post does not currently appear on Trump’s profile and archived versions of the profile also do not show the post. The image circulating on social media also contains signs it is not real, including a watermark from imgflip.com, a meme generator website that allows users to mimic Trump’s Truth Social posts. The text in the screenshot also goes over the platform’s 500-character limit. Trump did post about Nauta on Truth Social on June 9, but it was to protest his inclusion in the indictment. “They are trying to destroy his life, like the lives of so many others, hoping that he will say bad things about ‘Trump.’ He is strong, brave, and a Great Patriot. The FBI and DOJ are CORRUPT!” Trump wrote.

— Karena Phan

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Posts misrepresent data on terrorism and migration in Poland

CLAIM: A map shows that [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) has not been the target of any terror attacks, the lack of which is a result of the country’s “strict no-migrants policy.”

THE FACTS: The map only shows terror attacks from 2012 through 2015 — but the University of Maryland’s Global Terrorism Database shows six such attacks in Poland since 2015 and dozens prior to 2012. Additionally, Poland is open to migrants as a member of the European Union, and experts say the data shows migrants are in fact more likely to be victims of terror than perpetrators. Yet a screenshot of the map spread online in recent days alongside the erroneous claim. “Here is a map of terror attacks in Europe,” one tweet states. “Poland has a strict no-migrants policy. Draw your own conclusions.” It is true that the map, built by the Center for Strategic and International Studies, does not show any terror attacks in Poland. However, while the map only shows attacks recorded in the Global Terrorism Database over a four-year period, the database has records of attacks from 1970 through 2020. During that time, Poland has seen 42 terror attacks. CSIS did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but Erin Miller, program manager of the Global Terrorism Database, told the AP that using the map to make a wider point about migration and terrorism is a flawed premise given how selective the data is. While Poland does have lower levels of migration than other countries in the European Union, it doesn’t have a “no-migrants policy.” As a member of the EU, Poland must adhere to freedom of movement rights, which allow EU citizens and their families to reside freely in member countries. As of late May 2023, approximately 1.6 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** from the Russia-Ukraine war were registered for temporary protection in Poland, according to the UN Refugee Agency. Regardless, the map doesn’t show that terror attacks in the countries with higher migration rates were perpetrated by migrants, as the posts suggest, noted Miller. In fact, she added, most terror attacks are carried out by “domestic assailants,” and immigrants are more likely to be victims than perpetrators. The interactive CSIS map includes numerous examples of such attacks on migrants, and the entire Global Terrorism Database includes more than 150 attacks that targeted refugees and asylum-seekers in Western Europe over the past decade — a figure Miller said is considered to be “extremely conservative.” Countries that experience an influx of people do tend to have an increase in terrorist activities, said Daniel Meierrieks, a research fellow at the Berlin Social Science Center with expertise in international migration and terrorism. But that’s simply because more populous countries have more attacks, not because the migrants are the ones responsible, he added. To the extent that there is a relationship to migration, especially in the case of people coming to Europe from non-European countries, it’s due to the attacks on the migrants — not by them, according to Meierrieks and Richard McAlexander, a data analyst who studied terrorism and international borders as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Pennsylvania. “You’re in a new country," McAlexander said of migrants. "You’ve suffered some trauma. You’re in a precarious position. And the last thing you want to do is jeopardize all of that.”

— Associated Press writer Melissa Goldin in New York contributed this report.

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**Load-Date:** June 16, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Bel Powley on Botox, nepotism and difficult sex scenes: ‘The heroin chic thing is gonna die again, right?’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-FC91-JBNF-W3VK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 6, 2023 Saturday 5:30 AM GMT

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**Section:** FEATURES,TV & RADIO,CULTURE; Version:1

**Length:** 1852 words

**Byline:** Ellie Harrison

**Highlight:** THE SATURDAY INTERVIEW: The star of ‘The Diary of a Teenage Girl’ and ‘Everything I Know About Love’ talks to Ellie Harrison about playing the woman who hid Anne Frank and rescued her diary in ‘A Small Light’

**Body**

What’s all this f\*\*\*ed-up s\*\*\* about how heroin chic is back?” [*Bel Powley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bel-powley) is sprawled out, barefoot, on a chaise longue. And she’s mad. “Like, what the hell even is that? Sorry, that’s a complete sidenote, but hopefully that’s gonna die a death again, right?”

It’s not a total sidenote. We’ve been discussing how, in the Noughties – when the 31-year-old star of [*The Morning Show*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-morning-show) and [*Everything I Know About Love*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/everything-i-know-about-love) was a teenager – it was rare to see a “normal” body on film. Thigh gaps, perky bums and washboard stomachs always seemed to nab top billing. One of Powley’s first films, though – the subversive, sometimes uncomfortably honest coming-of-age story The Diary of a Teenage Girl – put ordinary bodies front and centre. Then poked and prodded at them, too. One scene in the 2015 movie saw Powley’s hormone-packed teen stand naked before the mirror and inspect the way she was changing.

“The reason why that moment sticks out is because there aren’t many moments like that,” Powley says, hugging a pillow in a London hotel room. “Still now, if a woman is naked in a film, it’s during a sex scene. It might be different for Gen Z, because there’s more representation out there for all different kinds of women and bodies, but when I was growing up, that definitely didn’t exist.” She fiddles with the cushion. “I don’t know if I’d be brave enough to do that scene now. As you get older, you get more scared. I was only 20 or 21 when I filmed it.”

Powley has a tendency to speak in sharp bursts, squeals and whispers, as if you’re on a girlie sleepover. In fact, she’s so happily chatting away – about everything from her favourite shows to the world’s fixation on the female form – that it’s easy to get distracted from the topic of the day, her charming Second World War drama [*A Small Light*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/a-small-light) , which is streaming now on Disney+.

Before we get to that, Powley tells me she’s been devouring the second season of cannibal drama Yellowjackets. She’s specifically in awe of its star [*Melanie Lynskey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/melanie-lynskey-yellowjackets-last-of-us-b2326650.html) , who recently defended herself on Twitter against claims that she had the wrong body type to play a ruthless resistance leader in the video game adaptation The Last of Us. Powley’s response to that? “Oh, f\*\*\* off!” she splutters, leaning forward. “People are also obsessed with women’s faces,” she adds. As a woman in her thirties, Powley is aware that some of her peers are starting to get Botox, or at least feeling the pressure to tweak themselves. “I personally haven’t had anything done to my face and I don’t think I will, but you shouldn’t judge anyone, or even comment on anyone, for doing it or not doing it. And there are so many weird websites where they’re like, ‘What has she done?’ or, ‘What should she do?’ It’s so dumb.”

Powley also has lots to say about being a woman in the film industry. The Diary of a Teenage Girl saw her play a sexually curious 15-year-old who starts sleeping with her mum’s boyfriend (Alexander Skarsgård), and she says the film’s director, Marielle Heller, was incredibly protective of her on set. Much of the film’s creative team was female, as well. But her sex scenes on other indies weren’t as smooth. “I did have a couple of bad ones, where everyone’s too awkward to ask if you’re gonna take your clothes off, and you don’t have it written up properly in the contract,” she says. “It’s low-budget, indie, guerilla-style filming. You’re outside, and suddenly it’s the scene where you have to get naked and simulate sex, and then you just find yourself doing it because you’re too scared to say no, with a young actor who probably felt just as uncomfortable.”

She then begins to talk, unprompted, about an off-camera incident, too. “I’ve had someone grab my arse and basically touch me inappropriately before,” she says, “but I was too scared to say anything. I was too scared to rock the boat.” The incident, which involved a senior member of the crew, happened when Powley was in her early twenties. “Ughh,” she says, a shudder running through her. “I just avoided that person and it was fine, but what really has changed post-MeToo is you just know that you’re protected. At the beginning of MeToo it was weird. For a while it was like, I feel protected because men are just f\*\*\*ing scared – which was fine too – but now everything’s settled into itself. People have learnt, and it’s like there’s a new code of conduct.”

Powley’s earliest roles came in cosy British television – she starred in the CBBC spy series MI High and the sun-drenched ITV sitcom Benidorm – but after The Diary of a Teenage Girl, she blossomed. Powley excels in parts that bring out her specific brand of irrepressible breathlessness – as a flibbertigibbet Princess Margaret in A Royal Night Out, or a headstrong TV staffer in The Morning Show, or the fizzy, sensible lead in the TV adaptation of Dolly Alderton’s Everything I Know About Love. Judd Apatow, who directed her in 2020’s The King of Staten Island – where she played the frustrated on-and-off girlfriend to Pete Davidson’s overgrown slacker – has praised her to the hilt. “It’s clear that when you have a Daniel Day-Lewis or Dame Judi Dench on your set, they don’t know what’s about to happen to them,” he said a few years ago. “She’s very young, but in my head, she’s going to be one of the all-time greats.”

While Powley says she hardly ever gets starstruck, working with Jennifer Aniston on The Morning Show turned her back into the fawning Friends fan she was as a teen. Though she was terrified of calling her hero “Rachel” by mistake, she was deemed cool enough to be invited to a party at the actor’s house. Powley is cool – she’s got a posh, husky voice and looks at home in a black leather jacket when we meet. She doesn’t seem to see herself that way, though. She sees more of herself in Birdy from Everything I Know About Love. “I’m a tidy freak,” she says, “and I like to plan. I’m not very good at being spontaneous, and it makes me quite anxious if I don’t know what’s gonna happen.” So she’s never been thrown a surprise party? “No, because everyone in my life knows it would be my worst nightmare.” She lets out a big, delicious guffaw. “No one should ever do that to me. I’m the kind of person where even with gifts, I tell people what I want. Basically, I’m hell.” Her fiancé – the actor [*Douglas Booth*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/douglas-booth) , whom she met on the 2017 costume drama Mary Shelley – is the opposite. “I feel like we’re good yin-and-yang. We definitely learn from each other. I’ve probably relaxed a bit and he’s probably learnt to be more organised.”

Powley has been told she’s got a “period drama face” – she is rosy-cheeked and slightly cherubic – but says she’s mostly shied away from those sorts of roles: “When I have done it, I’ve often felt this kind of distance. It’s hard to connect.” But A Small Light felt different. She plays Miep Gies, the Dutch woman who hid [*Anne Frank*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/anne-frank) and her family from Nazis and ultimately saved the young girl’s diary. Despite her having played an instrumental role in Second World War history, Miep’s name is known to few. A Small Light aims to rectify that, and Powley brings her innate mischief to the role. Her Miep is a twentysomething secretary who loves dancing; someone you could gossip down the pub with for hours. When collecting rations for the Franks, she flirts her way to a bigger chicken from the butcher. The real Miep was an ordinary person doing an extraordinary thing, and her motto – that anyone can “turn on a small light in a dark room” – gives the series its name.

The show also has a modern sensibility, with dialogue that feels natural – “no Downton Abbey speak”, as Powley puts it – and wardrobes that make Miep and her friends look almost like hipsters. For research, Powley read Miep’s autobiography “cover to cover a few times” and visited Amsterdam, going to Miep’s old home and cycling her route to work. The series was filmed in Prague, which stood in for the Dutch capital, and some ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing to the city at the time of production ended up working on the set. “The Czechs are very outspoken about their support for Ukraine,” recalls Powley. “On every building in Prague, there’s a Ukrainian flag. And there are so many parallels between the show and what’s happening right now – from the war in Ukraine, and authoritarian regimes popping up all over the world, to the rise of antisemitism and the refugee crisis...”

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A Small Light has been an emotional project for Powley, who is Jewish herself. Her great-grandparents lived on the border of Russia and Lithuania, and they fled during the pogroms of the early 20th century. She recounts how they got on a boat to New York and, thinking they’d already arrived in America, accidentally got off at the fuelling stop in Dublin. “I’m not joking,” she says, that big guffaw returning. “I think a few families did it. That definitely needs to be made into its own TV show.” Although her grandmother was safe in Dublin during the war, Powley says “you still do, as a Jew, grow up with the weight of that part of history on your shoulders”. She tells me that, the night before our interview, the Jewish side of her family came to the London premiere of the show. “They were all very, very moved by it. All weeping by the end. My grandma, who was the classic, chicken-soup-making Jewish matriarch in my family, died in 2020 and we were all so close to her, and I know that it would have meant so much to her that I was in this show, and she would have been very proud.”

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Powley doesn’t believe she’s had a leg-up from her parents. “The only thing I’ll admit,” she says, laughing, “is that my mum was a casting director on The Bill and she did cast me in one episode. And if people are annoyed about that, then they can go and get a life, because every actor in England is in an episode of The Bill. It’s a rite of passage, whether your mum’s the casting director or not.” Even her dad starred in the police procedural – did her mum cast him in it? “No, my dad worked on The Bill before my mum – she’s a nepo wife!”

‘A Small Light’ is streaming on Disney+

**Load-Date:** May 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*'I'm the kind of person who will tell people what I want'; Bel Powley, who starred in 'The Diary of a Teenage Girl' and 'Everything I Know About Love', tells Ellie Harrison about her new role as Miep Gies, the woman who hid Anne Frank*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685M-2TG1-F072-43GV-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

May 6, 2023 Saturday

First Edition

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**Section:** CULTURE; Pg. 34

**Length:** 1817 words

**Byline:** ELLIE HARRISON

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It's not a total sidenote. We've been discussing how, in the Noughties - when the 31-year-old star ofThe Morning ShowandEverything I Know About Lovewas a teenager - it was rare to see a "normal" body on film. Thigh gaps, perky bums and washboard stomachs always seemed to nab top billing.

One of Powley's first films, though - the subversive, sometimes uncomfortably honest coming-of-age storyThe Diary of a Teenage Girl- put ordinary bodies front and centre. Then poked and prodded at them, too. One scene in the 2015 movie saw Powley's hormone-packed teen stand naked before the mirror and inspect the way she was changing.

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'A Small Light' is streaming on Disney+

**Load-Date:** May 5, 2023

**End of Document**



[*A timeline of Putin’s invasion – and the fight to save Ukraine*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67MH-5SH1-DY4H-K1WN-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 2503 words

**Byline:** Liam James and Chris Stevenson

**Highlight:** Ukraine – a year of war: It has been 12 months of intense fighting, against a backdrop of the West coming together to support Kyiv

**Body**

On the morning of 24 February 2022, life changed for everyone in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ordered his forces into the country.

A year later, Kyiv’s forces have held Moscow at bay, with the help of support from Western weapons. Both sides are now seeking to change a bloody stalemate on the frontlines. The Kremlin is sending more troops to the battlefield, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zelensky) has asked the West to send more heavry weaponry and ammunition to halt any potential Russian advance and replenish the country’s military stocks for a counter offensive.

Here is how the last 12 months unfolded:

February 2022

24 February

President Putin launches an invasion of Ukraine from the north, east and south. He claims that the "special military operation" is aimed at "demilitarisation" and "denazification" of the country to protect ethnic Russians, prevent Kyiv's Nato membership and to keep it in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) 's "sphere of influence." Ukraine and the West say it's an illegal act of aggression against a country with a democratically elected government – President Zelensky vows his nation will defend itself.

Russian troops quickly reach Kyiv's outskirts, but their attempts to capture the capital and other cities in the northeast meet stiff resistance. Mr Zelensky records a video outside his headquarters to show he is staying and remains in charge.

26 to 27 February

President Zelensky refuses a US offer to evacuate, saying: “The fight is here; I need ammunition, not a ride”.

Russia’s assault on Kyiv, the eastern city of Kharkiv and Chernihiv in the north stalls as Ukrainian defenders target supply vehicles with Javelin missiles.

The European Union bans selected Russian banks from parts of the international banking system and freezes Russian central bank deposits. It also bans Russian aircraft from EU airspace.

28 February

President Zelenskyy officially signs an application for Ukraine's membership in the European Union.

March

2 March

Russia claims control of the southern city of Kherson.

In the opening days of March, Russian forces also seize the rest of the Kherson region and occupy a large part of the neighboring Zaporizhzhia region, including the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest.

The Russian army soon gets stuck near Kyiv, and its convoys — stretching along highways leading to the Ukrainian capital — become easy prey for Ukrainian artillery and drones.

11 March

The EU issues the Versailles Declaration in response to the Ukraine war, calling for member states to strengthen defence spending.

16 March

Russia strikes a theatre in the strategic port city of Mariupol where civilians had been sheltering, killing hundreds of people in one of the war's deadliest attacks.

29 March

Moscow announces the withdrawal of forces from Kyiv and other areas saying it will focus on the eastern industrial heartland of the Donbas, where Russia-backed separatists have fought Ukrainian forces since 2014 following the illegal annexation of Crimea.

April

Opening days

The Russian pullback from Kyiv reveals hundreds of bodies of civilians in mass graves or left in the streets of the town of Bucha, outside the capital. Many of them bear signs of torture in scenes that prompt world leaders to say Russia should be held accountable for possible war crimes.

7 April

The UN General Assembly votes to suspend Russia from the organisation’s Human Rights Council.

8 April

A Russian missile strike on a train station in the eastern city of Kramatorsk kills 52 civilians and wounds more than 100.

9 April

Then-Prime minister, Boris Johnson makes the first of a number of visits to Kyiv. Many, many world leaders will visit the city over the 12 months of the invasion

Intense battles rage for Mariupol on the Sea of Azov, and Russian air strikes and artillery bombardment reduce much of it to ruins.

13 April

The missile cruiser Moskva, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, is hit by Ukrainian missiles and sinks the next day, damaging Russian national pride.

May

12 May

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) says the number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** has passed the six-million mark.

16 May

Ukrainian defenders of the giant Azovstal steel mill, the last remaining Ukrainian stronghold in Mariupol, agree to surrender to Russian forces after a nearly three-month siege. Mariupol's fall cuts Ukraine off from the Azov coast and secures a land corridor from the Russian border to Crimea.

18 May

Finland and Sweden submit their applications to join Nato in a major blow to Moscow over the expansion of the military alliance.

21 May

Russia’s defence ministry announces it has full control of Mariupol, following the evacuation of 1,908 defenders of the Azovstal plant there, a month after Vladimir Putin declared victory over the city.

31 May

US President Joe Biden decides to send “more advanced rocket systems” to Ukraine to enable greater precision artillery raids. The US will send High Mobility Artillery Rocket Systems (HIMARS) which go on to have a major impact on Ukraine's defence of its land.

June

6 June

The UK announces it will send M270 multiple launch rocket systems with 80km (49.7 mile) range to Ukraine.

27 June

Nato Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg says the alliance is to increase its Response Force (NRF) – which can be deployed quickly in the face of attack – from 40,000 troops to 300,000.

29 June

Nato formally invites Finland and Sweden to become members of the alliance, after Turkey lifts its veto related to its own diplomatic issues with Sweden.

30 June

Russian troops pull back from Snake Island, located off the Black Sea port of Odesa and seized in the opening days of the invasion.

July

22 July

Russia and Ukraine, with mediation by Turkey and the United Nations, agree on a deal to unblock supplies of grain stuck in Ukraine's Black Sea ports, ending a standoff over a Russian blockade that threatened global food security.

26 July

Russian state company Gazprom says it will halve gas supply through the Nord Stream 1 pipeline to 20 per cent of capacity, having previously cut supply to 40 per cent the previous month. EU energy ministers agree to voluntarily reduce the use of natural gas by 15 per cent between August this year and March 2023.

29 July

A missile strike hits a prison in the Russia-controlled eastern town of Olenivka where Ukrainian soldiers captured in Mariupol were held, killing at least 53. Ukraine and Russia trade blame for the attack.

August

1 August

The first ship loaded with Ukrainian grain leaves port following a July 22 agreement to lift a Russian blockade.

9 August

Powerful explosions strike an air base in Crimea. More blasts hit a power substation and ammunition depots there a week later. signaling the vulnerability of the Moscow-annexed Black Sea peninsula that Russia has used as a major supply hub for the war. Ukraine's top military officer later acknowledges that the attacks on Crimea were launched by Kyiv's forces.

20 August

Darya Dugina, the daughter of Russian nationalist ideologist Alexander Dugin, dies in a car bomb explosion outside Moscow that the Russian authorities blame on Ukraine, without evidence.

24 August

Ukraine marks its day of independence from Soviet rule and the six-month anniversary of Russia’s full-scale invasion. Public celebrations are cancelled amid fears that Russia could escalate attacks to coincide with the day, but President Zelensky gives a defiant speech, saying Ukraine was “reborn” when Russia invaded: “We don’t care what army you have, we only care about our land. We will fight for it until the end.”

September

6 September

The Ukrainian forces launch a surprise counteroffensive in the northeastern Kharkiv region, quickly forcing Russia to pull back from broad areas held for months.

21 September

President Putin orders mobilization of 300,000 reservists, an unpopular move that prompts hundreds of thousands of Russian men to flee to neighboring countries to avoid recruitment. At the same time, Russia hastily stages illegal "referendums" in Ukraine's Donetsk, Luhansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions on whether to become part of Russia. The votes are widely dismissed as a sham by Ukraine and the West.

30 September

President Putin signs documents to annex the four regions at a Kremlin ceremony.

October

8 October

A truck laden with explosives blows up on the bridge linking Crimea – which Moscow illegally annexed from Ukraine in 2014 – to Russia's mainland in an attack that President Putin blames on Ukraine. Russia responds with missile strikes on Ukraine's power plants and other key infrastructure.

After the first wave of attacks on 10 October the barrage continues on a regular basis in the months that follow, resulting in blackouts and power rationing across the country.

November

9 November

Russia announces a pullback from the city of Kherson under a Ukrainian counteroffensive, abandoning the only regional center Moscow captured, in a humiliating retreat for the Kremlin.

December

5 December

The Russian military says Ukraine used drones to target two bases for long-range bombers deep inside Russian territory. Another strike takes places later in the month, underlining Ukraine's readiness to up the ante and revealing gaps in Russian defenses.

21 December

President Zelensky visits the United States on his first trip abroad since the war began, meeting with President Joe Biden to secure Patriot air defense missile systems and other weapons and addressing Congress.

January 2023

1 January

Just moments into the New Year, scores of freshly mobilised Russian soldiers are killed by a Ukrainian missile strike on the city of Makiivka. Russia's Defense Ministry says 89 troops were killed, while Ukrainian officials put the death toll in the hundreds.

5 Jan

Ukraine rejects calls from President Putin for a 36-hour ceasefire to mark Orthodox Christmas, from 6 to 7 January.

12 January

After months of ferocious fighting, Russia declares the capture of the salt-mining town of Soledar in the eastern Donetsk region, although Kyiv does not acknowledge it until days later. The town, part of a route into the wider Donetsk region that Mr Putin wants to control. Moscow also presses its offensive to seize the Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut, near Soledar. The fight for Bakhmut continues still.

14 Jan

When Russia launches another wave of strikes on Ukraine's energy facilities, a Russian missile hits an apartment building in the city of Dnipro in central Ukraine that has been a frequent target of missile assault. At least 45 are killed.

15 January

The UK announces it will send 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine to bolster the country's war effort,

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak speaks to President Zelensky in a call during which he confirmed he would send the equipment and additional artillery systems.

Downing Street says the move shows "the UK's ambition to intensify support."

18 January

At least 14 people, including Ukraine’s interior minister, Denys Monastyrsky, and other senior officials were killed after a helicopter crashed by a nursery in a suburb of Kyiv.

25 Jan

President Biden approves sending 31 US-made M1 Abrams tanks to Ukraine. The reversal of the US’s previous position came after Germany confirmed it will make 14 of its Leopard 2A6 tanks available for Ukraine’s war effort, and give partner countries its permission to re-export other battle tanks to aid Kyiv.

In the last couple of weeks of the month, President Zelensky ramps up an anti-corruption drive as more than 15 Ukrainian officials exit their posts.

February

The month is marked by intense fighting in Bakhmut and others areas around Donetsk and Luhansk as Russia steps up its assault.

8 February

The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, made a surprise visit to the UK and addresses parliament, before heading onto France and then a meeting with EU leaders. Having received a number of pledges on tanks – Mr Zelensky is pushing for fighter jets to be delivered next. There has still be no decision on that by Western allies.

20 February

President Biden makes a surprise visit to Kyiv where he meets with President Zelensky in a remarkable and defiant display of solidarity.

21 Feb

Vladimir Putin says Russia will halt its participation in New Start, the last major remaining nuclear arms control treaty with the US, saying that he cannot ignore actions by the US and the West at large over Ukraine

22 February

President Putin welcomes China's top diplomat, Wang Yi, to the Kremlin, and announces that Chinese leader Xi Jinping would visit Russia, saying relations had reached "new frontiers". The US has said it is worried that Beijing could provide weapons to Moscow.

Associated Press contributed to this report

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[*Ukraine-Russia war -live: Putin turns to new weapon for winter attacks as bombing of Avdiivka continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69G9-KNP1-JBNF-W0XH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:14

**Length:** 5461 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Maira Butt

**Highlight:** The longer-range weapon is harder to detect than the Iranian-made Shahed drone and may be used over winter

**Body**

The Russian Army has used new, longer-range drones for the first time in an attack against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , reports suggest.

The Italmas weapon, which is harder to detect than the Iranian-made Shahed drone, may be part of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s strategy to expand [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s arsenal as harsher winter weather approaches, the Institute for the Study of War said.

It comes as the Ukrainian city of Avdiivka, Donetsk, faced heavy shelling overnight as Russia continues with its offensive push into the region.

“The enemy dropped about 40 guided aerial bombs in two nights. But the number of ground assaults has been reduced, half of what it was yesterday and the day before,” Oleksandr Shtupun, spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern group of forces, said.

Mr Shtupun added that Russia had suffered about 2,400 casualties in the last five days during its campaing in the Donetsk region.

Meanwhile, Ukraine launched an “underwater sabotage” attack on Russia’s Black Sea fleet near Sevastopol, Crimea, on Tuesday, according to Mikhail Razvozhayev, the [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) -installed governor of the region.

Key Points

Kremlin rejects claims about Putin’s ill health Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive Putin forced to increase number of soldiers on ground as UK estimates death toll Six killed in Russia’s missile attack on Kharkiv postal centre, says Ukraine

‘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.

Pictured: Avidiivka under siege

Ukraine to produce tens of thousands of drone by end of year, minister says

Ukraine will produce tens of thousands of drones a month by the end of this year, the country’s minister for strategic industries said.

It comes after Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal said more than 200 Ukrainian companies have begun developing drones, fueling a massive increase in production as well as technical innovation.

In July, former deputy prime minister of Ukraine Mykhailo Fedorov said: “We will end this war with drones”.

Since that statement, Kyiv has announced plans to invest $1bn into the industry, as more than 10,000 drones are said to be lost on the battlefield every month.

Ukraine vows to strike back if Russia hits energy grid

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has vowed to respond to Russian attacks on energy infrastructure.

“We are preparing for terrorist attacks on energy infrastructure. This year we will not only defend ourselves, but also respond,” he said on Telegram.

Mr Zelensky also claimed Russia has moved its aircraft further from the border with Ukraine and moved its Black Sea fleet further from Crimea.

Ukraine says Russian drones hit area near nuclear plant

A Russian drone attack damaged buildings near the Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant in western Ukraine last night, wounding 20 people, officials said.

The Ukrainian air force destroyed all 11 Russian drones, according to the military. Damage was caused by blast waves and falling debris.

“At night, the enemy struck territory near the Khmelnytskyi nuclear power plant. As a result of the explosion, windows in administrative and laboratory buildings have been damaged,” Ukraine’s Energy Ministry said on the Telegram messaging app.

Support for Israel must not weaken support for Ukraine, says Italian PM

Europe must not weaken its support for Ukraine as it offers solidarity to Israel, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has said.

“We must not make the mistake of weakening our common support to Ukraine,” Ms Meloni told the Senate ahead of a meeting of European Union leaders.

Russia to use new longer range drones for winter

The Russian Army has used new, longer-range drones for the first time in an attack against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , reports suggest.

The Italmas weapon, which is harder to detect than the Iranian-made Shahed drone, may be part of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s strategy to expand [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s arsenal as harsher winter weather approaches, the Institute for the Study of War said.

Russian milbloggers noted that Italmas drones are cheaper than Shaheds, which means that they can be more widely manufactured and used, but that they deliver lighter payloads, which restricts their usefulness in isolation, according to the ISW.

[*#Russia*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Russia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) appears to be increasingly supplementing the use of Shahed-131/136 drones with cheaper and lighter domestically produced drone variants during strikes on [*#Ukrainian*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Ukrainian?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) infrastructure. [*https://t.co/IjuIXquSLO*](https://t.co/IjuIXquSLO) [*https://t.co/rreOty7XkE*](https://t.co/rreOty7XkE) [*pic.twitter.com/G4yILZIhD7*](https://t.co/G4yILZIhD7) — ISW (@TheStudyofWar) [*October 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/TheStudyofWar/status/1716982909347766745?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia has maintained ‘significant artillery capability’ Wednesday 25 October 2023 09:08 , Alexander Butler The Russian Army has maintained “significant artillery capability” within range of the Dnipro River, which has seen intensified fighting over the last week, the UK Ministry of Defence said.“Russia has likely been alert to the possibility of attacks across the river since it withdrew its forces from the western bank 12 months ago.“Initial indication suggests that Russia has maintained a significant artillery capability within range of the river,” it said on X, formerly Twitter.Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 25 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/rKPs31cagm*](https://t.co/rKPs31cagm) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/DJBhleyvMI*](https://t.co/DJBhleyvMI) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1717086858616709426?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukrainian control over Crimea ‘question of time’, Zelensky saysWednesday 25 October 2023 08:25 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian control over the Crimean peninsula is “only a matter of time”, Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky said.“We have not yet gained full fire control over Crimea and surrounding waters, but we will,” Zelensky told a meeting of the Crimea Platform, a diplomatic initiative he launched in 2021. “This is a question of time”, he added.He also claimed Russia’s Black Sea Fleet had been forced to move “as far as possible” from Ukrainian missiles and drones due to heavy losses.Ukraine exports almost 700, 000 tons of grain during temporary Black Sea corridor operationWednesday 25 October 2023 07:03 , Maira Butt Ukraine exported almost 700,000 tons of grain during a temporary [*Black Sea corridor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Kremlin%20addresses%20Putin%20heart%20attack%20rumours%20as%20Sevastopol%20targeted) operation according to UkrAgroConsult.Mykola Solsky, [*Minister of Agrarian Policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/solar-farms-space-renewable-energy-b2435275.html%22%20title=%22We%20can%20put%20solar%20farms%20in%20space,%20scientists%20announce) and Food of Ukraine, speaking during a meeting of the EU Council on Agriculture and Fisheries in Luxembourg said: “In August, we opened a temporary corridor through the Black Sea. It works thanks to the support of our armed forces and the trust of international partners. Every day the number of ships calling at the ports is increasing. During the operation of the new corridor, 38 ships entered the ports and more than 30 left, not all of them with grain, of course. But we managed to export almost 700 thousand tons of grain.“We need to export about 6 million tons per month to preserve our agriculture as a key sector of the economy. This volume of transportation can only be ensured by restoring the full operation of the deep-water ports of Greater Odesa. We see a tendency to increase the number of ships leaving our ports. We hope it will continue,” added Solsky.Pro-Ukraine candidate drops bid for US House Speaker amid Republican infightingWednesday 25 October 2023 06:02 , Maira Butt Congressman Tom Emmer has dropped his bid to lead the US House of Representatives only hours after he was nominated for House Speaker by his fellow party members. A Republican aide confirmed the news, according to Reuters, citing party infighting which has paralysed Congress for weeks. Emmer has consistently voted for pro-Ukraine policies and is considered an ally among pro-Ukraine Republicans. Russian ‘kamikaze’ drones injure man in attacks on NikopolWednesday 25 October 2023 05:00 , Maira Butt Governor Serhii Lysak has reported that [*Russian forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Kremlin%20addresses%20Putin%20heart%20attack%20rumours%20as%20Sevastopol%20targeted) used “kamikaze” drones and artillery in two separate strikes in Nikopol in the Dnipropetrovsk Oblast region on Tuesday. On his Telegram channel, the governor reported that the attacks injured a 36 year old resident. A hotel, a veterinarian clinic, a car, and a power line were reportedly damaged in the attacks.The injured victim was hospitalized with shrapnel wounds and is in moderate condition, the governor said.President Zelensky says Ukraine-German ties at an “all-time high”Wednesday 25 October 2023 04:00 , Maira Butt Ukraine’s President Volodmyr Zelensky addressed the Ukrainian-German business forum on Tuesday in a day he said was “filled with international work”. The forum included companies from a number of sectors including defense, energy and infrastructure. President Zelensky shared an update on the social media platform X, formerly known as Twitter, saying: “There are good deals and joint projects. I thank Chancellor Scholz, his team, and all Germans. Ukrainian-German trust and ties are at an all-time high.”The forum is in its fifth year and has an explicit focus on “rebuilding Ukraine”. The update comes as Ukraine’s Prime Minister Denys Shmyal met with German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Tuesday. Pro-Ukraine candidate nominated for US House SpeakerWednesday 25 October 2023 03:03 , Maira Butt Tom Emmer has been selected by the [*Republican Party*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/house-speaker-nominee-tom-emmer-b2435201.html%22%20title=%22GOP%20Majority%20Whip%20Tom%20Emmer%20drops%20speaker%20bid%20after%20four%20hours) as a nominee for House Speaker according to the Associated Press. Congressman Emmer served as the Majority Whip in the US House of Representativs since 2023 and has a record of backing pro-Ukraine inititatives in Congress. The House Speaker is traditionally considered the head of the majority party in Congress. Republicans for Ukraine, a coalition of pro-Kyiv party members, rates Emmer with its highest possible positive score. Detained reporter’s sister urges Biden to remain focused on his releaseWednesday 25 October 2023 02:05 , Maira Butt The sister of a Wall Street Journal reporter detained in Russia has urged President Joe Biden to remain focused on his release as she expressed concern that the Middle East crisis could detract from focus on Ukraine. Danielle, the older sister of Evan Gershkovich who has been detained in a Russian prison for six months, said the family had written letters to Evan to mark his 32nd birthday which he spent in a Moscow prison. “When we see the news, any news, we’re always thinking of it through the lens of what does this mean for Evan? Our focus is on Evan,” she said. “We just have to continue to ask President Biden to prioritize this and bring Evan home to us.”Avdiivka enduring unrelenting artillery and air attacks says military officialWednesday 25 October 2023 01:02 , Maira Butt Vitaliy Barabash, head of Avdiivka’s military administration, said the town was enduring [*unrelenting Russian artillery and air*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-east-frontline-b2434678.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine’s%20frontline%20troops%20say%20they’re%20surrounded%20by%20Putin’s%20forces%20–%20and%20ammo’s%20running%20out) attacks.He said: “The enemy is persistently trying to surround the city and is throwing in new forces from the north and south.“For two days, they have been operating mostly in small groups, trying to find cracks in our defence, but without success. The defence line is holding.”The intensification of military action is “not surprising” as over 2,400 Russians are said to have been killed and wounded in the Donetsk region, according to Oleksandr Shtupun a spokesperson for Ukraine’s southern group of forces. Qatar calls out ‘double standard’ in international community on Ukraine versus GazaWednesday 25 October 2023 21:16 , Maira Butt Speaking in Doha to Sky News, the Foreign Minister of Qatar questioned why the cutting off of food and water in Ukraine was seen as a war crime but not in Gaza.“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.”US official warns of swapping energy-dependence on Russia with ChinaWednesday 25 October 2023 00:02 , Maira Butt A US official has warned against swapping [*energy-dependence on Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Kremlin%20addresses%20Putin%20heart%20attack%20rumours%20as%20Sevastopol%20targeted) with dependence[*on China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/xi-li-shangfu-disappear-remove-b2435149.html%22%20title=%22China%20sacks%20defence%20minister%20two%20months%20after%20he%20disappeared%20from%20public%20life) at a conference on national gas in Washington. Geoffrey Pyatt, assistant secretary for energy resources at the State Department said on Tuesday: “We need to make sure we don’t replace European dependence on [*Russia for gas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-chinese-finland-estonia-helsinki-b2435352.html%22%20title=%22Anchor%20of%20Chinese%20container%20vessel%20caused%20damage%20to%20Balticconnector%20gas%20pipeline,%20Finnish%20police%20say) with a collective dependence on Chinese clean tech and critical minerals. We shouldn’t give in to fatalism. We shouldn’t assume this race is lost.”As former ambassador to Ukraine, Pyatt said the US needed to ensure China did not dominate wind power, small nuclear power and hydrogen -an emerging fuel that could help mitigate carbon emissions from hard-to-abate industries like cement and aluminum smelting.Russia launches heavy air strikes as it decreases ground attacksTuesday 24 October 2023 23:00 , Maira Butt Russia has dropped 40 bombs in two nights at or near the[*town of Avdiivka a*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-east-frontline-b2434678.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine’s%20frontline%20troops%20say%20they’re%20surrounded%20by%20Putin’s%20forces%20–%20and%20ammo’s%20running%20out) s it increases air strikes in the region. The Tavria group of forces spokesperson, Oleksandr Shtupun, said ground attacks had decreased. In a televised report, he said they had even “dropped by half” as air strikes intensified. Russia has focused on [*Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Kremlin%20addresses%20Putin%20heart%20attack%20rumours%20as%20Sevastopol%20targeted) , seeking to encircle the town which it considers important for its military objectives, according to The Kyiv Independent. Russian shelling of Kharkiv Oblast kills twoTuesday 24 October 2023 22:00 , Maira Butt Governor Oleh Syniehubov has reported that [*Russian shelling of a village in Kharkiv Oblast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/oil-boss-russia-dead-war-b2435174.html%22%20title=%22Russian%20oil%20boss%20becomes%20third%20to%20die%20suddenly%20at%20company%20that%20criticised%20Putin’s%20war) has killed two people. The victims are reported to be two civilians aged 50 and 57 years old. Russian forces attacked the village of Podoly in Kharkiv Oblast’s Kupiansk region on 24 October as part of their launch of major attacks along the[*entire eastern front*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20war%20-live:%20Kremlin%20addresses%20Putin%20heart%20attack%20rumours%20as%20Sevastopol%20targeted). Over the course of Russian attacks on 23 October in the same region, the governor reported four people had been injured. Putin’s many ‘heart attacks’ and why the rumours may be in his favourTuesday 24 October 2023 21:00 , Sam Rkaina For years, the [*health*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/health) of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has been the subject of lurid speculation and [*rumours*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rumours). Recent reports have included body doubles, secret [*chemotherapy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chemotherapy) , Parkinsons disease and claims that he fell down the stairs, landed on his coccyx and soiled himself.Yet this week, the most drastic rumour of ill health began to circulate about the 71-year-old. According to shadowy sources, members of his security service were alerted to banging from his private bedroom, only to discover him convulsing on the ground.Food and drinks were allegedly overturned, with doctors rushing to perform resuscitation while the news of his supposed cardiac arrest caused panic amongst his inner circle.Responding to the claims, Kremlin spokesperson[*Dmitry Peskov told reporters it was an “absurd hoax”, a*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html) nd that everything was well with the Russian president.[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-heart-attack-health-condition-b2435063.html) Russian oil boss becomes third to die suddenly at company that criticised Putin’s warTuesday 24 October 2023 20:15 , Sam Rkaina A top executive at [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s second-biggest oil company has become the third person to die suddenly in the past 18 months at the firm, which last year took a public stand over [*Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-latest-b2434838.html) Chairman of Lukoil Vladimir Nekrasov died after suffering acute heart failure, the company said on Tuesday. It did not respond to a request for further comment.Mr Nekrasov replaced the previous head of Lukoil’s board Ravil Maganov in September last year, after he [*died falling from a hospital window*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ravil-maganov-death-lukoil-putin-ukraine-war-b2157405.html) , according to state-run news agency TASS.Russian media said Mr Maganov, 67, had been receiving treatment at Moscow’s Central Clinical Hospital and died of his injuries. Lukoil said he passed away from a “severe illness” but made no mention of his alleged fall, which raised eyebrows among Russia watchers in the West.Ukraine’s frontline troops say they’re surrounded by Putin’s forces – and ammo’s running outTuesday 24 October 2023 19:51 , Askold Krushelnycky While the eyes of the world have turned towards the dreadful scenes in Israel and [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) , the fighting is fierce across multiple points on the [*hundreds of miles of front line*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) between [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) forces. Troops say they are facing Russia’s troops in multiple directions in some areas, while others have said they facing a shortage of ammunition.The clashes stretch from Ukraine’s northern borders with Russia to southern battlefields in the Zaporizhzhia region, where Kyiv’s forces are trying to punch their way through to the Azov Sea in an effort to break Russia’s land bridge with Moscow-occupied Crimea.[*Russia has redeployed significant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-ukraine-war-latest-news-today-b2434204.html) forces from the south – where the two armies appear to be locked in a bloody, attritional stalemate – further north to threaten towns including Kupyansk, Svatove, Kreminna, Lyman, Siversk and Avdiivka. These towns straddle three regions: in the east, Donetsk and Luhansk, and Kharkiv in the northeast.[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-east-frontline-b2434678.html) Ukraine launches joint venture with German arms maker to repair western weaponsTuesday 24 October 2023 18:34 , Sam Rkaina Ukraine has set up a joint defence venture with German arms manufacturer Rheinmetall AG to service and repair western weapons sent to help Kyiv against Russia’s full-scale invasion.Announced by Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal at a German-Ukrainian Business Forum in Berlin, the venture will also help with the local production of some key equipment made by Rheinmetall AG, he said.It will bring “cooperation between our countries to a qualitatively new level and will allow us to build together the arsenal of the free world,” Shmyhal told the forum.Ukraine relies heavily on financial and military support from the West which has poured in tens of billions of dollars of weapons since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022.Oleksander Kamyshyn, minister for strategic industries, said Ukraine was committed to launching the production of Western weapons locally to keep up with growing Ukrainian demand with the war now at the 20-month mark with no end in sight. He said he met 25 major German defence producers in Berlin.Russia sends fighter jet as two U.S. bombers approach its borderTuesday 24 October 2023 17:52 , Sam Rkaina Russia scrambled an Su-27 fighter jet after two U.S. B-1B strategic bombers approached its border over the Baltic Sea, Russian state news agency RIA has reported.As the fighter jet approached, the U.S. bombers “performed a U-turn” away from the Russian border, the Defence Ministry said.It is the latest in a series of mid-air incidents involving Russia in recent weeks. Tanaiste says accommodation limit for new Ukrainian arrivals ‘under discussion’Tuesday 24 October 2023 17:50 , Sam Rkaina Tanaiste Micheal Martin has said no decision has been made on a measure to restrict the amount of time new arrivals from Ukraine can stay in State-provided accommodation, but added that the matter was still “under discussion”.The latest data from the Central Statistics Office looking at the allocation of PPS numbers shows there were 96,338 arrivals from Ukraine under the Temporary Protection Directive.Of these, the CSO could identify that 82% had “activity in administrative data” after July 31.Women and men, aged 20 and over, made up 46% and 22% respectively of arrivals to date, while 32% were people aged under 20.Of all arrivals to date aged 18 and over, 63% of males and 50% of females were married or cohabiting.Speaking to reporters at the Global Ireland Summit, Mr Martin said other countries have commented on “the strength of Ireland’s response in respect of the war in Ukraine”.He added: “Ours has been predominantly on the political and humanitarian fronts, in terms of supporting Ukraine’s accession to the European Union and accepting refugees.”However, the foreign affairs minister said the Government is examining evidence of “secondary transfers from across Europe rather than directly from Ukraine”.Ukraine expects new €1.4bn 'winter aid package' from Germany, says PMTuesday 24 October 2023 14:14 , Alexander Butler Ukraine expects Germany to provide it with an additional €1.4bn to enhance its air defences and help it get through a second winter at war with Russia, Ukrainian prime minister Denys Shmyhal said.“Germany is preparing a €1.4bn winter aid package for Ukraine, including air defence equipment,” he said on X, formerly Twitter.Germany is preparing a 1.4 billion euro winter aid package for Ukraine, including air defence equipment. Grateful to [*@OlafScholz*](https://twitter.com/OlafScholz?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and the entire people for their support.\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Німеччина готує зимовий пакет допомоги Україні на €1,4 мільярда, в який зокрема… [*pic.twitter.com/dS4EyitCLA*](https://t.co/dS4EyitCLA) — Denys Shmyhal (@Denys\_Shmyhal) [*October 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Denys_Shmyhal/status/1716793873442197870?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

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[*Ukraine news – live: Putin and Wagner lose ‘substantial manpower in Bakhmut fight’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WR-BXK1-JBNF-W0MB-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** Full-scale invasion in Ukraine completes grim 400 days

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and the mercenary [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) group have likely lost tens of thousands of soldiers in [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) even as [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces continued to fight in the salt mining city.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) pointed to the statement by the US chairman of the joint chief of staff general Mark Milley who said that the Wagner has around 6,000 professional personnel and 20,000 to 30,000 recruits, mostly convicts, in Bakhmut.

This is lower than the number mentioned by the national security council spokesperson [*John Kirby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-kirby) in December where he said that the Wagner had 50,000 personnel in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) including 10,000 contractors and 40,000 convict recruits.

“It is likely that the difference between Kirby’s 50,000 figure in Ukraine and Milley’s 26,000 to 36,000 figure in the Bakhmut area is the result of casualties from Wagner’s attritional offensive on Bakhmut,” the ISW said.

Volodymyr Zelensky lauded Ukrainian strength faced against 400 days of Russia’s full-scale invasion in his nightly address.

Key points

Wagner has lost ‘substantial manpower’ in Bakhmut fight Ukraine has endured 400 days of Putin’s invasion, says Zelensky White House says Russia looking to trade food for North Korean munitions Putin may force 400,000 troops to join war in new volunteer campaign, says UK Xi Jinping should visit Ukraine, says White House Russia has suffered more than 220,0000 casualties so far, says Ben Wallace

Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy

[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Executive Editor Julie Pace interviewed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as Zelenskyy visited the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, which still faces regular shelling from Russian forces, and northern towns in the Sumy region that were liberated shortly after the war began a year ago.

Zelenskyy spoke to the AP aboard a train shuttling him across Ukraine to cities near some of the fiercest fighting and others where his country’s forces have successfully repelled Russia’s invasion. Zelenskyy rarely travels with journalists, and the president’s office said AP’s two-night train trip with him was the most extensive since the war began.

Read the full transcript below:

[*Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-english-europe-china-b2311272.html)

Wagner has lost ‘substantial manpower’ in Bakhmut fight

Russia’s onslaught on Bakhmut can turn bleak as Wagner group and conventional Russian forces have likely lost manpower in their ongoing fight in the salt mining city, analysts say.

“Western officials reported that Wagner Group and conventional Russian forces have likely lost a substantial amount of manpower in the Bakhmut area, which will further constrain Russia’s offensive on Bakhmut,” the US-based Institute for the Study of War said in its latest analysis.

The think-tank monitoring the war referenced a statement by the US chairman of the joint chief of staff general Mark Milley who said that the Wagner Group has around 6,000 professional personnel and 20,000 to 30,000 recruits, mostly convicts, fighting in the Bakhmut area.

This is lower than the number mentioned by the national security council spokesperson John Kirby in December where he said that the Wagner Group had 50,000 personnel in Ukraine including 10,000 contractors and 40,000 convict recruits.

“It is likely that the difference between Kirby’s 50,000 figure in Ukraine and Milley’s 26,000 to 36,000 figure in the Bakhmut area is the result of casualties from Wagner’s attritional offensive on Bakhmut,” the ISW said.

It added: “Kirby reported on 17 February that the Wagner Group had suffered 30,000 casualties, with 9,000 dead, in operations in Ukraine.

“The Wagner Group may lose thousands more convict recruits in the upcoming weeks as convicts finish their six-month military contracts, and the Wagner leadership appears for now to be allowing pre-pardoned convicts to return from the frontlines to Russia at the conclusion of those contracts,” the ISW said.

Scuffles at Kyiv monastery over alleged Russian ties

Scuffles broke out outside a Kyiv monastery on Thursday after a Ukrainian branch of the Orthodox Church that the government says has ties with Russia defied an eviction order.

Tensions over the presence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) at the 980-year-old Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery have risen since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February last year.

Kyiv accuses the UOC of maintaining ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, which has supported Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine. The UOC says it broke all links with the Russian Church in May 2022.

Hours after a deadline to leave the monastery passed at midnight on Wednesday, members of the UOC refused entry to representatives of a government commission who wanted to inspect buildings in the gold-domed monastery’s sprawling complex.

Shortly afterward, scuffles broke out in which a Reuters reporter was hit and shoved by an unidentified man and another reporter was pushed away by a cleric as she tried to approach him. No one was hurt.

Ukraine has endured 400 days of Putin’s invasion, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has lauded Ukrainian strength faced against 400 days of Russia’s full-scale invasion in his nightly address.

“Four hundred days... Four hundred days of our defence against full-scale aggression. This is a colossal path that we have endured . All together -everyone who fought and fights for Ukraine. Who took care and takes care about the state and Ukrainians. Who helped and helps our logistics. Who strengthened and strengthens Ukrainian resilience,” Mr Zelensky said.

He added: “Ukraine went through the most terrifying days of that February. We survived this winter as well. There is a colossal effort behind these words...”

“We passed last spring, which turned the tide of this war in favour of our defence,” he siad.

“Last summer and autumn, we proved that the spring liberation of our northern regions was no accident. The battle for Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions... The return of the territories of our Kharkiv region, the return of Kherson, the defence of Bakhmut and Donbas in general -this is the heroism of Ukrainians that the world will not forget,” Mr Zelensky said.

Trump claims ‘ignorant and foolish’ DeSantis comments about Putin could lead to nuclear war

In his latest campaign video posted to Truth Social, [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) again took aim at [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ron-desantis) , this time slamming him for his recent remarks on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) which took a tougher stance regarding [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The former president sought to tie the Florida governor to remarks made in the past by Senator [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mitt-romney) and even the late Senator [*John McCain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-mccain).

“Calling Russia a gas station with a bunch of nuclear weapons, or calling Putin, quote, ‘an authoritarian gas station attendant with some legacy of nuclear weapons from the old Soviet Union’ is exactly the kind of simple-minded thinking that has produced decades of failed diplomacy and ultimately war,” said the former president.

“And where is that war going? Those such as Mitt Romney and Ron DeSantis, very much alike, who insist on arrogantly treating Russia as deeply inferior to the other nations of the world with no history or culture or pride, are not only ignorant and foolish, but their attitude makes it impossible to negotiate peace. Absolutely impossible,” he continued.

Oliver O’Connell reports:

[*Trump claims ‘ignorant’ DeSantis remarks about Putin could lead to nuclear war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-desantis-putin-nuclear-war-b2311246.html)

ICYMI: Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests

Russia will no longer tell the US before carrying out missile tests, a senior Kremlin diplomat said on Wednesday, signalling an end to a decades-long practice that has eased the threat of nuclear escalation.

Sergei Ryabkov, Russian deputy foreign minister, said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington after recently withdrawing from the last remaining nuclear arms pact with the US.

The two nations have exchanged advance warnings about test launches for decades, along with information about the current state of their nuclear forces.

Read more below:

[*Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-missile-warning-nuclear-us-b2310322.html)

Zelensky painting up for auction

An original painting of Volodymyr Zelensky signed by the Ukrainian president is being sold at auction, and proceeds from the sale will be used to benefit the nation’s people suffering during its war with Russia.Bidding on the 40-by-24-inch painting by American artist Oleg Jones starts at $50,000, and the goal is to sell it for at least $100,000, Bobby Livingston, executive vice president of auctioneer RR Auction in Boston, said Thursday.The painting features an image of Zelenskyy against the background of Ukraine‘s blue and yellow flag. Several raised stars in the upper left of the piece form a heart around the gold trident from the nation’s coat of arms.

Inside Zelenskyy’s efforts to buoy a nation

The caravan of unmarked vehicles tears across the muddy grass next to the playground. On the merry-go-round, the children stop swinging and spinning. The curious — parents and other residents of this southeastern town — gather around. Car doors swing open, and heavily armed security guards in battlefield fatigues spill out.

And just like that, he is among them: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, wartime leader and his country’s chief morale officer.

This week, Zelenskyy shuttled across the country on a 48-hour train trip to rally soldiers who are battling Russian forces — and, just as important, to buoy the communities often caught in the crossfire.

Read more below:

[*Ukraine by rail: Inside Zelenskyy's efforts to buoy a nation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kyiv-zaporizhzhia-donald-trump-b2310627.html)

Putin calls up 147,000 Russians for spring conscription

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed an annual decree outlining how many citizens should be enlisted to fight as part of its spring conscription campaign.

The decree states that 147,000 Russian citizens should be drafted for military service, Tass news agency reports.

In September 2022, Putin previously signed an order calling for the conscription of 120,000 people as part of its autumn campaign.

At present, all men between the ages of 18 and 27 are required to carry out one year’s military service or the equivalent training if in higher education.

Blinken compares Bosnia Serb leader to Putin

U.S. Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) has compared the policies of the Bosnia Serb separatist leader to those of Russian [*President*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) following his moves to curb dissent and LGBTQ rights.

Blinken tweeted late Wednesday that “Milorad Dodik’s attacks on basic rights and freedoms in Republika Srpska show he is on President Putin’s authoritarian path.”

Republika Srpska is the name for the half of Bosnia that is dominated by the country’s Serbs. Dodik is the entity’s president and leading politician who has repeatedly advocated for the breakup of Bosnia and clashed with Western officials in the Balkan country.

Earlier this month, Dodik’s government faced criticism from the U.S. and the European Union for pushing forward with a law to recriminalize libel and insult offences, which was seen as an attack on the freedom of expression and independent media.

Dodik also announced a law in the upcoming months to prohibit access for LGBTQ activists to kindergartens, schools and universities. This came only days after a group of hooligans attacked LGBTQ activists and journalists in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska’s administrative centre.

Read more:

[*Blinken compares Bosnia Serb leader to Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/ap-bosnia-and-herzegovina-antony-blinken-vladimir-putin-president-b2310932.html)

NATO, US forces join Romania-led Black Sea military drills

Romania’s navy led multinational military drills in the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) region Thursday that brought together U.S. and NATO troops as the 30-nation alliance looks to boost security on its southeastern flank amid Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The sea and air exercises are part of a series of drills known as Sea Shield 2023 that involve some 3,400 military personnel from 12 NATO member countries and some partner nations.

Romania’s navy said Thursday’s drills in the Mahmudia region of the Danube Delta, which flows into the Black Sea, would demonstrate how the combined forces would “neutralize an enemy air landing” in an area adjacent to such a waterway.

More than 30 naval ships, 14 aircraft and 15 “fast intervention” boats and other patrol vessels are taking part in Sea Shield 2023, which started March 20 and runs until April 2. Anti-explosive divers have participated in drills, as have chemical, biological, and nuclear defence specialists.

In response to Russia’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, NATO bolstered its presence on Europe’s eastern flank by sending additional multinational battlegroups to alliance members Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Slovakia.

Read more:

[*NATO, US forces join Romania-led Black Sea military drills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-nato-romania-black-sea-ukraine-b2311128.html)

White House says Russia looking to trade food for North Korean munitions

The [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) said [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is “actively seeking” to acquire North Korean-made munitions for use against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and has offered to trade Pyongyang food in exchange for the weapons.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Thursday that Russia’s quest for North Korean munitions is a consequence of the American and European sanctions that have been imposed on Moscow since Russian forces began invading Ukraine last year.

In January, the White House claimed that Russia’s Wagner Group had received trainloads of arms from North Korea last year.

Mr Kirby said the Biden Administration remains “concerned” that Pyongyang will provide further support for Russia’s war in Ukraine, and said a private arms dealer has been trying to broker a secret agreement between the two countries.

Andrew Feinberg reports:

[*White House says Russia looking to trade food for North Korean munitions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-north-korea-food-munitions-weapons-b2311184.html)

Finland says Russia spy operations weakened in Nordic nation

Expulsions of [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) intelligence officers and visa refusals have substantially weakened Moscow’s intelligence operations in neighboring [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) in the past year, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service said Thursday.

The intelligence agency, known by the abbreviation SUPO, said in a statement that Russian intelligence has been “squeezed” in the [*Nordic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nordic) country because of the agency’s ability to compromise spy operations in 2022.

“The Russian intelligence station (in Finland) shrank to about half of its former size last year,” SUPO Director Antti Pelttari said, adding that the main reason for the decline were expulsions of suspected spies and visa refusals on the advice of his agency.

The falling number of intelligence officers and restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finland border amid [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ‘s war in Ukraine have significantly undermined operating conditions for Russian spies in Finland, SUPO said.

It noted that operations under diplomatic cover have traditionally been the main instrument of Russian intelligence abroad, and Moscow was seeking to use, among other methods, cyberespionge to make up for the shortfall in human intelligence.

Read more:

[*Finland says Russia spy operations weakened in Nordic nation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/finland-ap-helsinki-russia-nordic-b2310830.html)

Wall Street Journal reporter seen for first time since being arrested in Russia

New footage has captured a Wall Street Journal reporter seen for the first time since being arrested in Russia.

Journalist [*Evan Gershkovich*](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/evan-gershkovich) was arrested in Yekaterinburg on spying charges, according to Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) – the successor to the KGB.

He was brought to Moscow where a court at a closed hearing ordered him held in pre-trial detention until 29 May. The TASS state news agency said he pleaded not guilty. The authorities released no evidence publicly and the case is said to have been marked “top secret”.

The arrest is the most serious public move against an international journalist since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in February last year. Espionage charges against someone from an American news outlet have not been seen since the end of the Cold War – with the detention coming amid a bitter war of words between Moscow and Washington over the Ukraine war. If convicted, Mr Gershkovich could face up to 20 years in prison.

The Wall Street Journal said in a statement it was “deeply concerned” for Mr Gershkovich’s safety and that it “vehemently denies the allegations from the FSB and seeks the immediate release of our trusted and dedicated reporter”.

Watch here:

Read the full story here:

[*Russia arrests Wall Street Journal reporter on ‘espionage’ charges*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wsj-reporter-arrested-russia-espionage-evan-gershkovich-b2310976.html)

White House releases statement on Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia

The White House has released a statement following the arrest of a Wall Street Journal journalist in Russia.

[*Evan Gershkovich*](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/evan-gershkovich) was arrested in Yekaterinburg on spying charges, according to Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) – the successor to the KGB.

He was brought to Moscow where a court at a closed hearing ordered him held in pre-trial detention until 29 May. The TASS state news agency said he pleaded not guilty. The authorities released no evidence publicly and the case is said to have been marked “top secret”.

A newly-released statement from White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre reads:

“We are deeply concerned by the troubling reports that Evan Gershkovich, an American citizen, has been detained in Russia.

“Last night, White House and State Department Officials spoke with Mr. Gershkovich’s employer, the Wall Street Journal. The Administration has also been in contact with his family.

“Furthermore, the State Department has been in direct touch with the Russian government on this matter, including actively working to secure consular access to Mr. Gershkovich.

“The targeting of American citizens by the Russian government is unacceptable. We condemn the detention of Mr. Gershkovich in the strongest terms.

“We also condemn the Russian government’s continued targeting and repression of journalists and freedom of the press.

“I want to strongly reiterate that Americans should heed the U.S. government’s warning to not travel to Russia. U.S. citizens residing or travelling in Russia should depart immediately, as the State Department continues to advise.”

King Charles praises Germany’s generosity in hosting millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has praised [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) for showing “extraordinary hospitality” in hosting more than one million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the outbreak of war.

In the first state banquet speech of his reign on Wednesday evening (29 March), Charles also pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) and Germany after arriving in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin).

“I did want to pay a particular tribute to Germany’s extraordinary hospitality in hosting over one million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***,” the King said.

“This, it seems to me, so powerfully demonstrates the generosity and spirit of the German people.”

Watch:

[*King Charles praises Germany’s generosity in hosting millions of* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/germany-ukraine-war-king-charles-b2311045.html)

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Sweden’s Nato hopes falter amid fresh objection from Hungary

Sweden’s foreign minister has indicated that he was no longer sure his country would be able to join Nato by July, after fresh signs of objections from Hungary.

Sweden applied to join the military alliance after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year, but Hungary and fellow Nato member Turkey held off from approving the bid.

Foreign minister Tobias Billstrom said last week that “it goes without saying” Sweden would become a member by the time of a Nato summit in Vilnius in July.

But he told TT news agency on Thursday: I have noted the things that have been said in recent days, especially from Hungary’s side, and that means you always have reason to alter your words.

“I think ‘hopeful’ in this context is better,” he added.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Russia’s Lavrov to visit Turkey in early April -Turkish broadcaster NTV

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov will visit Turkey on 6-7 April Turkish private broadcaster NTV reported on Thursday.

The war in Ukraine and developments in Syria would be discussed in talks during Lavrov’s visit, as well as commerce, energy issues and bilateral ties, NTV said.

Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’

[*Orlando Bloom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orlando-bloom) has praised the strength of the Ukrainian people as he met the country’s president, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , and encouraged him to “go win” the war.

The [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) actor, 46, who is a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador, travelled to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) in his first visit back to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since 2016.

In the meeting, Bloom told Mr Zelensky it is “remarkable to see how you are holding this country” and said it was a “real honour” to meet the Ukrainian president.

More on this story here:

[*Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/volodymyr-zelensky-orlando-bloom-ukraine-unicef-british-b2308581.html)

FSB requests formal arrest of US reporter

Investigators from Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) on Thursday requested the formal arrest of American Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, detained on suspicion of espionage, the state-owned news agency TASS reported, citing Moscow’s Lefortovo district court.

‘Too early’ to talk of prisoner swap for US reporter, Russian minister says

Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov says it is too early to talk of a possible prisoner swap involving a detained US reporter who has been held on suspicion of spying, the state RIA news agency reported.

The Interfax news agency cited Ryabkov as saying that such exchanges had previously taken place for those already convicted, and that it was necessary to wait to see how the story with Evan Gershkovich developed.

Russia to keep missile test notices under Cold War-era deal

Russia will continue to give the US advance notice about its missile tests despite suspending the last remaining nuclear arms treaty between the two countries, a top Russian diplomat has said.

Deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov’s statement reversed one he made on Wednesday, when he said Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington envisioned under the 2011 New START nuclear pact, including missile test warnings.

More on this here:

[*Russia to keep missile test notices under Cold War-era deal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ap-washington-moscow-vladimir-putin-soviet-b2310855.html)

Zelensky describes ‘horrific’ year in Kyiv region

The past year had been “the most horrific” in the lives of many residents of the Kyiv region, Ukraine‘s president said on Thursday, where Russian troops are accused of committing war crimes before withdrawing a year ago

The Ukrainian military recaptured the small towns of Irpin and Bucha outside the capital, Kyiv, in late March last year.

International investigators are now collecting evidence in Irpin, Bucha and other places where Ukraine says Russian troops committed large-scale atrocities. Russia denies the allegations.

“For many residents of the Kyiv region, the past year has become the most horrific in their entire lives. And the liberation of the Kyiv region has become a symbol of the fact that Ukraine will be able to win this war,” president Volodymyr Zelensky wrote in English on the Telegram messaging app.

“Events that could not be imagined in the 21st century have become a reality in the satellite cities of Kyiv, Bucha and Irpin. Russian troops marched on the Ukrainian capital from the north and brought death and destruction.”

Zelensky wrote his Telegram post under video footage showing heavily damaged buildings and vehicles that had been destroyed in Bucha and Irpin.

Kremlin says US reporter ‘caught red-handed’

The Kremlin said on Thursday that the arrest of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich by Russia’s FSB security service on suspicion of spying was “a matter for the FSB”, but that it understood Gershkovich had been “caught red-handed”.

Russian did not publish any evidence of Gershkovich’s guilt. The Wall Street Journal vehemently denied the allegation.

Russia in contact with IAEA on 'evolving' idea of Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant safety zone

Moscow is still in talks with the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency about the idea of a safety zone around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant that is controlled by Russian forces in Ukraine, Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov was reported as saying.

RIA quoted him as saying that the idea was “evolving”. Interfax quoted Ryabkov as saying Moscow was in “constant contact” with IAEA chief Rafael Grossi.

China’s role in Ukraine conflict vital to EU relations, says von der Leyen

China must play a part in pressing for a “just peace” in Ukraine and its role in the conflict will be vital in shaping relations with the European Union, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Thursday.

China, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, had a responsibility to play a constructive role in advancing a peace based on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, with the withdrawal of invading Russian forces.

“Any peace plan which would in effect consolidate Russian annexations is simply not a viable plan. We have to be frank on this point,” von der Leyen said in a speech in Brussels on the eve of a trip to Beijing.

“How China continues to interact with Putin’s war will be a determining factor for EU-China relations going forward.”

Four bankers who helped Putin's friend set up Swiss bank account convicted

Four bankers who helped a close friend of Vladimir Putin move millions of francs through Swiss bank accounts have been convicted of lacking diligence in financial transactions.

The four were found guilty on Thursday of helping Sergey Roldugin, a concert cellist who has been dubbed “Putin’s wallet” by the Swiss government.

The executives -three Russians and one Swiss -helped Roldugin, who is godfather to Putin’s eldest daughter Maria, deposit millions of francs in Swiss bank accounts between 2014 and 2016.

The men, who cannot be identified under Swiss reporting restrictions, were found guilty at a hearing at Zurich District Court and were given suspended sentences of seven months each.

Waall Street Journal reporter in Russia 'detained on suspicion of spying’

Russia’s FSB security service has claimed that a reporter with The Wall Street Journal, Evan Gershkovich, had been detained in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg on suspicion of espionage, the Interfax news agency reported.

In a statement quoted by Interfax, the FSB said it had “stopped the illegal activities of U.S. citizen Gershkovich Evan, born in 1991, a correspondent of the Moscow bureau of the American newspaper The Wall Street Journal, accredited at the Russian Foreign Ministry, who is suspected of spying in the interests of the American government”.

The statement said Gershkovich had been tasked “by the American side” with gathering information on “the activities of one of the enterprises of the military-defence complex”. It provided no evidence.

Watch: Russia’s defence chiefs released a video showing patrol trucks carrying missiles

Russian man sentenced to prison after daughter’s anti-war picture detained, says lawyer

A Russian man who was sentenced to two years in prison for discrediting the Russian armed forces, and whose daughter was taken into care after she drew an anti-war picture at school, has been detained, reports say.

News of Alexei Moskalyov’s detention was confirmed to Reuters by human rights activist and lawyer Dmitry Zakhvatov on Thursday.

He vanished from his home during the night on Tuesday, hours before being sentenced to two years for discrediting the Russian armed forces.

Masha Moskaleva’s drawing featured both the Ukrainian and Russian flags, emblazoned with the words “No to war” and “Glory to Ukraine”, and a woman shielding her child from Moscow’s missiles.

It was reported earlier this month by independent rights watchdog OVD-Info that the 13-year-old’s art teacher reported her work to the school’s headteacher, who then alerted Russian authorities.

Local law enforcement in the town of Yefremov in the Tula region, south of Moscow, took action in April 2022, charging Mr Moskalyov, 53, with “discrediting” the Russian army for an anti-war comment he wrote on social media platform Odnoklassniki.

His daughter was taken to a foster care facility in Yefremov.

In a letter shared yesterday, Miss Moskaleva urged her father not to give up and told him to “believe, love and hope”.

“Hi Dad, I really ask you not to get sick and not to worry,” the letter said. “Everything is fine with me, I love you very much and know that you’re not guilty of anything. I am always on your side, and everything you do is right,” she wrote.

Written neatly on lined paper, the letter ended with “I love you” in English, and the words “you are a hero” inside a heart.

Russian forces advance on Bakhmit

US thinktank the Institute for the Study of War’s said this morning that “geolocated footage published on March 28 and 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced in southern and southwestern Bakhmut.”

It comes after officials on the Ukrainian side said that Russian forces have witnessed some success in Bakhmut over the past day after being stalled around the Donetsk city for weeks in a slow-burning fight.

[*#Bakhmut*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Bakhmut?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Update:[*#Russian*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Russian?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) forces continued offensive operations in and around Bakhmut on March 29.Geolocated footage published on March 28 and 29 indicates that Russian forces advanced in southern and southwestern Bakhmut.[*https://t.co/GC1K0Witfn*](https://t.co/GC1K0Witfn) [*pic.twitter.com/hlECzoQTvp*](https://t.co/hlECzoQTvp) — ISW (@TheStudyofWar) [*March 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/TheStudyofWar/status/1641272150291095553?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Putin may force 400,000 troops to join war in new volunteer campaign, says UK

The Vladimir Putin regime will possibly coerce men signing up for volunteer programme to be mobilised, the British defence ministry has said today.

Recent Russian media reporting suggests that the authorities are preparing to start a major military recruitment campaign with the aim of signing up an additional 400,000 troops.

The ministry noted that Russia is presenting the campaign as a drive for volunteer, professional personnel, rather than a new, mandatory mobilisation.

“There is a realistic possibility that in practice this distinction will be blurred, and that regional authorities will try to meet their allocated recruitment targets by coercing men to join up,” the MoD said.

It added: “Russian authorities have likely selected a supposedly ‘volunteer model’ to meet their personnel shortfall in order to minimise domestic dissent. It is highly unlikely that the campaign will attract 400,000 genuine volunteers.”

“However, rebuilding Russia’s combat power in Ukraine will require more than just personnel; Russia needs more munitions and military equipment supplies than it currently has available,” the ministry said.

Xi Jinping should visit Ukraine, says White House

The White House has said that Chinese president Xi Jinping should speak to Volodymyr Zelensky and a visit should be made to the war-torn country.

National security spokesperson was asked if he believes that Mr Xi should visit Ukraine, as suggested by the Ukrainian president.

“We certainly support, at the very least, a conversation between president Xi and president Zelensky. And, my goodness, we’ve been saying that for weeks,” he said.

IOC not stalling decision over Russia and Belarus, insists Thomas Bach

The International Olympic Committee has set out new recommendations governing how Russian and Belarusian athletes can return to international sport, writesJamie Gardner.

[*IOC not stalling decision over Russia and Belarus, insists Thomas Bach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/sport/russia-ukraine-olympics-paris-thomas-bach-b2309629.html)

UN nuclear watchdog in Ukraine: ‘Military activity is rising'

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency Rafael Grossi is on a repeat visit to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant and has said that is a “significant increase” in the number of troops in the region.

“It is obvious that military activity is increasing in this whole region. So the plant can’t be protected,” he said.

A recording of the briefing was made available to Reuters.

Mr Grossi said he was putting aside plans for a security zone around the plant so he could propose specific protection measures acceptable to both Russia and Ukraine.

Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant – the biggest nuclear facility in Europe – was a prized part of Ukraine‘s energy network and accounted for about 20 per cent of national power generation before the invasion. It has not produced any electricity since September, when the last of its six reactors was taken offline, leaving tens of thousands of Ukrainian civilians hunkering down inside their houses in biting sub-zero temperatures during the winter.

Russian forces shelled towns in central Zaporizhzhia region, including the contested centre of Hulyaipole, the Ukrainian general staff said.

Russia has suffered more than 220,0000 casualties so far, says Ben Wallace

The latest assessments show Russian casualties in the continuing war in Ukraine to be more than 220,0000, the British defence secretary has said.

“The Russian forces have some really significant and deep systemic problems at the moment in their efforts. The latest US assessments I have seen now put casualty figures over 220,0000 of dead or injured,” Mr Wallace said.

Just last month, the British intelligence had put the number of casualties between 175,000 to 200,000 for the Russian forces and their private military contractor forces, adding that this likely included between 40,000 and 60,000 killed.

ICYMI: Donald Trump says he could 'solve' Ukraine war ‘in 24 hours’

Kyiv monks accused of Russia links refuse eviction order

Orthodox monks who’ve been ordered out of a monastery in Kyiv have refused to leave today, as a deadline to vacate the complex expired.

The dispute over the Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery, Ukraine’s most revered Orthodox site, is part of a wider religious conflict playing out in parallel with the war.

The monks using the property belong to the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, which has been accused of links to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Read the full story here:

[*Kyiv monks accused of Russia links refuse eviction order*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-orthodox-kyiv-russia-b2310489.html)

Sanctions for man who ‘tried to arrange sale of weapons to Russia'

The US said yesterday it had imposed sanctions on a Slovakian man for trying to arrange the sale of over two dozen types of North Korean weapons and munitions to Russia to help Moscow replace military equipment lost in its war with Ukraine.

The action, which comes as Washington warned that Russia is seeking to acquire additional weapons from North Korea, is the latest in a series of sanctions the US has imposed targeting Moscow and its attempts to obtain military equipment. The conflict in Ukraine has killed tens of thousands and reduced many cities to rubble.

The US Treasury Department said in a statement it had imposed sanctions on Slovakian national Ashot Mkrtychev “for having attempted to, directly or indirectly, import, export, or re-export to, into, or from the DPRK any arms or related materiel.”

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine violates UN charter, says Singapore PM

Singapore’s prime minister Lee Hsien Loong has said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has gravely violated the United Nations charter and international law.

Mr Lee was speaking at the Boao forum in the southern Chinese island province of Hainan.

Big powers have the responsibility of maintaining stable and workable relations with one another, and the most worrying is the state of relations between the United States and China, he said today.

Russia convicts father of teen who drew antiwar pictures

A Russian court on Tuesday convicted a single father over social media posts criticizing the war in Ukraine and sentenced him to two years in prison — a case brought to the attention of authorities by his daughter’s drawings against the invasion at school, according to his lawyer and activists.

The case of Alexei Moskalyov, who was indicted and tried in his hometown of Yefremov, about 300 kilometers (about 186 miles) south of Moscow, has drawn international attention and is a grim indication that the Kremlin is intensifying its crackdown on dissent, targeting more people and handing out harsher punishments for any expression of criticism of the war.

[*Russia convicts father of teen who drew antiwar pictures*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-estonia-tallinn-kremlin-b2309476.html)

Russia sees a ‘degree of success’ in Bakhmut, says Ukraine

Russian forces have witnessed some success in Bakhmut over the past day after being stalled around the Donetsk city for weeks in a slow-burning fight, officials from the Ukrainian side have said.

“Enemy forces had a degree of success in their actions aimed at storming the city of Bakhmut,” the General Staff of the Ukrainian Armed Forces said in its regular night-time report.

“Our defenders are holding the city and are repelling numerous enemy attacks,” the top military command said.

For four straight weeks of this month, the average number of daily Russian attacks on the front line reported by Ukraine‘s general staff has declined.

Whereas earlier Russian attacks were recorded to be around 124 in the first week of March, the next seven days saw 69 attacks.

On Wednesday, this dipped further to 57 attacks.

Journalists near the frontline west of Bakhmut and in the northern sector have also observed notable declines in the intensity of Russian attacks last week.

After prematurely announcing the capture of most of Bakhmut in early March, the Russian officials now say that their forces are in the process of gaining ground in street-by-street fighting.

Eurovision festival ‘a celebration of Ukraine tinged with bitterness of war’

A festival accompanying the Eurovision Song Contest will be a celebration of Ukraine “tinged with bitterness” as the war continues in the European country.

EuroFestival, a two-week series of events in Liverpool, has announced 24 culture commissions for May which include a performance by Ukrainian Eurovision Song Contest winner Jamala and collaborations between British artists and Ukrainian artists.

Tetyana Filevska, creative director at the Ukrainian Institute, told the PA news agency at the British Music Experience in Liverpool, during the launch of the programme on Tuesday, that celebrating her culture is a form of “resistance”.

[*Eurovision festival ‘a celebration of Ukraine tinged with bitterness of war’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-liverpool-british-british-council-bbc-b2309644.html)

ICYMI: Sunak defends use of British munitions stockpiles to support Ukraine

British ammunition stockpiles are being used for the purpose they were intended – degrading Russia’s fighting ability, Rishi Sunak has said.

The Prime Minister said he would “not necessarily see it as a negative” that levels of shells and missiles were being run down because they were being used to deter the threat from Vladimir Putin’s military.

Mr Sunak’s comments came as British-supplied Challenger 2 tanks were poised to begin combat missions in Ukraine.

[*Sunak defends use of British munitions stockpiles to support Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-xi-jinping-british-rishi-sunak-prime-minister-b2309531.html)

UN atomic watchdog chief returns to Ukraine nuclear plant

The head of the U.N.’s atomic energy watchdog returned Wednesday to the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, a day after saying a deal to protect Europe’s largest nuclear power facility from a catastrophic accident due to the war in Ukraine was “close.”

International Atomic Energy Agency Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi crossed the war’s front lines for a second time to reach the plant, which is located in a partially Russia-occupied part of Ukraine where combat has intensified.

The IAEA, which is based in Vienna, Austria, has a rotating team permanently based at the plant. Grossi told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday he feels it is his duty to ramp up talks between Kyiv and Moscow aimed at safeguarding the facility.

[*UN atomic watchdog chief returns to Ukraine nuclear plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-international-atomic-energy-agency-europe-russia-b2310140.html)

World's first research hub for child blast injuries opens to support Ukraine war victims

Putin using Bakhmut to destroy Wagner Group and ‘put its chief in his place’, says ISW

Analyst says Ukraine battle – in which the Russian side has suffered heavy casualties – is part of a wider Kremlin power play, writesArpan Rai.

[*Putin using Bakhmut to ‘largely destroy Wagner Group and put its chief in his place’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/putin-ukraine-war-russia-bakhmut-wagner-b2308979.html)

Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests

Russia will no longer tell the US before carrying out missile tests, a senior Kremlin diplomat said, signalling an end to a decades-long practice that has eased the threat of nuclear escalation.

Sergei Ryabkov, Russian deputy foreign minister, said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington after recently withdrawing from the last remaining nuclear arms pact with the US.

The two nations have exchanged advance warnings about test launches for decades, along with information about the current state of their nuclear forces.

Liam James reports.

[*Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-missile-warning-nuclear-us-b2310322.html)

Ukraine’s Zelensky is ‘ready’ for Chinese leader to visit

Ukraine’s president invited his powerful Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, to visit the war-torn nation, saying they haven’t been in contact since the war began and he is “ready to see him here.”

“I want to speak with him,” Volodymyr Zelensky told The Associated Press on Tuesday, the week after Xi visited Russian President Vladimir Putin last week. China had no immediate response about whether a Xi visit to Ukraine would happen.

[*Ukraine's Zelenskyy is 'ready' for Chinese leader to visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/xi-jinping-ap-ukraine-vladimir-putin-beijing-b2310210.html)

ICYMI: Donald Trump says he could 'solve' Ukraine war ‘in 24 hours’

Poland urges EU to limit influx of Ukrainian grain

Poland wants the European Union to use all tools at its disposal to limit the amount of Ukrainian grain entering the bloc’s market, the prime minister said on Wednesday, amid fury among farmers over the effect of imports on Polish grain prices.

Mounting anger in the countryside over the influx of Ukrainian grain poses a major headache for Poland’s ruling nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party in an election year, as its conservative voter base mainly lives in rural areas and small towns.

“We demand the use of all regulatory instruments -quotas, tariffs, which will limit or block the import of Ukrainian grain into Poland,” Mateusz Morawiecki told a news conference.

Morawiecki said he had agreed with the leaders of several countries bordering Ukraine to write to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen to demand action.

Ukraine, one of the world’s largest grain exporters, has seen its Black Sea ports blocked since Russia invaded more than a year ago and has been forced to find alternative shipping routes through European Union states Poland and Romania.

But logistical bottlenecks mean large quantities of Ukrainian grains, which are cheaper than those produced in the European Union, have ended up in central European states, hurting prices and sales of local farmers.

Morawiecki spoke as Agriculture Minister Henryk Kowalczyk met with farmers representatives, who have dismissed government aid proposed so far as inadequate.

“Money is due for every hectare of grain, losses must be covered,” said Michal Kolodziejczak, founder of the Agrounia group ahead of roundtable talks with the government. “There must be at least 6 billion zlotys ($1.39 billion) to cover these losses.”

“I’m not going to leave unless there are good solutions here. The police will have to take us out.”

The figure cited by Kolodziejczak was ten times higher than the 600-million-zloty aid programme approved by the European Commission on Monday, which the government says will help compensate farmers for their losses.

Kowalczyk recently had to be escorted out of an agricultural fair in the central Polish city of Kielce after he was accosted by a crowd of angry farmers and had eggs thrown at him at another event.

Takeaways from AP's interview with Ukraine's Zelenskyy

A team of journalists from The Associated Press spent two days traveling by train with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as he visited the southeastern city of [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , which still faces regular shelling from Russian forces, and northern towns in the Sumy region that were liberated shortly after the war began a year ago.

The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is the first news organization to travel extensively with Zelenskyy since the war began. Here are some takeaways from an interview with Zelenskyy as he returned to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) late Tuesday.

[*Takeaways from AP's interview with Ukraine's Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-ukraine-vladimir-putin-takeaways-kyiv-b2309879.html)

Object near Nord Stream 2 pipeline poses no safety risk

An object found close to the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline in the Baltic Sea appeared to be a maritime buoy and does not pose a safety risk, the Danish Energy Agency said on Wednesday.

The object, which was retrieved on Tuesday by the Danish navy, was discovered during an inspection of the last remaining intact pipeline by Swiss-based operator Nord Stream 2 AG.

“Investigations indicate that the object is an empty maritime smoke buoy, which is used for visual marking. The object does not pose a safety risk,” the agency said in a statement.

Last week, Denmark invited the Russian-controlled Nord Stream operator to assist in retrieving the object. A representative from Nord Stream 2 AG was present during the operation, which was carried out at a depth of 73 meters, the agency said.

Putin using Bakhmut to destroy Wagner Group and ‘put its chief in his place’, says ISW

Russia’s months-long battle to capture the Ukrainian city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) is being used by the Kremlin to “largely destroy” the private [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) Group and put its chief [*Yevgeny Prigozhin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yevgeny-prigozhin) “in his place”, according to experts monitoring the conflict.

Analysts have suggested an ulterior motive to the Russian leadership’s determination to keep throwing mercenary units into the bloody siege, with disagreements over Ukraine increasingly driving a wedge between [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) and his long-time ally.

[*The Wagner Group*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-group-russia-ukraine-war-b2295482.html) has trained and deployed thousands of convicted criminals in Ukraine – promised their freedom if they can survive six months on the frontline – ever since the Russian president launched his full-scale invasion of the former Soviet nation.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Putin using Bakhmut to ‘largely destroy Wagner Group and put its chief in his place’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/putin-ukraine-war-russia-bakhmut-wagner-b2308979.html)

Ukraine condemns IOC recommendations on Russian and Belarusian athletes

Ukraine‘s sports ministry condemned on Wednesday what it said was a partial change of position by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) on allowing Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in international competitions as neutrals.

The IOC issued recommendations on Tuesday for the athletes’ gradual return to world sport, with President Thomas Bach saying their participation “works” despite Russia‘s war in Ukraine.

“The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Ukraine condemns the partial change of the position of the International Olympic Committee regarding the non-admission of Russian and Belarusian athletes,” a written ministry statement said.

“We have consistently advocated and will continue to insist that under the conditions of the unprecedented unprovoked military aggression of the Russian Federation with the support of the Republic of Belarus against Ukraine, which contradicts the principles of the Olympic Charter, representatives of aggressor states should not be present at international sports arenas.”

The ministry said the recommendations should primarily be applied to sports where athletes from Russia and Belarus have already been admitted to competitions.

The head of Russia‘s Olympic Committee said the criteria announced by the IOC were unacceptable. The Kremlin said the IOC’s guidelines that allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to compete in contained “elements of discrimination”.

The recommendations made by the IOC executive board concern the return of athletes to international competitions but not specifically the 2024 Paris Olympics, for which a separate decision will be taken at a later date.

Ukraine and some of its allies have threatened to boycott the Paris Games should they compete, even as neutrals.

UN atomic watchdog returns to Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant

The head of the UN’s atomic energy watchdog has returned to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, a day after saying a deal to protect Europe’s largest nuclear power facility from a catastrophic accident due to the war in Ukraine was “close”.

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) director general Rafael Mariano Grossi crossed the war’s front lines for a second time to reach the plant, which is located in a partially Russia-occupied part of Ukraine where combat has intensified.

The IAEA, which is based in Vienna, Austria, has a rotating team permanently based at the plant.

Mr Grossi told The Associated Press (AP) in an interview on Tuesday that he felt it was his duty to ramp up talks between Kyiv and Moscow aimed at safeguarding the facility.

He met on Monday with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and said he would “most probably” head to Moscow in the coming days.

But Mr Zelensky said in a separate interview with the AP that he was less optimistic a deal was near.

“I don’t feel it today,” he said.

Spain to send six tanks to Ukraine after Easter

Spain will send six German-made 2A4 Leopard tanks to Ukraine after the April 9 Easter holiday to support Kyiv’s efforts to fend off Russia‘s invasion, Defence Minister Margarita Robles told lawmakers on Wednesday.

Robles said the country had just repaired the fighting vehicles that have not been used since the 1990s, and was testing their combat readiness before shipping them.

“By sending the Leopards, we will continue to help the Ukrainian people... to defend themselves against an absolutely unjust attack,” she said, adding that Spain would now repair another four tanks which will be sent “in the near future”.

The Spanish military has trained Ukrainian tank crews for several weeks in the northeastern city of Zaragoza.

Earlier this week, 18 Leopard 2 tanks pledged by Germany and three pledged by Portugal arrived in Ukraine, which says the fighting vehicles are crucial to defeat the Russian invasion. Moscow calls the deliveries of Western weapons a dangerous provocation.

IAEA chief: situation at Ukrainian nuclear plant hasn't improved

The head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, said on Wednesday that the situation at Ukraine‘s Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant had not improved and that fighting nearby had intensified, Russian news agencies reported.

Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused each other of shelling the site of the power plant over the last year. Grossi has been pushing for a safety agreement between Ukraine and Russia to protect the facility. (

Russia stops sharing nuclear information with US

A senior Russian diplomat said Moscow had suspended sharing information about its nuclear forces with the United States, including notices about missile tests.

Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington after previously suspending its participation in the last remaining nuclear arms pact with the US.

Last month, Russian president Vladimir Putin suspended the New START treaty, saying Russia could not accept US inspections of its nuclear sites under the agreement at a time when Washington and its Nato allies had openly declared Russia‘s defeat in Ukraine as their goal.

Moscow emphasised that it was not withdrawing from the pact altogether and would continue to respect the caps on nuclear weapons.

The Russian foreign ministry initially said Moscow would keep notifying the US about planned test launches of its ballistic missiles.

Russia's Wagner chief says battle for Bakhmut damaged his forces

The head of Russia‘s Wagner mercenary group said on Wednesday that fighting to take control of the Ukrainian city of Bakhmut had “practically destroyed” the Ukrainian army but also “badly damaged” his forces.

“The battle for Bakhmut today has already practically destroyed the Ukrainian army, and unfortunately, it has also badly damaged the Wagner Private Military Company,” Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin said in an audio message.

Russia says it has stopped all data exchanges with U.S. on nuclear weapons

Russia‘s Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov said on Wednesday that Moscow had stopped notifying the United States about its nuclear activities, including test launches, after it pulled out of the New START arms control treaty last month.

“All notifications, all forms of notification, all data exchange, all inspection activities, in general all kinds of work under the treaty are suspended, they will not be carried out,” Ryabkov was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.a

Russia launches drills of its nuclear missile forces

The Russian military conducted drills of its strategic missile forces Wednesday, deploying mobile launchers in Siberia in a show of the country’s massive nuclear capability amid the fighting in Ukraine.

As part of the drills, the Yars mobile missile launchers will maneuver across three regions of Siberia, Russia‘s Defense Ministry said. The movements will involve measures to conceal the deployment from foreign satellites and other intelligence assets, the ministry said.

The Defense Ministry didn’t say how long the drills would last or mention plans for any practice launches. The Yars is a nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missile with a range of about 11,000 kilometers (over 6,800 miles). It forms the backbone of Russia‘s strategic missile forces.

The Defense Ministry released a video showing massive trucks carrying the missiles driving out from a base to go on patrol. The maneuvers involve about 300 vehicles and 3,000 troops in eastern Siberia, according to the ministry.

The massive exercise took place days after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced a plan to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, Russia‘s neighbor and ally.

Tactical nuclear weapons are intended for use on the battlefield and have a relatively short range and a much lower yield compared to the long-range strategic missiles fitted with nuclear warheads that are capable of obliterating whole cities.

Putin’s decision to put the tactical weapons in Belarus followed his repeated warnings that Moscow was ready to use “all available means” — a reference to its nuclear arsenal — to fend off attacks on Russian territory.

Sweden summons Russian envoy over 'retaliation' remark

Sweden’s Foreign ministry on Wednesday summoned the Russian ambassador after Moscow’s diplomatic mission to Stockholm posted on its website that the Scandinavian country would become a “legitimate target for Russia‘s retaliatory measures” if it joins NATO.

Foreign Minister Tobias Billström decried what he called an “obvious attempt at influence.”

Billström told Swedish news agency TT that the country’s security policy is determined by its government and no one else.

It’s unclear when the Russian ambassador will appear at the Foreign Ministry.

In May, Sweden and neighboring Finland angered Moscow after jointly applying for NATO membership, abandoning decades of non-alignment in the wake of Russia‘s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Sweden’s bid has stalled due to opposition from Turkey whose president has said his country wouldn’t ratify membership before disputes between Ankara and Stockholm are resolved.

The Turkish government has accused Sweden of being too soft on groups that it deems to be terror organizations.

Moreover, Hungary’s parliament has yet to ratify Sweden’s NATO membership bid and it remains unclear when it will do so.

Russia starts exercises with Yars intercontinental ballistic missiles

Russia has begun exercises with its Yars intercontinental ballistic missile system and several thousand troops, its defence ministry said on Wednesday, in what is likely to be seen as another attempt by Moscow to show off its nuclear strength.

President Vladimir Putin has aimed to make the Yars missile system, which replaced the Topol system, part of Russia‘s “invincible weapons” and the mainstay of the ground-based component of its nuclear arsenal.

“In total, more than 3,000 military personnel and about 300 pieces of equipment are involved in the exercises,” the defence ministry said in a statement on the Telegram messaging service.

The drills involve the Strategic Missile Forces comprehensive control checking of the Omsk missile formation together with a command and staff exercise with the Novosibirsk missile formation equipped with the Yars systems.

During the exercises, the Yars mobile systems will conduct manoeuvres in three Russian regions, the ministry said, without identifying the regions.

“Also, strategic missilemen will carry out a set of measures to camouflage and counter modern aerial reconnaissance means in cooperation with formations and units of the Central Military District and the Aerospace Forces.”

There are few confirmed tactical and technical characteristics of the Yars mobile intercontinental ballistic missile systems, which reportedly have an operational range of 12,000 km (7,500 miles).

According to military bloggers, the systems are able to carry multiple independently targetable nuclear warheads and can be mounted on a truck carriers or deployed in silos.

Hungary says 'grievances' hold up ratification of Sweden's NATO accession

Hungary is holding up Sweden’s admission to NATO because of grievances over criticism by Stockholm of Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s policies, the Hungarian government spokesman said on Wednesday.

Bridging the gap will require effort on both sides, spokesman Zoltan Kovacs said.

Sweden and its neighbour Finland asked to join the NATO military alliance last year following Russia‘s invasion of Ukraine. But the process has been held up by Hungary and Turkey.

After months of foot-dragging by Orban’s ruling Fidesz party, Hungary’s parliament approved a bill on Monday to allow Finland to join NATO but the Swedish bill is still stranded.

“In the case of Sweden, there is an ample amount of grievances that need to be addressed before the country’s admission is ratified,” Kovacs said on his blog.

Swedish representatives “have been repeatedly keen to bash Hungary through diplomatic means, using their political influence to harm Hungarian interests”, he said, referring to Swedish criticism over the erosion of rule of law by Orban’s government in the past 13 years. Orban denies these allegations.

He said Stockholm had taken a “hostile attitude” to Budapest for years.

“Adding Ankara’s woes and grievances to the mix does not leave much room to manoeuvre, at least not until the Swedes start changing their tune and help these lingering wounds heal,” Kovacs said.

Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan said last week that Turkey’s parliament would also start ratifying Finland’s accession. But it held off approving Sweden’s bid, accusing it of harbouring Kurdish militants.

Russia's Patrushev says Moscow is committed to preventing nuclear war

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev said on Wednesday that Moscow is committed to preventing nuclear war and military confrontation between nuclear-armed states, the TASS news agency reported.

It comes after his earlier comments where he said Russia “has modern unique weapons capable of destroying any adversary, including the United States, in the event of a threat to its existence”.

UN nuclear boss heads to Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant

The head of the U.N. nuclear watchdog set off on Wednesday for Russian-occupied southeastern Ukraine to visit the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station for the second time since Moscow’s forces invaded last year.

Rafael Grossi, head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, says he is travelling to Europe’s largest nuclear power station to review the situation there as part of a push to reduce the risk of a major accident.

Moscow and Kyiv have repeatedly accused each other of shelling the site of the power station over the last year. Grossi has pushing for a safety agreement between Ukraine and Russia to protect the facility.

An IAEA spokesperson confirmed Grossi was on his way to the plant. He said Grossi was in the Zaporizhzhia region, but declined to say where. He shared a photograph of Grossi standing in body armour by an armoured U.N. car on the side of a road.

Grossi told Reuters in an interview on Tuesday in the Ukrainian city of Dnipro that his attempt to broker a deal to protect the nuclear plant was still alive, and that he was adjusting the proposals to seek a breakthrough.

Grossi, who met President Volodymyr Zelensky on Monday, described the situation at the plant as “very dangerous” and very unstable.

The IAEA has had its own monitors stationed at the Zaporizhzhia plant since last year, when Grossi travelled to the facility and fears were mounting of the possibility for a nuclear accident.

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[*On neighbouring borders, Polish families helping refugees face very different fates*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:650H-95K1-JBNF-W559-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:3

**Length:** 1924 words

**Byline:** Daniel Howden and Maud Jullien

**Highlight:** Marina Sestasvili-Piotrowska and her family have transformed their guest house near Poland's border with Ukraine into a refugee shelter, but just seven hours away on the Belarus border Dorota could face time in prison for the exact same act

**Body**

At Marina Sestasvili-Piotrowska's kitchen table, Polish mingles with Ukrainian and people meet each other's gaze with the shy smile of new acquaintance.

Dazed-looking pensioners pad around in their pyjamas, while volunteers busy themselves for another day at the border.

In just three weeks, Chutor Gorajec, a rambling guest house in a tiny hamlet near [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) 's border with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , has been transformed into a refugee shelter. Everyone is getting their bearings.

"I feel like we're at war," says Marina. "My family is safe but mentally we're at war."

Since the Russian invasion triggered a historic exodus, Marina and her husband Marcin have been at the centre of relief efforts at the Budomierz border.

They opened a warehouse nearby to store the help that poured in from around the country and have led a team who have stitched together a network of tents into a makeshift field hospital on the Ukraine side of the border, where [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) have sometimes waited for days in freezing temperatures to cross.

While Poland has been lauded for receiving nearly 1.7 million refugees, Marina and many others say this is down to ordinary citizens.

"The help is coming from people, not governments," she says. "The best you could say is that the government is not interrupting us."

Marina, whose English is the legacy of 14 years working in Ireland at a contact lens factory as the couple saved up to convert an old school into the guesthouse, had never worked with refugees before.

While Marina appears almost fragile from exhaustion she has been buoyed by an outpouring of community support.

The experience has forced the mother of three to think differently about those Polish families who help refugees under bitterly different circumstances at the northeastern border with [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus).

While the flight of hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians into Poland has moved hearts, opened homes and evoked solidarity, the comparative trickle of refugees from conflicts in places like Syria, Yemen and Iraq at the Belarus border was treated as an act of war and Warsaw declared the border area to be a forbidden zone.

"It's only now that I fully understand this horrible situation they are living in," says Marina. "It must be devastating for them to see all of this help for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***."

Marina and Dorota live just seven hours' drive from each other in the same country.

They are of similar age, both working mothers of teenage children and clearly possessed of deep empathy. Their homes, while different in style, have the same air of welcome. But the consequences of their compassion are starkly different.

Dorota -not her real name -could face time in prison for the same act of sheltering refugees that has made Marina a local hero.

At least 20 people have died often agonising deaths in the vast and beautiful birch and pine forest where Dorota and her family live.

Poland's government reacted to the appearance of several thousand asylum seekers at the Belarus border by legalising pushbacks, in violation of EU law, declaring the forbidden zone and flooding the area with police, soldiers and militiamen.

Refugees have found themselves in a deadly vice with Polish security forces hunting them on one side and Belarussian forces forcing them forwards.

The most recent death was 23 February when Ahmed Al-Shawafi, 26, from Yemen, died of hypothermia.

"It was worse to do nothing," says Dorota. "To realise that here near to our house people could die. That in the 21st Century with such technology that we are so primitive."

It was September last year when life began to change.

"In our peaceful, small place they brought soldiers with long guns and police and checkpoints."

Dorota works for an international company. Like millions of other Polish women she marched to defend abortion rights against an onslaught from the ruling Law and Justice party, part of a worrying conservative lurch in recent years that has also seen courts packed with party loyalists and a crisis emerge with EU authorities over the independence of the judiciary.

When she shared an innocuous post about the refugees on Facebook she got a call that changed her life.

A woman she had not seen since her student years came to see them and asked if she could host six African men.

Dorota describes the conversation that followed at home as a "hard discussion" and it lasted all day.

On the one side they did not know anything about these men and her husband felt responsible for the safety of his wife and children. On the other was Dorota's moral clarity.

If we are going to help, she argued, we cannot select who we help. She refused to believe that freezing, hunted refugees presented a danger. Her arguments carried the day.

Nobody in the family regrets the decision.

On the first night her daughter asked Dorota to sleep in her room. That was before she spent time with Max, a young man from Senegal, who was jovial and relaxed even after an appalling month-long ordeal in the forest. Max would tell her with a smile, "life is simple, eat, drink and have a smoke".

On the second night she told her mum she was fine to sleep alone.

In the last six months the family has sheltered nearly two dozen refugees. There are women and girls crossing, and in some cases dying, in the forbidden zone but Dorota has so far received only males.

"These are men and boys who have been beaten, attacked by dogs, who have had men in uniform threaten to cut their fingers off," says Dorota. "And the words you hear from them most often? No problem."

Dorota and her husband have no illusions about the role of Belarus in the young men's misery.

They know that the country's long-time dictator and Putin ally Alexander Lukashenko has stoked the situation and opened routes to Belarus' capital, Minsk, with lies about what awaits the desperate.

"Of course they're being used by Lukashenko, by Putin," says Dorota. "They're used as toys by politicians. Our government wants us to be scared of refugees and the other side wants to show that Europe is cruel."

Polish media friendly to the ruling party, which dominates the airwaves, have pumped out nationalist and xenophobic propaganda, warning Poles that dark-skinned people are coming to destroy Christianity and rape their children.

Dorota has watched this flood of hate with repulsion. They rarely switch on state-run media and when they do the couple joke darkly to each other that they want to see what is happening in "perfect Poland".

Since the war in Ukraine, the same government now presents itself as a champion of refugees. The sudden pivot has left Dorota and her husband breathless.

In Marina's household in Gorajec there is a similar distaste for propaganda. As her double-barrelled name suggests her family has roots in Georgia.

She has both Jewish and Tatar ancestry and her parents, who are Russian speakers, live in Estonia. She says that while her parents live in Estonia "in their minds they live in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and Putin is their president".

When she spoke to them by phone they said: "Yeah the war is awful but it's the fault of Nato, Ukraine, the West and the US, Putin had to do it."

On the phone she demurred, she could not bring herself to argue with them.

"I can't listen to this crap that Putin was provoked."

Her mind keeps returning to a Ukrainian man in his 80s, a farmer who had never travelled more than 20 kilometres from home in his life.

He drove all the way to Gorajec from central Ukraine to deliver their daughter in law and grandchildren to safety, then turned around and drove straight back into the war to go and tend to his animals.

Her admiration for this man does not compel Marina to ignore the other things that her family and team of volunteers have seen.

Drivers carrying aid from their warehouse reported seeing queues to exit Ukraine segregated with brown and black people forced to wait much longer.

She says that her neighbours' compassion does not extend to non-Western refugees: "Ukrainians OK but dark skinned people, no way."

One of the unsubstantiated rumours that persists, Marina says, is that dark skinned people crossing from Ukraine are actually the same ones who were in Belarus. She is bemused at the suggestion that this makes them enemy agents.

Hossam was in Belarus. He is Syrian and arrived there from Latakia where he grew up and which is now notorious for its nearby Russian airbase, used to fly the same bombing sorties and murderous bombardments of Syrian cities that now outrage world opinion in Ukraine.

His journey into Poland took endurance that few people can imagine.

The 39 year old spent a month and a half in the forbidden zone, being violently pushed back 14 times in a single week by Polish forces.

The pushbacks go far beyond the rhetoric in Polish media of holding the line and shielding Europe.

Refugees found in the zone are often dumped on the Belarussian side of the border barefooted in temperatures which drop to minus 12 overnight in spring.

Dorota is haunted by the case of one young woman whom she encountered on the roadside encrusted with ice and suffering frostbite. It was dark and she never got to see her face.

She would later learn that this woman, who could not stand up, was taken from a Polish hospital by soldiers and left barefoot in the forest. They even took her phone, her only lifeline.

Dorota says that since this incident she no longer tries to talk to the police and soldiers at the checkpoints, to understand or engage with them.

"What kind of person does that?" she asks.

As for Hossam he is now in Germany and hoping to gain asylum and pick up work as a barber.

Dorota's family sent him a package with professional trimmers as a gift. He sends them regular updates on a messaging group called "we are family" that they keep with all their former guests.

"It warms my heart," says Dorota's daughter. "I see that they're OK in Germany, in France, in Spain. And every one of them tells us that as soon as they have their papers they will come to visit us or we will visit them. We can plan our trip around the world."

Meanwhile, mother and daughter sit at the kitchen table practising the few phrases they know in the Senegalese language, Wolof.

When they have guests she tells them to keep away from some windows where they might be spotted by the colour of their skin.

She hates doing this and feels that hiding innocent people from the police has disturbing echoes of Poland in the holocaust era.

From the kitchen window you can see a trail in the distance where police patrols pass every day, sometimes with an armoured car, to defend against "violent migrants".

Dorota knows that one day they might roll up to her door but she refuses to be cowed.

"We are ordinary people, not spies," she says. "I am not doing anything wrong."

Reporting for this piece was supported by Lighthouse Reports, a European investigative newsroom

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**



[*'After the victory, we will go home': Ukraine's refugees show faith in face of horror*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:64Y7-MTF1-DY4H-K3XH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 8, 2022 Tuesday 10:20 AM GMT

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:4

**Length:** 1839 words

**Highlight:** REFUGEES WELCOME APPEAL : Campaigns Editor David Cohen has been on the Polish/Ukrainian border speaking to those fleeing Ukraine following the Russian invasion as part of our Refugees Welcome appeal

**Body**

They crossed the Ukrainian border into [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) on foot.

Mothers carried their youngest children in their arms. Older siblings trudged alongside with grim, dogged determination. It was sub-zero and they were freezing, hungry and utterly exhausted.

Among them was Inna, 56, her daughter Olena, 35, and her granddaughter, Karolina, 8, three generations of women fleeing bombed-out Kharkiv in eastern[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). They had been on the road so long and without sleep, they no longer knew what day it was.

Day had merged into night and night had become day. It took several minutes of discussion among them to work out that they had left home three days ago.

They queued behind Aleksandra Melnyk, 35, a teacher from Kyiv, and her twin ten-year-old sons, Andriy and Dmytro, who had left the city on Friday 4 March and slept for only two hours. She spoke with defiance: "We will go back home to Kyiv after the victory."

But there was also fear.

"My husband stayed to fight and my parents couldn't travel. They start their life with the Second World War and now they finish their life with this? I would never believe we would use train for evacuation. Train was for holiday. Where to now? It depends on God."

Among them, too, was a group of nine - including three primary school teachers and their children - who had escaped from Korosten, north-west of Kyiv, after it too came under heavy bombardment.

One of the teachers, Tanya Bordiuk. had pretended to her three-year-old son, Kiril, that the air-raid sirens were "a game that meant he had to hide" - like a scene out of the tragicomic holocaust film Life is Beautiful. But eventually she could pretend no longer.

The Independent is raising money for the people of Ukraine - if you would like to donate then please [*click here*](https://www.gofundme.com/refugeeswelcome) for our GoFundMe page.

So far our appeal has raised £115,000 for the people of Ukraine, but they need more, please give what you can to help support them.

It had taken them 60 hours to get to the border, where they headed straight for a reception centre. All the groups of women and children we spoke to had left their husbands, fathers and brothers behind.

"They are fighting for Ukraine, they are heroes," Olena said.

They had no idea when they would see their family members again.

This is the story of the people we met on Monday morning as they passed through Kroscienko, the southernmost and perhaps most remote of eight border points into Poland.

At any other time, this would be a picturesque place to broach the Polish countryside and head towards the dramatic Carpathian mountains, but these are far from normal times.

More than 1 million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** have now entered Poland alone, and with people crossing at a rate of around 120,000 a day, there is a sense here of a country being emptied of its women and children.

Inna, a university administrator, spoke in rapid bursts as she recounted their escape on Friday from scenes of some of the worst devastation of the war so far.

"The Russians bombed us for seven consecutive days and for seven days we were hiding in our basements, too terrified to go out or even sleep," she said.

"Then one bomb landed in my front garden just a few metres away, making a hole 3-metres wide, and on the eighth day we decided it was too dangerous to stay and headed early for the station.

What has this world come to? Inna, a university administrator, who has fled Ukraine"My grandchild Karolina was so scared to leave that her hands were shaking and she couldn't get her shoes on. She is eight years old and she was convinced she will die. What has this world come to? We drove through a city that looks completely demolished and we got to the station at 8am. Thousands of people were already on the platform. It took us 11 hours to board a train to Lviv." Olena, a nurse, said: "The train was completely packed. We were in the corridor, standing room only. All lights had to be turned off because there were fears the Russians could bomb us. Not even allowed to use our mobile phones. We were 21 hours standing in the train, 21 hours not being able to go to the toilet to pee. I looked around and just saw women, all of them crying. It was a train of tears." They traversed the war-ravaged country and got to Lviv at 4pm the following day. "We stayed overnight in an orphanage but we were so tired and scared we couldn't sleep," said Inna. It would be another 24 hours before they would reach Poland, having to walk the last two hours and then endure a four-hour queue at the border. They finally crossed at 8.30am on Monday 7 March carrying a few plastic bags and small backpacks stuffed with essential belongings - and joined another queue for a bus to take them to a reception centre. While they waited, there were fire pits to keep them warm, hot food served up by charity workers from World Central Kitchen and the Polish fire service and a tent where children drew pictures and played with iPads. The children were very quiet. Olena clutched Karolina's raggedy doll as her daughter ate a bowl of steaming hot soup. When Karolina asked about her father, Olena said: "Her father is now a soldier in a war. He told me they won't let the Russians take Kharkiv. They will fight. I don't know when we will see him again." Where were they headed? "I have no plans, no idea," she said. At a nearby reception centre in a former primary school in the village of Lodyna, we found 160 women and children perched on camp beds crammed into every classroom and corridor. 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). We want to get 200,000 signatures as soon as we can to help put as much pressure on the government as possible, please add your support today.The group of teachers, including Olena Martynenko, 36, and Tanya, 32, had been there two hours, and were relieved to be out of the cold after their 60-hour escape from Korosten with their five children aged 3 to 15. Olena said: "The air-raid sirens in Korosten were going six times a day, but last Thursday there was a huge bombing that was very close, shaking and shattering our windows, so we decided it's not safe to stay. The train to Lviv was endless and from there we caught another train that took ten hours to the border at Medyka. After five hours of waiting and the queue hardly moving, the children were so cold that we turned around and caught a bus back to Lviv." It was a very low point, said Olena. "Our husbands were calling to tell us about bombs continuing to fall on Korosten, and we were crying and homeless in Lviv." That was when the Red Cross - one of 13 charities The Independent's Refugees Welcome appeal is funding as part of our support for the Disasters Emergency Committee - stepped in. "Thank God for the Red Cross - they got us hot food and directed us to warm marquees to stay overnight. The next day they helped us find someone to drive us to Kroscienko instead of Medyka because we heard it was only three hours at the border." Olena added: "This week is International Women's Day and we had planned a special presentation at our school, but now 8th March will be a day to pray for peace and victory." They shared pictures on their phones of bomb debris in their school-yard and of the unfolding local picture. "Where are you?" Olena's husband had earlier texted anxiously. Olena now wanted to know the same of him. She had just heard that bombs were again raining down on Korosten - and that a dozen houses had been destroyed with one dead and five injured. Never in my life could I imagine this would happen.

Tanya, 32, a teacher who has fled Ukraine

Tanya said: "The children keep asking when they can go home. Never in my life could I imagine this would happen."

The teachers sat amongst their bags, but suddenly had to shift because the volunteers running the centre tried to squeeze a few more camp beds into the space. Alongside them, drawing attention, was a young child playing with her two pet rats. In a few hours, the teachers, all colleagues from the same school, would be fanning out across Europe.

Olena and her daughter Maria, 9, were heading to her cousin in Koln, Germany, while Tanya and her son Kiris, 3, were going to stay with friends in Riga in Latvia. They knew where they were headed but had no idea for how long. Back at the border, a long line of vehicles formed of people who had come from all over Europe to pick up relatives, friends and friends of friends.

Among them was Boris, 34, an IT consultant, and his friend Reiner, who had driven from Germany to pick up two mothers and their two children to take to a friend's house in Germany. Boris said: "We expect to be waiting here up to 24 hours. We come to do our bit."

There was a sense of people coming out to help from across Europe, a united effort to provide humanitarian support in the face of an aggressor that has become the common enemy. There was particular gratitude from the Ukrainians for the Poles. They have welcomed refugees, given them free transportation to wherever they want, free healthcare for 30 days, taken Ukrainian children into their schools and removed obstacles to adults seeking work.

There is a sense that the Polish people have risen to the challenge and that this, perhaps, is their finest hour. For Europe and the world, the scale of the humanitarian disaster is yet to be fully calibrated or understood. I watched an endless stream of humanity arrive - past the border post, over the train tracks, pressed up against the doors of coaches that arrived to take yet another load to a reception centre.

One woman, her 14-year-old daughter and their Chihuahua puppy Dolores said they had taken 20 hours to travel from Kyiv. "My brother drove us to a few kilometres from the border and then we walked," she said. "We have left our men behind to come to Poland but we don't know where we will go from here. I am exhausted and sad but also happy in one way." She pointed to the sky. "There are no more bombs over my daughter's head."

Additional reporting, translating, by Sofiia Sas

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**Load-Date:** March 8, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Why I'm no longer happy to be 'Putin's propaganda girl'; She fell in love with Russia and spent years defending Putin and his policies. But now, watching the unprovoked, violent invasion of Ukraine, Johanna Ross is left bitterly disillusioned*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652D-JP61-JCS0-D2TK-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent - Daily Edition

March 23, 2022 Wednesday

First Edition

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**Section:** SECTION 2; Pg. 39

**Length:** 2141 words

**Byline:** JOHANNA ROSS

**Body**

When I was a child, the word 'Russia' was, for me, one synonymous with tragedy. As my father spoke about our family story, his face fell as if he himself could feel the pain of all those who had suffered at the hands of the communists.

Memories were bittersweet. His mother, Eugenie Fraser, was a Russian emigree to Scotland in 1917. In her autobiography, The House by the Dvina, she documented the dramatic tale of how, as a teenager, she had sought refuge aboard a ship bound for Dundee with her mother, their jewellery and roubles sewn into their petticoats. After the revolution, my grandmother would never see her father and grandparents again. Those left behind met a sorry fate, having lost everything.

I am reminded of this story today as I watch countless ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** leave their families, and everything they hold dear, at the hands of Russian aggression, and I ask myself if there is some tragic inevitability to all this. Is Russia a nation fated to be associated with tragedy and suffering? Have no doubt: this is just the beginning of the end of Putin's Russia. The suicidal decision to invade Ukraine is already having a severe effect on Russian society, as Soviet-style censorship takes hold and young people, barred from the social media they thrive on, desperately look at ways to abandon the sinking ship and make a new life abroad.

This senseless, reckless move by Putin took us all by surprise. And it changed my view of the Russian government and its policies. Up until then, I had shared the view of most Russians. Having seen the strides the country had made in the past 20 years, and in particular how the lives of friends and relatives had blossomed under his leadership, I was convinced that Putin was the best thing for Russia since sliced chleb.

I studied Russian at the University of Edinburgh and the state university in St Petersburg, and spent several years living in Russia's "Venice of the North". I fell in love with a country that seemed to have moved on so far since the dark days of communism. As one of the first students from Scotland to visit the Soviet Union, the place I described to my father was almost unrecognisable from the Russia he had seen in the 1960s. Dreary cafeterias had been replaced by glamorous bars and Starbucks. Customer service was now a thing. God now existed... or so we thought.

The Georgian invasion of South Ossetia in 2008 was a turning point for me. By now I was fluent in Russian and was a regular viewer of Vesti. I realised there was a complete disconnect between what the western mainstream media was reporting about the conflict - that Russia had invaded Georgia - and what the Russian news was reporting, which was that the South Ossetians had been targeted by Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, and Russian tanks had crossed the border to defend the South Ossetians.

Back then I had no doubt in my mind which story to believe: the Russian media had many more journalists on the ground, providing detail that the English-speaking western journos just couldn't provide as they sat tight in Tbilisi hotel rooms away from the action. Georgia had started the war - something that an EU report later confirmed.

Following the Maidan revolution of 2013, I also had no doubt in my mind as to who was to blame. I had seen footage of US assistant secretary of state Victoria Nuland handing out cookies to protesters in Kyiv; I'd heard her infamous "Fuck the EU" phone call with colleagues as they discussed who they thought should be the next Ukrainian president, as if it were a game of chess.

The overthrowing of a democratically elected government was never something I was going to support, and it made it worse to think it could be part of a western regime-change plot. After all, it wouldn't be the first time the west had engaged in such covert action. The CIA and MI6 had supported fascist leader Stepan Bandera in the 1940s to subvert the USSR (read Rory Cormac's Disrupt and Deny for more on that). History was repeating itself.

Feeling an inherent sense of injustice at the way the Maidan revolution was being portrayed in the western media, with all its mistranslations and mispronunciations of Russian language, I felt compelled to do my own writing on the subject. I joined US expat media project Russia Insider - an English-language site aimed at reporting the truth on Russia. I volunteered there for several months, debunking inaccurate and misleading stories about Russia in the mainstream media.

At that time, there appeared to be a great deal of reporting taking place by journalists who did not speak Russian and were writing stories based on second-hand translations.

Then, one cold December day in 2015, I noticed a news item in The Herald about Russian news agency Sputnik opening an office in Edinburgh. Unlike many, I was aware of Sputnik as we had analysed Russian media sources at university. I jumped at the chance to apply, elated with the prospect that I could somehow "get the truth out" about Russia and its actions, which were always painted negatively. I wrote to a general email address displayed on the website, never really expecting to get a response. A few days later I was contacted by the bureau chief, Oxana, and we arranged a meeting at a location of my choice.

Once hired, I became involved in everything from trips to Ikea to fit out the Sputnik office to writing job adverts for radio and journalist positions, barely knowing myself what they consisted of. Unfazed by the challenge, however, I was intent on proving I was up to the job, and did my research.

Soon, over coffee and shortbread, we were interviewing prospective candidates in Edinburgh's five-star Sheraton Hotel, situated close to the Sputnik office in Exchange Tower. Then, as soon as we had built up a team and moved into the office, the British media launched its own attack on the company, labelling us "Putin's propaganda girls". This was the beginning of a media onslaught that continues to this day.

At Sputnik I was thrown in at the deep end like never before. But I learnt a huge amount during the three years I was there - about the news business in general, but also about how Russian media operates. That's for another day. What I will say is that it's far from the slick, well-oiled propaganda machine it is made out to be in the western press, and in its defence, it did provide platforms for alternative viewpoints that would not otherwise have been given airtime in the mainstream media.

As for its motivations, I think that's pretty self-explanatory. But people would be mistaken to think its management was a bunch of militant ideologues. As a Russian journalist once said to me: "The best communists were the East Germans." The Russians, he explained, simply weren't disciplined enough. It's a stereotype, perhaps, but my time working in Russian media would only reinforce this idea. In the outlets I've worked for, opinions among senior management figures ranged from not supporting Putin at all to completely apolitical.

What has been interesting to observe is the transition Russian media has undertaken, in recent years, from left to right. When I first joined this field, many anti-war activists and left-wingers were given a voice; in the past few years there has been a clear change of direction, reflecting the country's foreign policy position.

Since roughly the time of Donald Trump's election at the end of 2016, Russia has self-identified as conservative and has attempted to align itself with right-wing parties across the globe, whether it be Viktor Orban's Fidesz, Marine Le Pen's Front National, or AfD in Germany. This approach backfired, however, in Britain. Instead of supporting Jeremy Corbyn and his anti-imperialism, Russia backed the Tories, not understanding that Conservative politics in the UK does not necessarily mean conservative policies, or taking a softer stance towards Putin.

I didn't fully appreciate Russia's shift towards the far right until recently, when it invaded Ukraine. It is a tragic irony that Russia is waging war on Ukraine to "defeat neo-Nazism" when Russia itself has sunk further into the ultra-nationalist quagmire. As thousands of Russians marched every year on their Victory Day parade, or "Immortal Regiment", clutching photographs of their deceased relatives who defeated fascism in the Second World War, they have been oblivious of the road to perdition that their government was about to take them on.

Yet extreme nationalism is nothing new for Russia. When I was studying in St Petersburg in 2006-7, neo-Nazi groups attacked, and in one case killed, a student from an ethnic minority background. At that time, violent racism was a problem in Russia, and Africans and Asians genuinely feared for their lives. Now, seeing videos of angry, bullish men in their black tops branded with the letter Z, like others I am sadly reminded of the Nazi swastika. Putin's imperialist mission in Ukraine is being compared to Hitler's Second World War ambitions, and it's hard to argue against this.

I only wish I had seen the light earlier. Since my decision to abandon Russian media, cease writing for website InfoBrics, and oppose the war in Ukraine, I have been at the receiving end of a barrage of condemnation on Twitter. One ex-colleague said I had "lost it", another declared he would "turn his back on me and walk away in disgust". Many suggested I had somehow been forced into adopting the British stance.

This is not the case. No one has twisted my arm in this way: my opposition to the war in Ukraine is rooted in the basic human values and principles most of us hold dear. It is also not the first time I have had doubts about the Russian position on certain events. The Skripal poisoning of 2017 caused me to think twice about the Russian version of events - yet there seemed to me at the time discrepancies in the British story that still left room for doubt, as journalist Mary Dejevsky has also noted.

The Navalny poisoning in 2020 did force me to question the official Kremlin narrative. After this, I decided I would cease writing for Russian media as soon as it was financially viable. In particular I disliked Putin's arrogant and rather sinister response to questions about Navalny, that "they could have killed him if they wanted to", and I found it quite odd that he never had the guts to utter Navalny's name but would refer to him only as "the Berlin patient". In this way, the Russian president confirmed the widely held view that he is afraid of Navalny.

Around this time I began watching TV Rain, the only Russian channel that gave open, honest coverage of the story.

Tragically, such independent media in Russia is now consigned to the past. Veteran opposition radio station Echo Moskvi has been replaced by Sputnik on the Moscow airwaves. I now send friends in Russia reports on the Ukraine crisis they don't have access to there - such as those that include the confessions of Russian soldiers, or images of war crimes. One wrote to me saying she had been crying about the war, was looking to emigrate, and asked me to keep sending her news from British sources.

I feel it's the least I can do in the current situation, and part of me naturally regrets that I defended Putin and his policies for so long, given this brutal, unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation.

Perhaps I was incredibly naive, but I can only say that I believed what I was doing was right, and that Russia at that time was the only country standing up to US imperialism and catastrophic western regime-change operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere. Perversely, Russia is now waging its own regime-change operation, in the "western fashion", as one Sky News commentator said this week. How things have changed.

And I've changed also. For now, I don't trust a word that comes out of the Kremlin, regardless of whether it is true or not. I will always love Russia and its long-suffering, warm and generous people, but the fact is, they are worthy of a much, much better government. All the economic and social progress made in the last 20 years is being eroded in front of our eyes. The cycle of tragedy for the Russian people has to be broken - we're now living in the 21st century, in the globalised world, and they deserve a stable, democratic government.

I don't think Russia is a special case, as some would have us believe; that only a strong leader can rule it. Strength is what is being demonstrated right now by Volodymyr Zelensky and his people - not by Putin and his entourage, who don't even have the courage to use the word "war". I may have defended Russia on the front lines of the information war, but I can no longer support the lies and barefaced aggression exhibited now by the Russian state. Make no mistake - 'Putin's propaganda girl' has quit.

Johanna Ross is a freelance writer on Russia

**Load-Date:** March 23, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine war – live: Putin’s forces ‘dealt a good kick’ after first UK Challenger 2 tank destroyed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:693M-R9C1-DY4H-K186-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:36

**Length:** 9634 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Alexander Butler

**Highlight:** British Challenger 2 tank was initially immobilised by a mine, defence sources claim

**Body**

The Ukrainian military says Russian forces have been dealt a “good kick” as it claimed advances along several of the war’s frontlines.

“We are pressing our offensive in the [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) sector and our defenders are advancing confidently metre by metre, namely [in] Klishchivka,” Ilya Yevlash, the spokesperson for Ukrainian troops in the east, told national television.

Russian forces halted their advance after being served a “good kick” near the village of Novoyehorivka, he said, referring to a village on heights south of Bakhmut that is seen as critical to recapturing the city.

It comes after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces destroyed a British Challenger 2 tank for the first time since they were deployed to the battlefield in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

A video circulating online appears to show the burning wreck of the tank. It is unclear what caused the explosion.

Britain initially supplied 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine and then doubled that number to 28.

Key Points

Russian forces ‘blow up first British Challenger 2 tank’ in Ukraine Ukraine reports frontline success, says Russians dealt a ‘good kick' Russian general ‘Sergei Surovikin pictured alive’ Cubans trafficked to fight for Russia in Ukraine, says government Kim to meet Putin as Russia seeks closer military ties with North Korea

Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help

The North Korean leader is said to be planning a possible visit to see the Russian president later this month to discuss weapons for Moscow’s war machine. Given the isolation both men face it is clear they need each other, writes Chris Stevenson:

[*Analysis: Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-kim-jong-un-russia-north-korea-ukraine-b2405304.html)

UK says it will declare Russia’s Wagner mercenary group a banned terrorist organisation

The UK announced Wednesday it will declare Russia‘s Wagner mercenary group a banned terrorist organisation, saying it remains a threat to global security even after the death of leader Yevgeny Prigozhin.

The government said an order will be introduced in Parliament to proscribe the group under the Terrorism Act.

The designation, once approved by lawmakers, will bar membership in or support for Wagner, which has played a major fighting role during Russia‘s invasion of Ukraine. It also has operated in Syria and several African nations.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman said Wagner “has been involved in looting, torture and barbarous murders. Its operations in Ukraine, the Middle East and Africa are a threat to global security.”

“They are terrorists, plain and simple -and this proscription order makes that clear in UK law,” she said.

Russia now claims it ‘tactically’ withdrew from Ukraine’s Robotyne, official says

A Russian-appointed official has claimed that Moscow’s forces “tactically abandoned” the strategic Ukrainian village of Robotyne, more than a week after Kyiv announced its recapture.

The Russian army had withdrawn for tactical reasons, said Yevgeny Balitsky, the top Moscow-installed official in the Zaporizhzhia region.

“The Russian army abandoned – tactically abandoned – this settlement because staying on a bare surface when there is no way to completely dig in... doesn’t generally make sense. Therefore the Russian army moved off into the hills,” news outlet RBC quoted him as saying.

Russia has not previously acknowledged the loss of Robotyne, the recapture of which was announced by Ukraine last week.

Challenger 2 tank likely immobilised by mine, claims defence source

Defence sources believe the British Challenger 2 tank destroyed in Ukraine was initially immobilised by a mine.

The tank hit a mine which sparked a fire in the rear fuel tank, a Western defence source told the BBC.

Russia has heavily mined the territory it has captured in Ukraine, as well as deploying anti-tank “dragon’s teeth” concrete obstacles, since Ukraine’s Western allies started supplying it with top-tier tanks including the Challenger 2 and Germany’s Leopard.

Four members of the Ukrainian military were evacuated from the tank to safety. But the empty immobilised tank was then targeted by a Russian Lancet loitering drone which completely destroyed it, the defence source said.

While the exact location and time of the tank’s destruction is not known, it is the first verified sighting of a Challenger 2 on the battlefield since they were first supplied by Britain.

UK to declare Wagner Group a terrorist organisation

Russian mercenary group [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) will be declared a [*terrorist organisation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/terrorist-organisation) and a draft order against the private militia will be laid in parliament on Wednesday, the [*Home Office*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/home-office) said.

Once cleared, the order will make it illegal to be a member of the group or to support it.

The group, formerly led by now-dead Yevgeny Prigozhin, is known to carry out Russia’s dirty work in [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) and [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) , and has also handed [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) Russia’s biggest victory of capturing Bakhmut against Ukraine in the continuing invasion.

Assets belonging to Wagner, primarily consisting of contractors and prison convicts, will be declared as terrorist property and will be seized after the draft order is cleared. It will also render certain proscription offences punishable by up to 14 years in jail.

[*UK to declare Wagner Group a terrorist organisation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-wagner-terrorist-organisation-b2405584.html)

Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help

As Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine has isolated him on the international stage – and Western sanctions have hit Russia’s economy – the president has been casting around for ways to alleviate the pressure and feed his war machine.

First it was China and President Xi Jinping. Mr Putin has consistently touted his good relationship with Mr Xi and has used that to get an economic lifeline from Beijing. In June, Chinese customs data showed that trade between the two nations was $93.8bn (£74.7bn) from January to May 2023, up 40.7 per cent when compared to the same period last year.

The data also showed that China’s exports to Russia were $43bn (£34bn) from January to May 2023, up 75.6 per cent on the same period the previous year. A report from the Financial Times this week also said that China’s banks are extending billions of dollars of loans to Russian banks.

The bromance is alive and well. But it is clear that Vladimir Putin needs Xi Jingping more than he needs Mr Putin.

Mr Kim would happily take the kind of bromance that Mr Putin believes he has with Mr Xi. The pair are said to have exchanged letters. In June, Mr Kim sent a message to Mr Putin marking Russia’s national day, where he said he would “hold hands” with the Russian leader and that the nation had the full support of North Korea’s people. The Kremlin said last week that Moscow intends to deepen its “mutually respectful relations” with Pyongyang.

Chris Stevenson writes:

[*Analysis: Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-kim-jong-un-russia-north-korea-ukraine-b2405304.html)

Ukraine reports frontline success, says Russians dealt a ‘good kick'

Ukraine’s military confirmed advances along the frontlines yesterday as the Russian side described “tension” in the southern region of the war-hit nation in an update yesterday evening.

“We are pressing our offensive in the Bakhmut sector and our defenders are advancing confidently metre by metre, namely Klishchivka,” Ilya Yevlash, spokesperson for Ukrainian troops in the east, told national television.

He was referring to a village located on heights south of Bakhmut, seen as critical to recapturing the city.

Russian forces had been dealt “a good kick” near the village of Novoyehorivka which halted their advance, he said.

Almost three months after Ukraine began its counteroffensive to repel Russian forces from its territory, Kyiv has reclaimed several settlements.

Several villages in a southward drive towards the Sea of Azov have been recaptured and Ukraine’s military says it is regaining ground near the eastern city of Bakhmut, seized by Russia in May after months of battles.

The spokesperson said Ukrainian troops had withstood an onslaught further north near Lyman, a town they retook last year.

Saudi Arabia, Russia plan to extend 1.3 million barrel a day oil cut through the end of the year

[*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) and [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) agreed Tuesday to extend their voluntary oil production cuts through the end of this year, trimming 1.3 million barrels of crude out of the global market and boosting energy prices.

The dual announcements from Riyadh and [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) pushed benchmark Brent crude above $90 a barrel in trading Tuesday afternoon, a price unseen in the market since November.

The countries’ moves likely will increase the cost for motorists at gasoline pumps and put new pressure on Saudi Arabia’s relationship with the United States. President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) last year warned the kingdom there would be unspecified “consequences” for partnering with Russia on cuts as Moscow wages war on Ukraine.

More here:

[*Saudi Arabia, Russia plan to extend 1.3 million barrel a day oil cut through the end of the year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/saudi-arabia-ap-moscow-russia-joe-biden-b2405255.html)

ICYMI: Video shows ‘first British Challenger 2 tank destroyed’ in Ukraine

A battlefield video circulating online appears to show the destruction of a [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) Challenger 2 tank in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The burning [*wreck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wreck) of the military vehicle is seen in footage from the [*frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frontline) and would be the first time one of the [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) has been destroyed in combat.

In the video, a vehicle with a cracked windscreen drives past as black smoke is seen rising from the roadside, although it is unclear what caused the explosion.

Britain initially supplied 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine and then doubled that number to 28.

Watch:

[*Video shows ‘first British Challenger 2 tank destroyed’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-news-russia-tanks-weapons-b2405122.html)

ICYMI: Kim Jong-un to hold weapons talks with Putin after ‘travelling to Russia in armoured train’

Kim [*Jong-un*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kim-jong-un-0) is said to be plannning to visit [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) this month to meet [*Vladimir Putin,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) as the Russian president seeks weapons to support his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

[*North Korea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-korea) ’s leader would travel from [*Pyongyang*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pyongyang) , probably by armoured train, to Vladivostok on the Pacific Coast of Russia, where he would meet Mr Putin, reported The New York Times.

It is believed that while in Vladivostok, a port city not far from North Korea, the two leaders would discuss Kim sending Russia artillery shells and anti-tank missiles in exchange for [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ‘s advanced technology for satellites and nuclear-powered submarines, according to US officials.

More here:

[*Kim Jong-un to hold weapons talks with Putin after ‘travelling in armoured train’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/east-asia/kim-jong-un-putin-meeting-russia-b2404876.html)

How many casualties has Russia suffered in Ukraine?

Establishing accurate data on the number of military casualties sustained since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) began on 24 February 2022 is difficult for two reasons. The severity of the fighting on the ground and the fact that both sides are inclined to keep their cards close to their chests to avoid damaging morale – especially at a time when the war is entering a pivotal new stage.

The [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) , in particular, is unlikely to admit to high fatality rates among its troops because to do so would amount to a confession that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s spurious war to “de-Nazify” Russia’s neighbour state is not going according to plan and, in fact, represents a monumental miscalculation on the part of its leader, who is already under pressure at home over the attempted uprising by [*Wagner Group*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner-group) mercenaries.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*How many casualties has Russia suffered in Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-losses-update-b2391513.html)

Drone warfare map reveals how Ukraine is striking Russia hundreds of miles from the frontline

As [*drone strikes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/drone-strikes) continue to rain down on Russian soil, [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s bloody war has reached his own doorstep.

The strikes are now daily and on Tuesday the Russian defence ministry said its air defence systems destroyed two drones over the Kaluga and Tver regions, which border the [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) region, as well as one closer to the capital, over the Istra district.

Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that the drones “were trying to carry out an attack on Moscow“ and that a consumer services facility was damaged in the Istra district, which is located some 65 km (40 miles) northwest of the Kremlin.

Read more:

[*Drone map reveals how Ukraine is striking Russia hundreds of miles from the frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-drone-strikes-map-latest-b2404991.html)

ICYMI: Russia says southeast Ukraine is now the main focus of fighting in the war

The [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region of southeast Ukraine has become the most recent hot spot for battles in the 18-month war, Russian Defense Minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) said Tuesday, as Kyiv’s forces press ahead with their counteroffensive.

Shoigu told Russian military officers that Ukraine has brought up reserve brigades there that were trained by Kyiv’s Western allies. He offered no evidence for his claim, which could not be independently verified.

Fighting in the southeast could be one of the keys to the war. If Russian defenses there collapse, Ukrainian forces could push southward toward the coast and potentially split Russian forces into two.

More here:

[*Russia says southeast Ukraine is now the main focus of fighting in the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-sergei-shoigu-kyiv-zaporizhzhia-b2405259.html)

ICYMI: British Challenger 2 tank ‘destroyed in Ukraine’ – defence source

A [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) tank given to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been destroyed during fighting against invading Russian forces, the PA news agency has been told.

A defence source said it was likely the first time a [*Challenger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/challenger) 2 had been disabled by enemy action.

The last time one of the heavily-armoured battle vehicles had been destroyed is thought to have been during friendly fire in Iraq in 2003.

Read more:

[*British Challenger 2 tank ‘destroyed in Ukraine’ – defence source*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-challenger-volodymyr-zelensky-british-ministry-of-defence-b2405366.html)

Aid group official warns the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine risks becoming “normalised”

A major aid group is concerned that there is not enough international attention given to Ukraine and is bracing for fewer donations used to finance operations in the battle-scarred country, its president warned on Tuesday.

The head of the [*International Rescue Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-rescue-committee) , [*David Miliband*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-miliband) said, his central concern is that the 19-month war and the resulting humanitarian crisis caused by Russia’s invasion and continued attacks on civilian infrastructure are becoming “normalised” by the international community while the needs brought about by the war show no signs of diminishing, he said.

“We know that the 2022 figures for humanitarian aid in Ukraine are not going to be repeated,” he told the Associated Press. Miliband said they don’t expect the donations received from [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) and North America last year to be matched.

Read more:

[*Aid group official warns the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine risks becoming "normalized"*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-david-miliband-international-rescue-committee-kyiv-b2405421.html)

Woman and two children killed in Yorkshire crash identified as Ukrainian family

A woman and two children killed in a crash have been identified as three members of a Ukrainian family living in North Yorkshire.

Daria Bartienieva, 35, her son, Ihor Bartienieva, six, and stepdaughter, Anastasiia Bartienieva 15, were killed in a collision involving two cars and a double decker bus on the A61 on Sunday.

Police say Ms Bartienieva and the two children were travelling together in a silver Vauxhall Meriva which was involved in a crash with a bus and a blue Toyota Aygo at about 2.20pm.

The crash happened between South Stainley and Ripley, near Ripon, the North Yorkshire force said.

The two cars were travelling south towards Ripley and the bus was going in the opposite direction.

On Tuesday North Yorkshire Police said the three family members were from Ukraine and living in Ripon.

A force spokesperson previously said: “Sadly, all three occupants of the Vauxhall Meriva...died following the collision.

“The driver of the bus was taken to hospital with leg injuries ... and the two people in the Toyota were not injured.”

The road was closed for emergency services and investigators to attend the scene until 11.30pm.

Romanian villager fears risk of drone straying from across Ukrainian border

Fishing on the Romanian shore of the Danube on Tuesday, beekeeper Gabi Popescu could see barges loading grain in the Ukrainian river port of Izmail, a day after Russia launched its third overnight strike against port infrastructure.

The attack rattled windows in the Romanian border village of Plauru across the river and Popescu’s trailer shook.

“I counted five explosions, three very powerful ones,” said Popescu, who has been bringing his beehives to Plauru from central Romania for six years.

Ukraine said Russian drones had detonated on the territory of NATO member Romania, a rare report of stray weapons from the war hitting a neighbouring member of the Western military alliance.

Romania strongly denied it had been hit, but the attacks on Ukraine‘s river ports, just hundreds of metres from the Romanian border, have increased security risks for NATO which has a collective defence commitment.

“I can tell you no piece, no drone and no part of a device landed in Romania,” President Klaus Iohannis told reporters on Tuesday. “We have total control over our national space...

“But, yes, we are concerned, because these attacks are taking place very close to the Romanian border. I was ... told today there were verified attacks 800 metres from our border, so very, very close.”

Russia intercepts Ukrainian drone over Belgorod region -defence ministry

Russian air defences intercepted a Ukrainian drone over the southern region of Belgorod on Tuesday, the Defence Ministry said on Telegram.

Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help

As [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ‘s invasion of Ukraine has isolated him on the international stage – and Western sanctions have hit [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s economy – the president has been casting around for ways to alleviate the pressure and feed his war machine.

First it was [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) and President [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping). Putin has consistently touted his good relationship with Xi and has used that to get an economic lifeline from Beijing. In June, Chinese customs data showed that trade between the two nations was $93.8 billion (£74.7bn) from January to May 2023, up 40.7 per cent when compared to the same period in 2022 (Russia’s invasion of Ukraine began in late February 2022).

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Analysis: Why Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un are desperate for each other’s help*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-kim-jong-un-russia-north-korea-ukraine-b2405304.html)

North Korea will 'pay a price' for giving weapons to Russia -U.S. national security adviser

North Korea will “pay a price” for providing weapons to Russia for use in Ukraine, U.S. national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Tuesday.

The three reasons Putin will be terrified of Ukraine’s counteroffensive win

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s counter-offensive breakthrough will come as a “shock” to Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , an expert has said.

Mark Galeotti, professor of Slavonic studies at UCL, said Russians had become “complacent” and believed their [*defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/defence) to be more effective than Kyiv’s progress would suggest.

It comes after Ukrainian generals claimed troops had breached Russia’s first line near [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) and were gathering momentum in an offensive many observers claimed had failed.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*The three reasons Putin will be terrified of Ukraine’s counteroffensive win*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-b2404643.html)

The US sent cluster munitions to Ukraine but activists still seek to bolster a treaty banning them

Backers of an international agreement that bans cluster munitions, which harm and kill many more civilians than combatants, are striving to prevent erosion in support for the deal after what one leading human rights group calls an “unconscionable” U.S. decision to ship such weapons to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for its fight against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Advocacy groups in the Cluster Munitions Coalition released their latest annual report on Tuesday, ahead of a meeting next week of envoys from the 112 countries that have acceded to or ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, which prohibits the explosives and calls for clearing areas where they litter the ground — often during or after conflicts.

A further 12 countries have signed the convention. The United States and Russia are not among them.

Jamey Keaten reports:

[*The US sent cluster munitions to Ukraine but activists still seek to bolster a treaty banning them*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-ukraine-geneva-kyiv-b2404976.html)

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

ICYMI: Cluster munition deaths in Ukraine pass Syria, fueling rise in a weapon the world has tried to ban

More than 300 people were killed and over 600 wounded by cluster munitions in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in 2022, according to an international watchdog, surpassing Syria as the country with the highest number of casualties from the controversial weapons for the first time in a decade.

Russia’s widespread use of the bombs, which open in the air and release scores of smaller bomblets or submunitions as they are called, in its invasion of Ukraine — and, to a lesser extent, their use by Ukrainian forces — helped make 2022 the deadliest year on record globally, according to the annual report released Tuesday by the Cluster Munition Coalition, a network of non-governmental organizations advocating for a ban of the weapons.

The deadliest attack in Ukraine, according to the country’s prosecutor general’s office, was a bombing on a railway station in the town of Kramatorsk that killed 53 people and wounded 135.

More here:

[*Cluster munition deaths in Ukraine pass Syria, fueling rise in a weapon the world has tried to ban*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/syria-ap-ukraine-united-states-yemen-b2404964.html)

Ukraine lawmakers back anti-graft disclosure rule, but with loophole

Ukrainian lawmakers voted on Tuesday to restore a requirement that officials declare their assets, a measure sought by the International Monetary Fund, but included a loophole critics say dampens its effect.

The mandatory disclosures were introduced in 2016 but were made optional and restricted from public view after Russia’s full-scale invasion last year because they were considered a security risk.

The IMF had singled out the return of the requirement as one of several benchmarks for paying out part of a $15.6 billion assistance package.

Fighting graft is also a requirement for Ukrainian accession to the European Union and President Volodymyr Zelensky’s government has declared it a priority alongside the war effort.

Parliament approved a version of the measure requiring officials to declare their assets, lawmaker Yaroslav Zheleznyak said, but keeping the disclosures sealed off from the public for another year.

Anti-graft campaigners say keeping the registry closed defeats the primary purpose of the declarations, a key pro-transparency reform introduced after the 2014 Maidan revolution.

“The hidden fortunes of deputies and officials will destroy the trust of Ukrainians. Honest officials have nothing to hide,” the Anti-Corruption Action Centre, a leading Ukrainian NGO, said in a statement.

“The desire to hide one’s property from the public only indicates a desire to steal public money.”

The head of Zelensky’s own party called the bill “an incredible disappointment”. It now goes to the president for approval, and supporters of the reform have urged him to veto it.

Russia says southeast Ukraine is now the main focus of fighting in the war

The [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region of southeast Ukraine has become the most recent hot spot for battles in the 18-month war, Russian Defense Minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) said Tuesday, as Kyiv’s forces press ahead with their counteroffensive.

Shoigu told Russian military officers that Ukraine has brought up reserve brigades there that were trained by Kyiv’s Western allies. He offered no evidence for his claim, which could not be independently verified.

Fighting in the southeast could be one of the keys to the war. If Russian defenses there collapse, Ukrainian forces could push southward toward the coast and potentially split Russian forces into two.

Read more:

[*Russia says southeast Ukraine is now the main focus of fighting in the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-sergei-shoigu-kyiv-zaporizhzhia-b2405259.html)

Hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** to be housed at Irish festival site for six weeks

Tents at the site of an Irish music festival are to be used to house hundreds of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** for the next six weeks, a junior minister has said.

Over the weekend, 70,000 revellers attended Electric Picnic at Stradbally, Co Laois -but its tents are now to be used to help with a shortage in emergency beds.

The Department of Integration said that due to a drop-off in rooms in the tourism sector and as student accommodation became unavailable ahead of the academic year, it was expected that tents “will be the primary source of accommodation” for new arrivals from Ukraine from this week.

The return to the use of tents comes after the Minister for Children and Integration said in November that Ireland would stop using tents to house refugees.

Military-grade tents at the Gormanston army camp in Co Meath and other locations have been used to house refugees temporarily as more permanent accommodation is sourced.

As of June, 84,613 people have fled to Ireland from the Russian invasion of Ukraine which began in February last year.

The government has sought to address this by procuring beds in hotels and B&Bs, by looking to refurbish unused public buildings, and using rooms pledged by members of the public for a limited time.

Minister of State Ossian Smyth said that 750 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** were to be moved onto the festival site this week amid what he called a “short-term” squeeze on accommodation options.

Mr Smyth, who has responsibility for public procurement, e-government and the circular economy, has said he is confident other accommodation will be found in six weeks’ time.

“We’ve been using tents in Tullamore in a military facility up to now as a last resort, and in the last four months we’ve had 10,000 Ukrainians arrive in the country,” he told RTE’s Morning Ireland.

“So in other words, the rates they’re arriving has increased.

“We’re now faced with a real short-term difficulty for the next few weeks, and the Government has contracted to take over the tents that were at the Electric Picnic over the weekend.

“And I think that today or tomorrow, up to 750 Ukrainians will be moving into those tents but that’s obviously a very short-term facility...six weeks I would expect.”

Cuba uncovers human trafficking of Cubans to fight for Russia in Ukraine

Cuba has uncovered a human trafficking ring that coerced its citizens to fight for Russia in the war in Ukraine, its foreign ministry said, adding that Cuban authorities were working to “neutralize and dismantle” the network.

The statement from Cuba’s foreign ministry late on Monday gave few details, but noted the trafficking ring was operating both within the Caribbean island nation, thousands of miles from Moscow, and in Russia.

“The Ministry of the Interior... is working on the neutralization and dismantling of a human trafficking network that operates from Russia to incorporate Cuban citizens living there, and even some from Cuba, into the military forces participating in war operations in Ukraine,” the Cuban government statement said.

Russia’s defence ministry did not immediately respond to a Reuters request for comment.

Russia last year announced a plan to boost the size of its armed forces by more than 30% to 1.5 million combat personnel, a lofty goal made harder by its heavy but undisclosed casualties in the war.

In late May, a Russia newspaper in Ryazan city reported that several Cuban citizens had signed contracts with Russia’s armed forces and had been shipped to Ukraine in return for Russian citizenship.

It was not immediately clear if the Cuban foreign ministry statement was associated with the Ryazan report.

Russia, which has strong political ties with communist-run Cuba, has long been an important destination for Cuban migrants seeking to escape economic stagnation at home.

The defense ministers of Cuba and Russia earlier this year discussed the development of joint “technical military” projects at a meeting in Moscow. But the administration of Cuban president Miguel Diaz-Canel denies any involvement in the Ukraine conflict.

“Cuba is not part of the war in Ukraine,” the foreign ministry said late on Monday. “(Cuba) is acting and will act energetically against anyone... who participates in any form of human trafficking for the purpose of recruitment of Cuban citizens as mercenaries to use arms against any country.”

Cuba said it had already begun prosecuting cases in which its citizens had been coerced into fighting in Ukraine.

“Attempts of this nature have been neutralized and criminal proceedings have been initiated against people involved in these activities,” the statement read.

ICYMI: Dodging a constant assault of Russian missiles – the war weary keep fighting in Ukraine’s blood-soaked east

The missile aimed at the mayor’s office took an estimated 64 seconds to fly 55 miles and detonate in shrapnel and flames after being fired by Russian forces.

Thankfully for Oleksandr Goncharenko, the mayor of Kramatorsk – near the frontline in east [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) – it missed the target by 200 metres, hitting a garden square.

There is plenty of pride in the cities around the frontline in managing to keep Putin’s forces at bay, writes Kim Sengupta from Druzhkivka. But it has come at the cost of crushing loss:

[*Dodging Russian missiles, the war weary keep fighting in Ukraine’s blood-soaked east*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-missiles-putin-b2403754.html)

Drone warfare map reveals how Ukraine is striking Russia hundreds of miles from the frontline

As [*drone strikes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/drone-strikes) continue to rain down on Russian soil, [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s bloody war has reached his own doorstep.

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Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said that the drones “were trying to carry out an attack on Moscow“ and that a consumer services facility was damaged in the Istra district, which is located some 65 km (40 miles) northwest of the Kremlin.

Maryam Zakir-Hussain has more:

[*Drone map reveals how Ukraine is striking Russia hundreds of miles from the frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-drone-strikes-map-latest-b2404991.html)

The US sent cluster munitions to Ukraine but activists still seek to bolster a treaty banning them

Backers of an international agreement that bans cluster munitions, which harm and kill many more civilians than combatants, are striving to prevent erosion in support for the deal after what one leading human rights group calls an “unconscionable” U.S. decision to ship such weapons to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for its fight against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

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A further 12 countries have signed the convention. The United States and Russia are not among them.

Read more:

[*The US sent cluster munitions to Ukraine but activists still seek to bolster a treaty banning them*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-ukraine-geneva-kyiv-b2404976.html)

Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman: Ukraine uses Australian drones to attack Russia's territory

Russia said on Tuesday that Ukraine had used Australian drones to attack targets on Russian territory and that Australia was increasingly being drawn into the conflict.

“As it turns out, Australian drones are actually used to strike targets in Russia,” Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

She was responding to a question about a report in the Sydney Morning Herald last week that Ukrainian had used the Australian drones to attack an airfield in the Russian city of Kursk.

Zakharova accused the Australian government of “enthusiastically contributing to the anti-Russian campaign directed from Washington” while trying to hide from public opinion “the unenviable circumstances indicating that Australia is increasingly being drawn into the conflict in Ukraine“.

ICYMI: Asylum applications in the European Union continue to rise after a major hike last year

Asylum applications in the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) continued to rise in the first half of 2023 following a major hike last year, pressuring limited hosting capacities and moving the issue up the political agenda in many nations.

The European Union Agency for Asylum said applications in the 27-nation bloc plus [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) and [*Norway*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/norway) rose 28% in the first half of the year compared to the same period last year. In all of 2022, applications increased 53%.

“Based on current trends, applications could exceed 1 million by the end of 2023” in the region of about 460 million people, the agency said in a statement.

Raf Casert has more:

[*Asylum applications in the European Union continue to rise after a major hike last year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-european-union-brussels-switzerland-norway-b2404990.html)

Kim Jong Un and Putin may meet. What do North Korea and Russia need from each other?

[*North Korean*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-korea) leader [*Kim Jong Un*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kim-jong-un) may travel to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) for a summit with President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , a U.S. official said, in a trip that would underscore deepening cooperation as the two isolated leaders are locked in separate confrontations with the U.S.

U.S. officials also said that Russia is seeking to buy ammunition from North Korea to refill reserves drained by its war in Ukraine. In return, experts said, North Korea will likely want food and energy shipments and transfers of sophisticated weapons technologies.

A meeting with Putin would be Kim’s first summit with a foreign leader since North Korea closed its borders in January 2020. They met for the first time in April 2019, two months after Kim’s high-stakes nuclear diplomacy with then-U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed.

Read more:

[*Kim Jong Un and Putin may meet. What do North Korea and Russia need from each other?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kim-jong-un-ap-north-korea-russia-vladimir-putin-b2405116.html)

Russian forces destroy first British-supplied Challenger 2 tank in Ukraine, official says

Russian forces fighting in southern Ukraine have destroyed a British-supplied Challenger 2 tank for the first time, a Russian-backed official said on Tuesday, releasing what he said was a video of its smouldering wreckage.

Ukraine in March thanked Britain for what it said were the “fantastic machines” after London sent Kyiv 14 of its Challenger 2 main battle tanks ahead of a Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Vladimir Rogov, a Russian-installed official in part of the southern Zaporizhzhia region which is under Moscow’s control, said on Telegram that a Challenger 2 had been set alight in fighting near the southeastern village of Robotyne.

He said the tank belonged to the Ukrainian army’s 82nd brigade and was meant to have reached Crimea, which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014, but had instead been destroyed on what he said was the first line of Russian defence.

A video Rogov posted on Telegram showed what look like a tank on fire by a roadside with thick grey smoke rising from it.

Reuters could not immediately confirm Rogov’s assertion.

Russia has previously announced that its forces have destroyed German-made Leopard 2 battle tanks and U.S. fighting vehicles along with other hardware supplied to Ukraine by countries such as France and Denmark.

Kremlin says 'nothing to say' on possible visit by North Korea's Kim

The Kremlin said on Tuesday it had “nothing to say” about claims by U.S. officials that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un planned to travel to Russia this month to meet President Vladimir Putin and discuss supplying Moscow with weapons for Ukraine.

U.S. National Security Council spokesperson Adrienne Watson said on Monday that arms negotiations between Russia and the North Korea are actively advancing.

“We have information that Kim Jong Un expects these discussions to continue, to include leader-level diplomatic engagement in Russia,” she said in a statement.

Her comments came after the New York Times cited unnamed U.S. and allied officials who said Kim plans to travel to Russia as soon as next week to meet Putin.

Asked if he could confirm the talks, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: “No, I can’t. There’s nothing to say.”

German arms maker Diehl to ramp up production of IRIS-T air defence system

German arms maker Diehl Defence aims to significantly ramp up the production of its IRIS-T air defence system to satisfy growing demand due to Russia’s war on Ukraine, Chief Program Officer Harald Buschek said on Tuesday.

In 2025, the privately owned company plans to build at least eight systems, up from three to four systems this year, he told reporters at an air base in Todendorf in northern Germany.

He added that missile production was being tripled this year and would be further doubled next year, with an expected output of some 400 to 500 missiles from 2024.

Germany so far has supplied two IRIS-T units to Ukraine, where they are mainly used to guard Kyiv against Russian missile attacks.

Berlin has pledged to supply another six IRIS-T units to Kyiv, and expects to take delivery of the first of six systems for its own air force in October 2024.

Buschek said Ukraine had shot down more than 110 targets, most of these cruise missiles such as the Kalibr, with a hit rate of almost 100%.

The system successfully countered an attack on Kyiv by a swarm of 13 Russian cruise missiles at the start of the year, intercepting all missiles, Buschek said.

In the small town of Todendorf, Berlin will host the training of partner nations on the modern IRIS-T air defence system, one of the most coveted weapons that Kyiv has received from the West.

Boasting a range of some 40 kilometres (25 miles) and a 360 degree view, the IRIS-T SLM system has been used to shoot down cruise missiles that Moscow has attacked power stations with, and aircraft including Iranian-made Shahed drones.

Before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, only a few Western nations had purchased the system, reflecting a common trend after the Cold War to scale down air defences as the main threat from Russia was deemed to have gone.

Now, NATO allies are scrambling to order IRIS-T for their own militaries, with several countries on NATO’s eastern flank such as Estonia and Latvia expected to sign contracts in the coming weeks.

Kremlin dismisses Armenian suggestion that Russia is quitting South Caucasus

The Kremlin on Tuesday rejected a suggestion by Armenia’s prime minister that Russia had failed to protect Armenia in its standoff with neighbouring Azerbaijan and was winding down its role in the wider South Caucasus.

In an interview with the Italian paper La Repubblica published on Sunday, Nikol Pashinyan accused Russia of failing to ensure Armenia’s security against what he said was aggression from Azerbaijan over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region.

Yerevan has repeatedly complained that Russian peacekeepers have for nine months allowed Azerbaijanis to blockade the “Lachin corridor”, the only road linking Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia, causing shortages of food, medicines and other essentials.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday that Russia, which has a military base in Armenia and has sent peacekeepers to uphold a ceasefire deal, would continue to be a “guarantor of security” in the region.

Pashinyan had said Armenia felt Russia was pulling back from the South Caucasus, which includes Azerbaijan and Georgia. He also suggested that Moscow was unable to meet all Armenia’s security needs because of its own requirements for the war in Ukraine.

“We cannot agree with these [Pashinyan’s] theses,” Peskov said. “Russia is an absolutely integral part of this region...Russia plays a consistent, very important role in stabilising the situation in this region ... and we will continue to play this role.”

North Korean leader Kim's trips abroad by train and private jet

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un is expected to visit Russia’s far-eastern port city of Vladivostok by armoured train this month to meet President Vladimir Putin, possibly to discuss supplying Russia with weapons for its war with Ukraine.

It is likely to take almost a full day to travel more than 1,000 km (600 miles) to Vladivostok across the border with Russia, taking account of the North’s sometimes archaic rail network.

The following are Kim Jong Un’s foreign visits since taking power in 2011:

\*25-28 March 2018: Making his first foreign trip as leader, Kim visits China, the North’s main political ally and economic benefactor. He travels to Beijing by a special train and holds a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

\*27 April 2018: Kim steps across the inter-Korea border in the Panmunjom truce village for a summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. It is the first time a North Korean leader has set foot in the South, Kim’s first summit with a South Korean leader and the third ever by a North Korean leader.

\*7-8 May 2018: Kim flies his personal Ilyushin jet to the northeastern Chinese city of Dalian and holds a summit with Xi. The two discuss deepening ties between the traditional allies. The visit comes amid expectations of Kim’s summit with U.S. President Donald Trump.

\*10-12 June 2018: Kim takes an American-made Boeing 747 operated by Air China on a direct flight from Pyongyang to Singapore for the first summit between North Korea and the United States.

\*19-20 June 2018: Kim visits China on his Ilyushin jet and discusses the denuclearisation of North Korea with Xi in Beijing. Accompanied by senior economic aides, Kim tours Chinese industrial facilities and an agricultural research centre.

\*7-10 January 2019: Kim visits China for a fourth time, travelling to Beijing by train amid expectations of a second summit with Trump.

\*26-28 February 2019: Kim visits the Vietnamese capital of Hanoi for a second summit with Trump. He takes the train from Pyongyang through China over three days to Vietnam. After two days of meetings, the talks between Kim and Trump collapse over disagreement on lifting sanctions imposed on the North and how to dismantle its nuclear programme.

\*24 April 2019: Kim visits Vladivostok for his first summit with Putin. Kim takes the train for the nearly day-long trip, crossing the Tumen River border into Russia.

\*30 June 2019: Kim steps across the inter-Korean border for talks with Trump.

\*September 2023: Kim is expected to visit Vladivostok, again by train, for a summit with Putin, which would be his first trip abroad in more than four years.

One killed by shelling in Russia's Belgorod region -governor

One person was killed and one wounded as result of shelling by Ukrainian forces on Tuesday in Russia’s Belgorod region which borders Ukraine, local governor Vyacheslav Gladkov wrote in the Telegram messaging app.

Belgorod has come under frequent cross-border fire in the course of the 18-month war. Ukraine typically does not comment on attacks inside Russia.

Ukrainian parliament paves way for Rustem Umerov as next defence minister

The Ukrainian parliament approved the dismissal of Rustem Umerov as the Head of the State Property Fund, a lawmaker said, paving a way for his likely appointment as defence minister.

Umerov’s removal was supported by a majority of members of the Verkhovna Rada, deputy Yaroslav Zheleznyak said on the Telegram messaging app after a vote.

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday he was dismissing Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov and proposed Umerov, a Crimean Tatar and ex-lawmaker, to replace him.

Russia's foreign minister Lavrov to visit Bangladesh ahead of G20 meeting

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov will be on a two-day visit to Dhaka ahead of the G20 meeting in New Delhi, government officials said, a move seen as part of Moscow’s efforts to strengthen bilateral ties with the South Asian country.

Lavrov will hold a meeting with Bangladesh’s Foreign Minister Abdul Momen on Sept. 7 and call on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina the next day before leaving for the G20 conference in New Delhi with a delegation, government officials said.

“All bilateral issues including (payments for) the nuclear power plant, trade, and energy will be discussed during the visit,Ã¢Â€ÂÂ said a senior Bangladesh foreign ministry official, who asked not to be named as he was not authorised to talk to media.

During the talks, the prospects for bilateral co-operation between the countries will be discussed, and “an exchange of views on the most pressing regional and international issues is planned,” Maria Zakharova, Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman, told reporters during her weekly press briefing on Tuesday.

Before visiting Bangladesh, Lavrov will attend the 18th East Asia summit in Jakarta.

Bangladesh is constructing the first of two nuclear power plants in collaboration with Russia’s state-owned atomic company Rosatom in a $12.65 billion project, 90% of which is financed through a Russian loan repayable within 28 years, with a 10-year grace period.

Russian forces ‘blow up first British Challenger 2 tank’ in Ukraine

A battlefield video circulating online appears to show the destruction of a [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) Challenger 2 tank in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The burning [*wreck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wreck) of the military vehicle is seen in footage from the [*frontline*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frontline) and would be the first time one of the [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) has been destroyed in combat.

In the video, a vehicle with a cracked windscreen drives past as black smoke is seen rising from the roadside, although it is unclear what caused the explosion.

Britain initially supplied 14 Challenger 2 tanks to Ukraine and then doubled that number to 28.

[*Russian forces ‘blow up first British Challenger 2 tank’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-news-russia-tanks-weapons-b2405122.html)

US nuclear weapons in Britain would be ‘escalation’, Russia says

The return of US nuclear weapons to Britain would be an “escalation” and “destabilising practice”, according to Russia’s foreign ministry.

It comes as the US air force secured £39m in funding next year for a project that could pave the way for American nuclear weapons to return to British soil for the first time in more than 15 years.

Kremlin has ‘nothing to say’ about North Korea meeting

The Kremlin has ‘nothing to say’ on reports Russian President Vladimir Putin would be meeting North Korea’s Kim Jong Un this month.

“We have nothing to say on this topic,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

Russian general ‘Sergei Surovikin pictured alive’

A Russian general has been pictured for the first time after he disappeared following the Wagner Group’s aborted mutiny in June.

A new photo was posted to Russian social media claiming to show a photo of Sergei Surovikin, who dissapeared following the aborted coup.

Mr Surovikin was reportedly close to Wagner leader Yevgeny Prighozin, who was killed in a plane crash near Moscow last month.

The image, posted to Telegram, shows a man in sunglasses and a cap walking alongside a woman resembling Surovikin’s wife, Anna.

“General Sergei Surovikin is out. Alive, healthy, at home, with his family, in Moscow. Photo taken today,” the caption read.

Ukraines’s breakthrough will come as a ‘shock’ to Russian leadership

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s counter-offensive breakthrough will come as a “shock” to Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , an expert has said.

Mark Galeotti, professor of Slavonic studies at UCL, said Russians had become “complacent” and believed their [*defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-b2404643.html) to be more effective than Kyiv’s progress would suggest.

It comes after Ukrainian generals claimed troops had breached Russia’s first line near [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) and were gathering momentum in an offensive many observers claimed had failed.

Professor Galeotti explained[*there were three aspects to Ukraine’s counteroffensive gains that would particularly concern the Russian leadership*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-b2404643.html).

Russia says it destroyed a Ukrainian drone over Crimea

Russian air defences destroyed a Ukrainian aeroplane-style drone over Crimea on Tuesday morning, the Russian defence ministry said.

Yesterday, Ukraine reported up to 30 Russian Iranian-made Shahed drones were used in an attack on the port city of Odesa.

Russian authorities plan to hold ‘unfree’ elections in occupied Ukraine, MoD says

Russian authorities will hold elections with “Kremlin-endorsed” parties in occupied areas of Ukraine next week, according to the Ministry of Defence.

The MoD’s intelligence report said authorities would hold elections between 8 and 10 September, in parallel with those going ahead in the Russian federation.

But the report said: “While over 1,000 candidates have been identified, there is a lack of qualified, experienced and willing candidates.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 05 September 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/vj0f0FmYk9*](https://t.co/vj0f0FmYk9) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/xufDvqT7xn*](https://t.co/xufDvqT7xn) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*September 5, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1698935294865617219?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

“There is also an abscence of independent candidates that are not members of the Kremlin-endorsed parties, indicating that these will not be free or fair elections.”

The election is being held in Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, four Ukrainian regions claimed by Russia since its full-scale invasion in February 2022.

Russia has lost 265,680 troops in Ukraine, general staff claims

The Russian military has lost 265,680 troops in Ukraine, according to The General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces.

It claimed Russia had lost the troops since it invaded Ukraine in February 2022. Russia has also lost 4,489 tanks, 8,670 armored fighting vehicles, 8,175 vehicles and fuel tanks, 5,649 artillery systems, 747 multiple launch rocket systems, 504 air defense systems, 315 airplanes, 316 helicopters, 4,512 drones, and 19 boats, according to its report.

Moscow’s major airports shut down operations, resume shortly after

Moscow’s two major airports Vnukovo and Sheremetevo, as well as the Zhukovksy airport resumed normal operations from 7.30am after a temporary traffic suspension in the early hours today, Russia’s Federal Air Transport Agency said.

Earlier, Russia’s defence ministry said its forces shot down at least three Ukraine-launched drones that were targeting the country’s capital.

Olena Zelenska details emotional toll of war on family: ‘Living separately, need my husband’

[*Olena Zelenska*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olena-zelenska-russia-putin-warning-b2386866.html) , the first lady of Ukraine, divulged the personal side of her life and the emotional toll Russia’s full-scale invasion on the country took on the leader and his family.

She said she was aware it could be a “bit selfish” but she needed her husband, not the political figure, by her side.

As soon as Russia entered Ukraine’s territory, the first lady and her kids went underground in secret locations and the days were filled with a “constant feeling of adrenaline”, she told the BBC.

“We don’t live together with my husband, the family is separated. We have the opportunity to see each other but not as often as we would like. My son misses his father. But we stay strong, we have strength both emotionally and physically. And I am sure we will handle it together,” Ms Zelenska said.

The Russian war, which Vladimir Putin calls a “special military operation” and has claimed thousands of lives and left millions displaced, has served an emotional blow to the family’s children.

Ms Zelenska said she is pained to watch her kids not being able to plan their lives. Her 19-year-old daughter does not have the opportunity to leave the country. Ms Zelenska said her children “dream of travelling, of new sensations and emotions”.

“There are limitations in time in what you can allow yourself, they exist, and we somehow try to live within them,” she told the BBC.

Last month, [*speaking to The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olena-zelenska-russia-putin-warning-b2386866.html) , she had opened up about the concerns she has for Ukraine and her family, with her and her husband being forced to live separately for security reasons – so the president rarely gets the chance to see their children.

“I want to be together again. We really hope that somehow all this will change and we will be able to live a more or less normal family life,” she said.

Kim to meet Putin as Russia seeks closer military ties with North Korea

Kim Jong-un plans to travel to Russia and meet Vladimir Putin and discuss the possibility of supplying Moscow with weapons for the war in Ukraine, amid Moscow’s push to seek closer military ties with North Korea.

In a rare trip abroad, Kim would travel from Pyongyang, probably by armoured train, to Vladivostok, on the Pacific Coast of Russia, where he would meet Putin, the New York Times reported on Monday, citing US and allied sources.

While in Vladivostok, a port city not far from North Korea, the two leaders would discuss Kim’s sending Russia artillery shells and antitank missiles in exchange for Moscow’s advanced technology for satellites and nuclear-powered submarines, the newspaper reported.

At a time when the United States has expressed concern about growing military ties between the two countries, the news of Kim’s planned visit came after Russia said it was discussing holding joint military exercises with North Korea.

Cubans trafficked to fight for Russia in Ukraine, says government

Cuban citizens are being trafficked to fight for Russia in its war in Ukraine, the country’s foreign ministry said.

A human trafficking operation was being run by criminals working in both the Caribbean island nation and thousands of miles away in Russia, the Cuban government said.

Authorities are now working to “neutralise and dismantle” the network.

A Cuban government statement read: “The Ministry of the Interior is working on the neutralisation and dismantling of a human trafficking network that operates from Russia to incorporate Cuban citizens living there, and even some from Cuba, into the military forces participating in war operations in Ukraine.”

Russia has yet to comment on these allegations.

Russia downs drones in Moscow, other regions in early morning attacks

Russia claims to have shot down Ukraine-launched drones in Moscow’s Istra district and another in Kaluga region in the early hours today.

“Tonight, air defence forces destroyed drones in the Kaluga region and in the Istra region that were trying to carry out an attack on Moscow. Emergency services are on the scene,” Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin said.

He later added that a household object was damaged as a result of fallen debris in Moscow and emergency services are “working to eliminate the consequences”.

Another drone was destroyed in the Tver region in the Zavidovo area, which the mayor claimed was flying in the direction of Moscow.

The Russian defence ministry said the three drones were either destroyed or intercepted before they could hit their targets.

**Load-Date:** September 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Kyiv troops advance on two fronts as Putin’s air defences ‘struck in Crimea’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69HK-KFM1-DY4H-K2HY-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:17

**Length:** 5936 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Arpan Rai

**Highlight:** The attack used ‘combined’ weapons like ATACMS, storm shadow missiles and sea drones, Russian sources say

**Body**

Ukrainian troops have made confirmed advances near [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , Donetsk, and Robotyne, [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War.

“Geolocated footage posted on 30 October shows that Ukrainian forces have advanced northeast of Kurdyumivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut),” it said.

Ukrainian forces have also “marginally advanced” west of Robotyne, Zaporizhzhia, according to geolocated footage seen by the think tank.

It comes as [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said it had “successfully hit a strategic object of the air defence system” in western [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea). Russian sources said the attack was carried out using “combined” long-range weapons like ATACMS, [*storm shadow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/storm-shadow) missiles and sea drones.

The Russian Ministry of Defence confirmed its air defence systems destroyed eight Storm Shadow cruise missiles over the peninsula.

If confirmed, this would be the first time [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has used the top-tier missile system provided by the US to hit targets on the Crimean coast.

Meanwhile, [*Russia has*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) bulked up its forces around the devastated city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) in the east and has switched its troops from a defensive posture to taking “active actions”, a[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) military commander said.

Key Points

Ukraine ‘successfully’ hits Russia’s air defence system in Crimea Belarus leader Lukashenko says Ukraine and Russia are locked in a ‘stalemate’ US says executing own soldiers is ‘barbaric' Putin pushes more soldiers to frontline despite failing offensive

Air raid alerts in Crimea’s port of Sevastopol – officials

An air raid alert has been declared in the Crimean port of Sevastopol and traffic on the Crimean Bridge as well as sea transport were suspended, Russian-installed officials in the Crimean Peninsula said in the early hours today.

Sevastopol, where Russia parks it major naval fleet, has come under heavy attacks from Ukraine since September this year.

The Sevastopol shipyard attack in September was[*one of the biggest in recent weeks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-drone-attack-b2413345.html) , even though the Crimean peninsula, illegally annexed from Ukraine by Russia in 2014, has been a frequent target in the 18-month old war.

Mapped -The Ukraine -Russia War

Watch -Mike Johnson says Congress will pass 'stand-alone Israel funding bill' before supporting Ukraine

Zelensky speaks with Bulgarian PM to strengthen Black Sea security

Zelensky spoke with Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolai Denkov on ways to further strengthen Black Sea security amid Russian military threats.

He said: “Ukraine strengthens global food security with the alternative Black Sea export corridor. I appreciate the joint naval demining initiative by Bulgaria, Romania, and Turkey.”

I spoke with Bulgarian Prime Minister Nikolai Denkov on ways to further strengthen Black Sea security in the face of Russian militarization and threats to freedom of navigation.Ukraine strengthens global food security with the alternative Black Sea export corridor. I appreciate… [*pic.twitter.com/1vMWCnkoaH*](https://t.co/1vMWCnkoaH) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1719380442787221809?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine urges EU to cancel European film festival in Russia 01:00 , Lydia Patrick Ukraine has urged the European Union to cancel an upcoming film festival being held in Russia that was organised by the bloc’s Russian delegation.“It is important to continue an effective sanctions policy not only in the economic sphere, but also in culture, in particular in cinema,” Ukraine’s Culture Ministry said.The festival, which features over 20 films from across the continent, is set to be held online between 1 November and 15 November under the slogan of “Cinema Unites”.US House Republicans' Israel-only aid bill faces opposition in Senate00:00 , Lydia Patrick U.S. senators from both parties expressed doubts on Tuesday about House of Representatives Republicans’ plan to provide $14.3 billion in aid to Israel by cutting funding for the Internal Revenue Service, without providing aid to Ukraine.In the first major legislative action under new Speaker Mike Johnson, House Republicans unveiled a standalone supplemental spending bill only for Israel on Monday, despite President Joe Biden’s request for a $106 billion package that would include aid for Israel and Ukraine and funding to boost competition with China in the Indo-Pacific as well as security along the U.S. border with Mexico.Republicans have a narrow majority in the House, but Biden’s fellow Democrats control the Senate. To become law, the bill would have to pass both the House and Senate and be signed by Biden.Democrats said the Republican bill would be dead on arrival in the Senate, even if it passed the House.“The bottom line is it’s not a serious proposal,” Senate Democratic Majority Leader, Chuck Schumer, told reporters.Senator Mitch McConnell, the Republican leader in the Senate said he felt the four issues needed to be addressed.“We need to treat all four of these areas, all four of them, Ukraine, Israel, Taiwan and the border,” McConnell told reporters.Republicans are expected to pass the legislation in the House as soon as this week.ICYMI -Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine warTuesday 31 October 2023 23:00 , Lydia Patrick[*Russia and Ukraine were locked*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-health-b2438201.html) in a serious stalemate in [*Moscow’s continuing invasion of the country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/russia-moscow-war-ukraine-lgbt-b2258581.html) and needed to sit down for [*peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/china-ceasefire-ukraine-russia-war-b2302823.html) , Belarusian president and Vladimir Putin’s close ally [*Alexander Lukashenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-belarus-prigozhin-lukashenko-b2399543.html) said.“There are enough problems on both sides and in general the situation is now seriously stalemate: no one can do anything and substantively strengthen or advance their position,” Mr Lukashenko said.“They’re there head-to-head, to the death, entrenched. People are dying,” he said over the weekend.This marks the first time the Belarusian president has come forward seeking truce in the conflict and called for a “stop” command.“We need to sit down at the negotiating table and come to an agreement,” Mr Lukashenko said in a question and answer video posted on the website of the Belarusian state news agency BelTA.[*Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-lukashenko-ukraine-russia-war-peace-talks-b2438217.html) Irish Prime Minister addresses whether social welfare payments will be cut for UkrainiansTuesday 31 October 2023 22:00 , Lydia Patrick Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has said that if social welfare payments were to be cut for Ukrainians arriving in Ireland, it would be done via a joint memo.He said: “The procedure for anything would be would be joint memo. So a memo that would be coordinated by my office, the Department of the Taoiseach, but will be brought forward by a number of ministers because we have to look at the whole thing in the round, how it impacts on schools, healthcare, on the housing situation as well.”Asked when the memo would be brought to Cabinet, Mr Varadkar said: “I actually can’t say that. There have been some draft proposals brought forward by Minister (for Integration Roderic) O’Gorman, but they only related to accommodation and we’ve formed the view that we have to see it all in the round and take into account social protection, education, healthcare, housing, all of those things.“So certainly not this week. Maybe in the next couple of weeks, but we don’t have a timeline as of yet.”Ireland to ‘change offering’ to Ukrainian refugeesTuesday 31 October 2023 21:00 , Lydia Patrick Leo Varadkar has said that a joint proposal would be brought to Cabinet in the coming weeks to change the offering to Ukrainians arriving into the country.The Taoiseach said Ireland was not going to refuse ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** or other asylum seekers, but that the Government “can’t be blind to (the) reality” that Ireland is seen as more attractive than other EU countries.“We’re not going to turn anyone away,” he said on Tuesday as he opened a new road in Athy, Co Kildare.“No Ukrainian who comes to Ireland is going to be told ‘you’re not welcome here’. Nobody coming from other parts of the world seeking international protection is going to be told to go away. They’ll have their application processed.“But what we are saying is that we’re seeing increasing numbers of what are called secondary movements, Ukrainians who had been living in other parts of Western Europe for a number of months or even over a year, people seeking international protection, who may have fled a country where they weren’t safe but have actually been living in other parts of Western Europe for a number of months or a number of years, and that is different.“And we do believe that part of the reason why we’re seeing those secondary movements is because the offering that we have in Ireland is different to that of other countries.”He said that Ireland had accepted an “unprecedented” number of people from overseas from the war in Ukraine and others seeking international protection, compared to 3,000 or 4,000 in previous years.“So you can see how much the situation has changed and we can’t be blind to that reality.”As of October, 96,338 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** had arrived in Ireland since the start of the war in February 2022.The Government has said that as a further 30,000 to 50,000 were expected to arrive in the next year, it must change the open-ended accommodation it was offering, and potentially reduce entitlements to social welfare supports.Russian soldiers accused of killing family of nine as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian townTuesday 31 October 2023 20:00 , Lydia Patrick Russian forces allegedly gunned down an entire family of nine, including two young children, as they slept in their beds in [*the Russia-occupied town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-mariupol-humanitarian-corridors-b2029181.html) of Volnovakha in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) , officials in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said.[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said [*Russian soldiers killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) all members of the Kapkanets family on 27 October after the civilians refused to give them control of their house.According to the Ukrainian prosecutor’s office in Donetsk, the attackers were in army uniforms and had demanded the family house be vacated, leading to an argument.“According to preliminary information, the occupiers have [*killed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-russia-kharkiv-b2438007.html) the whole of the Kapkanets family, who were celebrating a birthday and who had refused to hand their own house over to occupiers from Chechnya,” he said on his official Telegram channel.The suspects came back later as the family slept and gunned down the members, as per media reports.[*Family of nine shot dead as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-family-in-russia-occupied-town-b2438863.html) Canadian defendants charged in US with exporting technology to RussiaTuesday 31 October 2023 19:00 , Lydia Patrick A Brooklyn man and two Montreal residents have been charged in New York over an alleged scheme to violate U.S. sanctions by exporting millions of dollars of technology to Russia, including equipment supporting the Kremlin’s invasion of Ukraine.Salimdzhon Nasriddinov, 52; Nikolay Goltsev, 37, and Kristina Puzyreva, 32, were each charged with smuggling, conspiracy to violate sanctions and wire fraud conspiracy.The U.S. Attorney’s office in Brooklyn said Nasriddinov, a Russian-Tajikistan national, was arrested in Brooklyn, while Goltsev and Puzyreva, both Russian-Canadian nationals, were arrested at a Manhattan hotel during a trip to visit him.Prosecutors want the defendants jailed pending trial, saying they pose a “serious flight risk” and have significant foreign ties.Pentagon Chief -‘Russia will succeed in Ukraine unless U.S. support continues'Tuesday 31 October 2023 18:30 , Lydia Patrick U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said on Tuesday that Russia would be successful in Ukraine unless the United States' support for Kyiv continued."I can guarantee that without our support (Russian President Vladimir) Putin will be successful," Austin said during a Senate hearing on President Joe Biden's request for $106 billion to fund ambitious plans for Ukraine, Israel and U.S. border security."If we pull the rug out from under them now, Putin will only get stronger and he will be successful in doing what he wants to do," Austin added, sitting next to Secretary of State Antony Blinken.Jens Stoltenberg certain that Sweden will become Nato memberTuesday 31 October 2023 18:00 , Alexander Butler Nato’s secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said he was certain that Sweden would join the defence alliance but declined to predict an exact time for when this would happen.Earlier this month, Turkey’s president, Recep Tayyip ErdoÄŸan, removed one of the final hurdles blocking Sweden from joining Nato by submitting a bill approving membership to parliament for ratification.The move was in line with a commitment ErdoÄŸan made to Nato at its summit in July when he said he would send the bill to parliament for ratification when parliament restarted in October.Ukraine urges EU to cancel European film festival in RussiaTuesday 31 October 2023 17:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine has urged the European Union to cancel an upcoming film festival being held in Russia that was organised by the bloc’s Russian delegation.“It is important to continue an effective sanctions policy not only in the economic sphere, but also in culture, in particular in cinema,” Ukraine’s Culture Ministry said.The festival, which features over 20 films from across the continent, is set to be held online between 1 November and 15 November under the slogan of “Cinema Unites”.Zelensky awards ‘defenders’ of Black SeaTuesday 31 October 2023 16:04 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has awarded soliders who have fought for the Black Sea against Russia, he said on X, formerly Twitter.“I awarded our defenders who have changed the situation in the Black Sea in Ukraine’s and the world’s favor. The battle for the Black Sea continues. “But Russia won’t win it. The Black Sea will serve as an example of how Ukraine can restore security for itself and its partners,” he said.I awarded our defenders who have changed the situation in the Black Sea in Ukraine's and the world's favor.The battle for the Black Sea continues. But Russia won't win it.The Black Sea will serve as an example of how Ukraine can restore security for itself and its partners. [*pic.twitter.com/3CbBkGOSGQ*](https://t.co/3CbBkGOSGQ) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1719349690171273361?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia to use sale of Ukrainian first lady’s home to fund invasionTuesday 31 October 2023 15:04 , Alexander Butler Money made on the sale of the Ukrainian first lady’s apartment in occupied-Crimea will be used to fund Putin’s invasion of Ukraine, according to Russian media.Olena Zelenska’s home in Yalta, Crimea, was sold by Russian authorities for £394,000 earlier this month, Tass news agency reported.“This is good money for the Crimean budget, we will provide assistance to both the participants of the north military district and the families of those killed at the front. Perhaps we will purchase something for needs of the front,” chairman of the Russian parliament in Crimea, Vladimir Konstantinov, said.Watch live: Anthony Blinken and Lloyd Austin testify to Senate committee on Biden’s $106bn funding requestTuesday 31 October 2023 14:13 , Alexander Butler[*Live: Blinken and Austin testify to Senate committee on Biden's $106 billion funding request*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PrS0e1Gau0k&ab_channel=TheIndependent) Ukraine received £2.3bn from international partners this monthTuesday 31 October 2023 13:30 , Alexander Butler Ukraine has received about £2.3bn from international partners including the US and EU this month, according to its finance ministry.The total sum included a $1.15bn grant from the US and 1.5bn euro as part of a macro-financial assistance package from the EU.Overall, Ukraine has received £29bn in external funding so far in 2023. The World Bank estimated in December 2022 that Ukraine’s reconstruction could cost more than £518bn.Top UN body says Russia likely behind deadly strike on Ukrainian civiliansTuesday 31 October 2023 13:00 , Alexander Butler There are “reasonable grounds” to conclude a missile strike that killed 59 people in a cafe in the Ukrainian village of Hroza on 5 October was launched by Russia., the UN human rights office said.“There are reasonable grounds to believe that the missile was launched by Russian armed forces. There was no indication of military personnel or any other legitimate military targets at or adjacent to the cafe at the time of the attack,” Liz Throssell, spokesperson for the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights said.Ukraine said a Russian missile hit a cafe in the village in the Kharkiv region on 5 October as people gathered to mourn a fallen Ukrainian soldier. Moscow denies targeting civilians in its invasion, a position it repeated in relation to the strike on Hroza.White House warns Republicans against ‘politicising national security'Tuesday 31 October 2023 12:32 , Alexander Butler The White House has warned US House Republicans against “politicising national security” after they introduced a bill separating aid to Israel and Ukraine.“Demanding offsets for meeting core national security needs of the United States — like supporting Israel and defending Ukraine from atrocities and Russian imperialism — would be a break with the normal, bipartisan process and could have devastating implications for our safety and alliances in the years ahead,” the White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said.House Republicans, led by Speaker Mike Johnson, unveiled a $14.3bn spending bill only for Israel. The plan leaves out aid to Ukraine and Taiwan as well as humanitarian assistance to civilians in Israel and Gaza.Arrest made after ‘attempted assassination’ of pro-Russian lawmaker in UkraineTuesday 31 October 2023 11:50 , Alexander Butler Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) has detained an accomplice in the attempted killing of a former Ukrainian lawmaker and pro-Russian politician, according to Russian state media.The FSB said evidence had been obtained about the involvement of Ukrainian special services in the attempted assassination of Oleg Tsaryov.A Ukrainian intelligence source said on Friday that the attempt in Yalta, Crimea, had been carried out by the Security Service of Ukraine.Hundreds of strikes carried out on southern frontTuesday 31 October 2023 11:18 , Alexander Butler Hundreds of strikes were carried out in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia over the last 24 hours, according to regional officials.The Russian military carried out 148 strikes on 27 communities, said Yuriy Malashko, head of the Zaporizhzhia military administration.And in Kherson, 98 attacks were carried out, including 447 shells from mortars, artillery, tanks, planes and drones, its regional administration said. He added that the strikes killed one person and injured 16.Mapped: Kurdyumivka and RobotyneTuesday 31 October 2023 10:59 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian troops have made confirmed advances near [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , Donetsk, and Robotyne, [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War.“Geolocated footage posted on 30 October shows that Ukrainian forces have advanced northeast of Kurdyumivka (10km southwest of Bakhmut),” it said.Ukrainian forces have also “marginally advanced” west of Robotyne, Zaporizhzhia, according to geolocated footage seen by the think tank.Russian oligarch detained in France in sanctions probeTuesday 31 October 2023 10:45 , Alexander Butler A Russian tycoon has been detained for questioning in France in connection with alleged tax evasion, money laundering and violating international sanctions, the French financial prosecutors’ office has said.Searches took place yesterday at Alexei Kuzmichev’s Paris home and in the Mediterranean Var region as part of the investigation, according to the office.Russia will be able to defend the rights of Russian businessman Alexey Kuzmichev, who has been detained in France, once Paris provides detailed information about his case, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.Tuesday 31 October 2023 10:30 , Alexander Butler Russia had lost 300,810 troops in Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion on 24 February last year, according to the General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces.The number includes 870 casualties suffered over the last day amid a “meat assault” offensive near the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka.Russia has also lost 5,211 tanks, 321 airplanes, 324 helicopters, 5,440 drones, 844 multiple launch rocket systems and 562 air defense systems, the report said.Russia has turned the Black Sea into a battleground, Zelensky saysTuesday 31 October 2023 10:00 , Alexander Butler Vladimir Putin has turned the Black Sea into a “battleground” used for aggression and the curtailing of freedom of navigation, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.“The Black Sea has strategic significance not just for its neighboring nations but for Europe, the Middle East, and global food security. “Russia has turned it into a battleground, using it for aggression and threatening freedom of navigation. Today, we need to work together to restore the Black Sea as a zone of peace, trade, and development,” he said on X, formerly Twitter.October 31st is International Black Sea Action Day.The Black Sea has strategic significance not just for its neighboring nations but for Europe, the Middle East, and global food security.Russia has turned it into a battleground, using it for aggression and threatening freedom… [*pic.twitter.com/ILzyNeIa3V*](https://t.co/ILzyNeIa3V) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1719272263936061721?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Airport riot shows 'growing radicalisation' of Russian societyTuesday 31 October 2023 09:30 , Alexander Butler A riot which broke out in a Russian airport which saw a violent mob searching for Israelis reflects the growing radicalisation of Russian society, the Institute for the Study of War said.“The 29 October riots in Dagestan highlight the growing radicalisation and factionalism of Russian society resulting from the hyper-nationalist ideologies that the war in Ukraine has empowered,” it said.Russia’s interior ministry said 60 people were arrested and 150 of “the most active protesters” were identified, who had shouted antisemitic chants, video shows.Commander of occupied-Kherson replaced, MoD confirmsTuesday 31 October 2023 09:00 , Alexander Butler The commander of occupied-Kherson and the eastern bank of the Dnipro River has been replaced, the UK’s ministry of defence confirmed.“The deputy commander of Russian forces in Ukraine, Colonel General Mikhail Teplinsky, has likely personally taken over Russia’s Dnipro Grouping of Forces,” the MoD said on X, formerly Twitter.“He replaces Colonel General Oleg Makaevich. The force is responsible for the occupied areas of Kherson oblast, including the eastern bank of the Dnipro River.”Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 31 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/nIayCwZUct*](https://t.co/nIayCwZUct) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/K3zfDuiQ9d*](https://t.co/K3zfDuiQ9d) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1719266846346526953?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russian forces accused of killing family-of-nineTuesday 31 October 2023 08:45 , Alexander Butler Russian forces allegedly gunned down an entire family of nine, including two young children, as they slept in their beds in the Russia-occupied town of Volnovakha in eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk, officials in Kyiv said.Ukrainian ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said Russian soldiers killed all members of the Kapkanets family on 27 October after the civilians refused to give them control of their house.According to the Ukrainian prosecutor’s office in Donetsk, the attackers were in army uniforms and had demanded the family house be vacated, leading to an argument.[*Family of nine shot dead as they slept in Russian-occupied Ukrainian town*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-family-in-russia-occupied-town-b2438863.html) Russian forces are preparing to conduct ‘meat assaults’ near AvdiivkaTuesday 31 October 2023 08:19 , Alexander Butler Russian forces are preparing to conduct “meat assaults” near the town of Avdiivka where Putin has already lost nearly an “entire brigade”, according to the Institute for the Study of War.Meat assaults are when Russian infantry forces in Storm Z detachments attack without artillery support to suppress Ukrainian firing positions, a Russian milblogger said.Between 40 per cent and 70 per cent of personnel in Storm Z units are killed in highly attritional, infantry-led attacks which lack artillery support in eastern Ukraine, the ISW said.Five communities attacked in Ukraine, officials saysTuesday 31 October 2023 08:00 , Alexander Butler Russian forces attacked five communities near Ukraine’s northeastern Sumy Oblast, causing over 100 explosions, the regional military administration said.The communities of Krasnopillia, Shalyhyne, Seredyna-Buda, Bilopillia, and Puty were targeted on 30 October, with at least 52 explosions recorded.A range of different weapons were used in the attacks, including mines, mortars, and artillery, according to the Ukrainian military.Dutch F-16 fighter jets for Ukraine to arrive in Romania, PM saysTuesday 31 October 2023 07:28 , Alexander Butler The first US-made F-16 fighter jets the Netherlands will provide to Ukraine will arrive in Romania within two weeks, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte has said.“I expect the Patriot missiles to be delivered shortly, to aid Ukraine in the upcoming winter. And the same speed applies to the F-16s,” Mr Rutte said during a video conference with Volodomyr Zelensky posted on X, formerly Twitter.“The first ones will be shipped to the training centre in Romania within the next two weeks so that day we will get ready for further training.”The Netherlands will continue to support Ukraine in the face of continued Russian aggression, as much and for as long as necessary. The devastating situation in Israel and Gaza will not divert our attention away from Ukraine. The existential need to push back against Russian… [*pic.twitter.com/o1CCW3gKQp*](https://t.co/o1CCW3gKQp) — Mark Rutte (@MinPres) [*October 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/MinPres/status/1719016335554801739?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

What would happen if Putin died?

[*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.

Yet since his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and the loss of tens of thousands of his troops, the fallout of his military gamble has caused cracks to appear for the first time under his 20-year leadership. [*Speculation has also dogged the ageing tyrant that his health is failing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-health-update-massive-heart-attack-b2435507.html) , with the future of Russia uncertain upon his demise.

Read the full story from Holly Evans here...

[*If Putin dies, this is what would happen in Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-heart-attack-health-update-b2438221.html)

Ukraine ‘successfully’ hits Russia’s air defence system in Crimea

Ukraine’s Armed Forces have said they “successfully hit a strategic object of the air defence system” in Crimea’s west while Russian military bloggers speculated the US-provided Army Tactical Missile System (ATACMS) behind the attack.

And, the Russian Ministry of Defence said its air defence systems destroyed eight Storm Shadow cruise missiles over Crimea in a fresh assault on the territory which Kyiv claims is a strategic target in its counteroffensive push.

Several Russian sources said that the latest attack was carried out using “combined” long-range assault weapons like ATACMS, Storm Shadow missiles and sea drones between Sunday and yesterday.

If confirmed, this would be the first time Ukraine has used the top-tier missile system provided by the US to hit targets on the Crimean coast.

Citing Russian insiders and military bloggers, the Washington-based think-tank the Institute for the Study of War said that the alleged Ukrainian ATACMS strike damaged vehicles and radar systems near Olenivka and killed or wounded more than 20 Russian servicemen.

“The insider source also claimed that Russian officials did not report on the Ukrainian ATACMS strike but chose to instead issue statements about the downing of Storm Shadow missiles and drones,” it said in its assessment but did not verify the claims.

ICYMI -Ukraine bombards Russian forces with drones as Putin suffers losses in fight for Avdiivka

Ukrainian forces fired more than 30 drones in a [*renewed assault*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-clashed-82-times-putin-b2434244.html) over the weekend as Russian forces [*lost at least an entire brigade*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-news-putin-weapons-latest-b2437508.html?page=6) in their push for the [*eastern town of Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-avdiivka-putin-zelensky-war-b2437290.html) , officials said.

The Russian air defence systems destroyed 36 [*Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-soviet-bakhmut-kyiv-b2417807.html) over the Black Sea and the northwestern part of the Crimean peninsula, its defence ministry wrote on Telegram on Sunday, accusing Kyiv of carrying out a “terrorist attack”.

In a separate incident, local officials in southern Russia’s Krasnodar region near the Black Sea said an oil refinery was hit and set ablaze in the early hours of Sunday but did not explain what caused the fire. Several local media outlets said that the fire was caused by a drone strike or a crashed drone’s debris.

Officials in Kyiv have not issued a comment on the Russian defence ministry’s claims. The war-hit nation rarely acknowledges responsibility for attacks on Russia and Russian-occupied territories but has admitted that striking targets there helps its counteroffensive.

The recent months have seen drone strikes and shelling on the Russian border regions and illegally annexed [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) peninsula as a regular part of the continuing military offensive.

[*Ukraine bombards Russia with drones as Putin suffers losses in fight for Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-avdiivka-drone-attacks-b2438181.html)

House Speaker vows to bring Israel package to floor this week – without Ukraine funding

Newly elected House Speaker [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/speaker-mike-johnson-gun-control-b2437161.html) pledged on Sunday to put an aid package for Israel on the floor this week without aid for Ukraine.

Mr Johnson, whose Republican colleagues unanimously voted to make him speaker on Wednesday, called the package of support for Israel in the wake of a terrorist attack by Hamas that killed 1,400 people a “pressing and urgent need.”

“There are lots of things going on around the world that we have to address and we will. But right now, what’s happening in Israel takes the immediate attention, and I think we’ve got to separate that and get it through,” he said on Morning Futures with Maria Bartiromo.

[*GOP vows to bring Israel package to floor this week – without Ukraine funding*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/speaker-johnson-israel-ukraine-funding-b2438393.html)

ICYMI -Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine war

[*Russia and Ukraine were locked*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-health-b2438201.html) in a serious stalemate in [*Moscow’s continuing invasion of the country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/russia-moscow-war-ukraine-lgbt-b2258581.html) and needed to sit down for [*peace talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/china/china-ceasefire-ukraine-russia-war-b2302823.html) , Belarusian president and Vladimir Putin’s close ally [*Alexander Lukashenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-belarus-prigozhin-lukashenko-b2399543.html) said.

“There are enough problems on both sides and in general the situation is now seriously stalemate: no one can do anything and substantively strengthen or advance their position,” Mr Lukashenko said.

“They’re there head-to-head, to the death, entrenched. People are dying,” he said over the weekend.

This marks the first time the Belarusian president has come forward seeking truce in the conflict and called for a “stop” command.

“We need to sit down at the negotiating table and come to an agreement,” Mr Lukashenko said in a question and answer video posted on the website of the Belarusian state news agency BelTA.

[*Putin ally Lukashenko calls for ceasefire in ‘stalemate’ Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-lukashenko-ukraine-russia-war-peace-talks-b2438217.html)

Zelensky says airport riot shows Russia cannot score ‘strategic’ victory

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said that anti-Jewish unrest in Russia showed that Moscow’s moral foundation had become so contaminated by hate that it was no longer capable of scoring a “strategic” victory.

Zelensky said the storming on Sunday of an airport in southern Russia by protesters looking for Jewish passengers was the second time this year Moscow had lost control over events, after an abortive uprising by Russian mercenaries in June.

The airport riot in mainly Muslim Dagestan, Zelensky said in his nightly video address, showed Russia “had contaminated its own territory with such a level of hatred and degradation that for the second time this year in Russia, control over events is being lost.

“When insurgents head to Moscow and no one stops them and there is a breakdown of the power system in Dagestan, a real pogrom occurs,” he said, a reference to unrest targeting a specific group.

“These are all signals that Russia can, for the time being, sustain military action and increase pressure on the front lines in some places, but is not capable of withstanding this confrontation strategically,” he said, referring to Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.

Kamala Harris to visit Rishi Sunak to discuss Israel and Ukraine

U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris will discuss the Israel-Hamas conflict and “consult on next steps in our support for Ukraine“ with British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak during a visit to London later this week, a White House official said on Monday.

Harris will also attend a summit and deliver a speech on artificial intelligence.

US condemns violent antisemitic events reported in Russia

The United States on Monday condemned violent antisemitic events that have been reported in Russia threatening Israelis and Jews after rioters in the predominantly Muslim Dagestan region stormed an airport to “catch” Jewish passengers on board a flight from Tel Aviv.

Videos obtained by Reuters from the airport at Makhachkala, the regional capital of Dagestan, showed the rioters, mostly young men, waving Palestinian flags, breaking down glass doors and running through the airport on Sunday evening.

Police said they had arrested 60 people in connection with the unrest and identified 150 of the most active participants.

State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said Washington condemned the incident, and said he had seen videos of events he said “looked like a pogrom to me.”

“We call on Russian authorities to publicly condemn these violent protests, to hold anyone involved accountable and to ensure the safety of Israelis and Jews in Russia,” Miller said at a regular press briefing.

Russia’s embassy in Washington did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Russia blames Ukraine for antisemitic riot at airport in Dagestan

Russia blame Ukraine after Rioters in the predominantly Muslim Dagestan region stormed an airport to “catch” Jewish passengers on board a flight from Tel Aviv.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the violence was the result of “outside influence” and that “ill-wishers” had used images of suffering in Gaza to stir people up. Maria Zakharova, a spokeswoman for the Russian foreign ministry, accused Ukraine of a “direct and key role” in preparing the “provocation”.

At least 60 people have been detained after a huge crowd of pro-Palestinian protesters entered the airport in search of Jewish passengers.

**Load-Date:** November 1, 2023

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[*Royal news -latest: Harry arrives for final day of privacy hearing as King addresses German parliament*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WS-BVH1-DY4H-K07F-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** Harry’s appearance at High Court comes as Charles addresses Bundestag in fluent German

**Body**

Prince Harry has arrived at the High Court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a privacy battle against Daily Mail publisher Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

The Duke of Sussex was pictured entering the building’s side entrance at around 1.45pm on the fourth day of the hearing, during which ANL is hoping to have the claims dismissed without a trial.

Earlier this week, Harry[*accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him “for a long time” about phone hacking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-royal-family-phone-hacking-evidence-b2309942.html) as they did not want to “open a can of worms”, the High Court heard earlier this week.

The allegation emerged in a witness statement submitted by the [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) in the high-profile case, which he is bringing alongside Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Baroness [*Doreen Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , and others.

Meanwhile, [*the King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-king) has become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles has delivered a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

Key Points

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag King Charles and Queen Consort arrive in Berlin for first state visit Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking Daily Mail publisher claims privacy case uses files provided confidentially to Leveson Inquiry ...

Baroness Doreen Lawrence arrives at High Court

Baroness Doreen Lawrence has arrived in the courtroom for the final day of the preliminary hearing involving Associated Newspapers Limited.

Harry pictured arriving at High Court

Harry arrives at High Court

Prince Harry has arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a set of privacy claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

He arrived through the building’s side entrance around 1:45pm.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Latest images of Charles and Camilla’s trip to Germany

UK’s friendship with Germany ‘meant so much to my beloved mother’, says Charles

King Charles spoke earnestly of late Queen Elizabeth II’s affection for Germany during his historic address to the Bundestag on Thursday.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits,” he said.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

Charles speaks affectionately of ‘close personal ties’ to Germany

King Charles is speaking to the Bundestag at length about “the pride” he feels in the “strength of the partnership” between Germany and Britain.

During the historic address, the King spoke of his first visit to Germany’s “remarkable land” at 13 years old. He also talked affectionately of his “close personal ties to the country”, made deeper by his “cherished family relationships”.

He noted that “with all of us, there are countless points of connection and common experience in the British-German story, which has unfolded over nearly two millennia.”

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-germany-camilla-harry-b2310756.html)

Watch live: King Charles continues Germany visit before historic Bundestag address

Camilla pays subtle tribute to Elizabeth II

The Queen Consort wore a tiara once owned by the Queen Mother and a brooch bearing the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II as she attended a state banquet in Berlin last night.

Camilla, sporting a black evening gown studded with silver embroidery, arrived at the Schloss Bellevue residence wearing the Boucheron tiara given to her by the late monarch. She also wore the Queen’s fringed diamond necklace, offered to her as a wedding present in November 1947.

The Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, was pinned to Camilla’s left shoulder. It features a hand-painted miniature of the young Queen set in platinum.

Harry not in court for final day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex is not in court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a group of privacy claims against the publisher of the Daily Mail.

Harry attended the hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Monday and Tuesday, but was not present on Wednesday or as the hearing continued on Thursday.

Some of the other people bringing the claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL), Sir Elton John, David Furnish, Baroness Lawrence and Sadie Frost, have also attended some of the hearing.

None of the group, which also includes Sir Simon Hughes and Liz Hurley, were seen in the courtroom as the hearing resumed on Thursday morning.

In pictures: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomes King Charles at the Chancellery in Berlin

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

The King will become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles will deliver a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

During the day the King will attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

Later, the King and the Queen Consort will visit Wittenbergplaztz Food Market and meet a range of local business owners who will discuss the history of the market.

Germany has welcomed more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary after Russia invaded their homeland and Charles will tour the Tegel Refugee Centre to meet some of the group.

Separately the Queen Consort will visit the Refugio House community centre, a meeting place for locals and new Berlin residents, including refugees.

In pictures: King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort attend a State Banquet at Schloss Bellevue in Germany

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, writesTom Peck.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

ICYMI: Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish reports he is planning to write memoir

Friends close to Prince Andrew have hit out at reports that he is planning to write a memoir.

On Sunday, a number of newspapers claimed that the Duke of York was in talks to produce a tell-all autobiography, following the success of Prince Harry’s book ‘Spare’.

However, friends of his family have taken the unusual step to make his views known following the reports.

[*Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish claims he is planning to write memoir*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-andrew-autobiography-harry-spare-b2308191.html)

King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin for first state visit as monarch

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with Harry, Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry leaves High Court after second day of case against Daily Mail publisher

ICYMI: ‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

Duke ‘deprived of important aspects of his teenage years’ by newspaper publisher, lawyer says.

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

King Charles shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait

A new portrait of King Charles III depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation edition, which is on sale from Thursday.

[*King shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-indigenous-amazon-bracelet-portrait-b2310135.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Prince Harry had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the High Court ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

In a witness statement, he accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him about the alleged phone hacking.

As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

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Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim should be rejected ‘in its entirety’, High Court hears

The Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim against the publisher of the Daily Mail is rejected “in its entirety”, brought “far too late”, and should be thrown out by a judge, the High Court has been told.

Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) says legal challenges brought by a number of high-profile individuals, including Sir Elton John and Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, have “no real prospects of succeeding” at a trial.

The publisher’s lawyers argued at the High Court in London on Wednesday that the cases should be dismissed or a judgment made in its favour without a trial.

But the legal team for Harry and others say ANL’s bid is “hopeless, plainly inappropriate and suggestive of a tactical gamble” to avoid a full trial.

King Charles plants tree with German president during Berlin visit

Voices: I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard, writesAndrei Molodkin.

I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

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As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store, Tom Peck writes.

On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

In pictures: Charles and Camilla visit Germany on first state visit

King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla visited the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin this afternoon, after being greeted by Germany’s president at Brandenburg Gate.

The royal tour is the King’s first state visit, having postponed a trip to France due to widespread political protests.

Germany’s president welcome Charles and Camilla in Berlin

In the shadow of Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate -a national symbol of peace and unity -Germany’s president Frank-Walter Steinmeier and wife Elke Budenbender formally welcomed the King and Queen Consort.

The foursome posed for the waiting photographers with the famous landmark in the background before the national anthems of Germany and the UK were played.

The King inspected a guard of honour, accompanied by the president, before Charles, Camilla, the German statesman and his wife went on a brief walkabout meeting people waiting behind nearby crash barriers.

Charles and Camilla touch down in Germany at start of first state visit

The King and Queen Consort have arrived in Germany for the start of their first state visit -a three-day tour of one of the EU’s leading nations.

Charles and Camilla said in a joint statement, released on their official Twitter account, it was a “great joy” to be able to develop the “longstanding friendship between our two nations”.

The couple were greeted by a 21-gun salute and a fly-past by two fighter jets after they emerged from the ministerial plane Voyager and paused at the top of the steps.

As a mark of respect two Typhoon jets escorted the plane carrying the King and Queen Consort, their entourage and a large number of media for a period as it approached Berlin-Brandenburg Government Airport.

The trip has been overshadowed by the postponement of the French leg of the European tour, which was shelved by President Emmanuel Macron last Friday after violent nationwide protests against the French leader’s retirement age reforms.

The decision was made amid reports the King may have been targeted during further demonstrations planned by protestors to coincide with the visit.

“Ahead of our first state visit to Germany, we are very much looking forward to meeting all of those who make this country so special,” the King and his wife said in their joint statement.

“It is a great joy to be able to continue the deepening of the longstanding friendship between our two nations.”

King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late

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.

[*King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-britain-elizabeth-ii-london-b2309938.html)

Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut

Watch live as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Consort, Camilla, arrive in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

The first leg of the King’s trip to France was cancelled due to ongoing protests over controversial pension reform.

German president [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) will welcome Charles and Camilla at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

On Thursday, the King is expected to deliver a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament, and meet with chancellor Olaf Scholz.

[*Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-camilla-berlin-germany-b2310155.html)

King arrives in Berlin

The King has arrived in Berlin for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

Their plane landed at the capital’s Brandenburg Airport.

Star line-up for Camilla’s first literary festival

The Queen Consort’s literary charity has revealed the line-up for its first ever festival.

Dame Judi Dench, Gyles Brandreth, Dame Harriet Walter, Philippa Gregory, David Olusoga, Ben Macintyre, Kate Mosse, David Harewood, Robert Harris and Ken Follett will be among the actors and authors appearing at Hampton Court Palace on June 11.

The one-day event will also see The Queen’s Reading Room join forces with The Royal Society of Literature to stage a memorial event for the late Wolf Hall trilogy author Dame Hilary Mantel, overlooked by Anne Boleyn’s Gateway.

And the cast of the West End show Austentatious will improvise a new Jane Austen novel inspired by a title dreamt up by Camilla.

Dame Judi will appear in conversation with Brandreth to discuss her life, career and love of Shakespeare.

Camilla’s reading room began as an Instagram book club inspired during lockdown, but was relaunched as a charity in February to work on advancing education by promoting the appreciation of literature among adults and children.

Vicki Perrin, chief executive of The Queen’s Reading Room, said: “There is a special kind of magic to be found in a book, and great wonder in listening to authors speak about their work.

“I have no doubt that visitors will find themselves inspired by these great minds, enjoy connecting with fellow readers, and I hope that they will come away transformed into lifelong literature lovers.”

The festival is a co-production between The Queen’s Reading Room and Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that cares for Hampton Court Palace.

Proceeds will go towards the ongoing work of both charities and tickets are available via thequeensreadingroom.co.uk

New portrait of Charles shows King wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader

A new portrait of the King depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation editio, which is on sale from Thursday.

Charles did not sit for the portrait, but Mr Barford attended a biodiversity reception at Buckingham Palace and spent around an hour and a half observing the King as he greeted guests.

He said of his work: “I wanted it to be more about the man and less about the role so I was trying to capture something of a warmth and an empathy which I saw in his interactions with those people when I was there.

“I felt that there was a sort of a sensitivity.”

Charles was presented with a necklace made from seeds -symbolic of an alliance between the King and indigenous people -and a bracelet by Domingo Peas, leader of the Achuar Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon, at the Palace reception in February.

Mr Barford said: “I thought it was really nice to leave the bracelet in as a nod to the event and a nod to his interest in environmental matters.”

The artist, from Bridport in Dorset, was also commissioned by Illustrated London News to paint the late Queen in 2015.

Watch: Prince Harry's two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Harry claims ANL journalists are ‘criminals with journalistic powers’

In a witness statement made public on Tuesday, Harry alleged that journalists at ANL “are criminals with journalistic powers which should concern every single one of us”.

“The British public deserve to know the full extent of this cover-up and I feel it is my duty to expose it,” he said.

However, in a statement, a spokesperson for ANL said Harry “has become a serial litigant against Mail newspapers with whom he seems obsessed”.

They continued: “Associated Newspapers profoundly regrets his untrue, inflammatory and deeply offensive remarks about the Mail’s journalists.

“If they were repeated outside court, they would be highly defamatory.”

Baroness Lawrence claims to have been the victim of the illegal interception of her voicemails, monitoring of her bank accounts and “corrupt payments to serving Metropolitan Police Service police officers, including on the Stephen Lawrence murder investigations, for confidential information”.

Sir Elton and Mr Furnish have alleged the landline phone of their Windsor home was tapped by investigators on ANL’s behalf and that the birth certificate of their first child was unlawfully obtained by the publisher.

But ANL argues that an alleged confession by private investigator Gavin Burrows “prompted the claims” -and highlighted a statement in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

The publisher says it “categorically denies” the allegations against it and it is “profoundly saddened” Baroness Lawrence is bringing her case.

ANL’s lawyers argue the claims are “stale” and “largely inferential”.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, with a ruling expected at a later date.

Prince Harry not at High Court for third day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex was not present at the High Court for the start of the third day of a hearing over multiple privacy claims against the Daily Mail’s publisher.

Proceedings in Court 76 at the Royal Court of Justice in London resumed on Wednesday morning without Harry.

The duke, who unexpectedly appeared at court earlier this week, is one of seven people bringing claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) over denied allegations it carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information gathering.

Those bringing claims include Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, Sir Elton John and his husband David Furnish and actress Sadie Frost -all of whom have made appearances during the ongoing preliminary hearing.

Mr Furnish and Ms Frost returned to the courtroom on Wednesday.

The group’s allegations, which are denied, include that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records and access and record private phone conversations over a period starting from 1993.

ANL is trying to have the claims dismissed without a trial at the hearing, which is due to end this week.

What are Prince Harry’s claims?

His lawyers claim he was “deprived of important aspects of his teenage years” by the “unlawful actions” of Associated Newspapers.

“In particular, suspicion and paranoia was caused by Associated’s publication of the unlawful articles: friends were lost or cut off as a result and everyone became a ‘suspect’, since he was misled by the way that the articles were written into believing that those close to him were the source of this information being provided to Associated’s newspapers,” they argue in a written submission.

They say the actions of Associated Newspapers amounted to “a major betrayal” of promises made by the media after the death of Harry’s mother, Diana, Princess of Wales.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, but Buckingham Palace said the King would be unable to meet his son because of prior commitments, including an official state visit to Germany on Wednesday

David Furnish arrives at High Court

Candian filmmaker David Furnish has arrived at the High Court in London.

Sadie Frost arrives at the High Court for third day of hearing

Actress Sadie Frost has arrived at the Royal Courts Of Justice, central London, ahead of a hearing claim over allegations of unlawful information gathering brought against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

In his witness statement, which was released on Tuesday, Mr Furnish wrote about the friendship he and Sir Elton have with Harry.

Read more here:

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

King and Queen Consort to visit Germany after France trip cancelled

The King and Queen Consort are expected to arrive in Germany today after the couple’s visit to France was postponed due to civil unrest in the country.

Charles and Camilla were due to begin the first state visit of the King’s reign on Sunday but the trip was shelved after a night of violent demonstrations across France that led to hundreds of arrests and police being injured.

President Emmanuel Macron said the four-day state visit was likely to be rescheduled for the beginning of summer, after Downing Street confirmed the French leader had asked the British Government to postpone the trip.

Charles and Camilla were due to travel from France to Germany for a state visit from Wednesday to Friday, and the visit to Berlin will proceed as planned.

France has faced an eruption of violent demonstrations over forced-through pension reforms.

Sylvie Bermann, who served as Paris’s ambassador to Britain between 2014 and 2017, said Mr Macron wanted the visit to go ahead “until the last minute” before realising the situation was untenable.

She said a planned state banquet at the Palace of Versailles for Charles and Camilla would “not have given a good image”.

Lord Ricketts, a former national security adviser, said the lavish Versailles dinner would have had “echoes” of the French revolution if it had gone ahead during a public outcry at Mr Macron’s decision to push back the national retirement age.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[*Ukraine-Russia news – live: One dead as Putin’s troops ‘fire at rescue workers’ in flood-hit Kherson*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68HD-Y7N1-JBNF-W44C-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Martha McHardy

**Highlight:** One person has died and seven have been wounded

**Body**

One person has died and seven have been wounded after Vladimir Putin’s troops fired at rescue workers in the southern city of Kherson, Kyiv has said.

Russian forces fired at rescuer workers who were clearing mud from flood-hit Kherson and seven people were wounded, Andriy Yermak, head of the president’s office, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Meanwhile, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko stated in a separate post that eight of the rescuers were wounded. Russia denies targeting civilians.

The[*collapse of the Kakhovka hydro-electric dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-war-rescue-soldiers-b2360114.html%22%20title=%22Ukrainian%20soldiers%20rescue%20Russian%20troops%20left%20to%20drown%20after%20Kakhovka%20dam%20destruction) on 6 June unleashed floodwaters across southern Ukraine and Russian-occupied areas of the Kherson region, [*killing more than 50 people and destroying homes and farmland.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-moscow-kyiv-kherson-b2360062.html%22%20title=%22UN%20complains%20Russia%20won't%20let%20aid%20workers%20into%20areas%20hit%20by%20dam%20collapse%20in%20southern%20Ukraine)

Ukraine accuses Russia of blowing up the Soviet-era dam, under Russian control since the early days of its invasion. The Kremlin accused Kyiv of sabotaging the hydroelectric facility.

Elsewhere, four of Putin’s attack helicopters have been shot down by Ukrainian air defences in the past week, Kyiv claims.

Mykola Oleshchuk, commander of the Ukrainian air force, said a Russian Ka-52 helicopter was hit by an anti-aircraft missile above Ukraine’s eastern Donetsk region at 11pm on Monday.

Key Points

Russia attacks Ukrainian cities in overnight air strikes Ukraine says eight villages liberated One dead in Russian shelling of rescuer workers in Ukraine’s Kherson Ukrainian shelling in Belgorod leaves at least 8 injured Four of Putin’s attack helicopters downed in last week, Kyiv says Russia says Ukraine plans missile strikes on Crimea

One dead in Russian shelling of rescuer workers in Ukraine's Kherson -Kyiv

At least one emergency worker was killed and several others were wounded in Russian shelling in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson on Tuesday, the head of the president’s office said.

Russian forces fired at rescuer workers who were clearing mud from flood-hit Kherson and seven people were wounded, the official, Andriy Yermak, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said in a separate post that eight of the rescuers were wounded. Russia denies targeting civilians.

Ukraine’s Zelensky: Our forces are destroying the enemy in east, south

President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Tuesday that Ukraine‘s forces were destroying Russian forces in the two main theatres of the conflict, the east and south of the country.

“At this time, our soldiers in the south and east are actively destroying the enemy, physically cleansing Ukraine,” Zelensky said in his nightly video message.

“A defence against terror means destroying terrorists. And it is a guarantee that the state of evil will never have the opportunity to bring evil to Ukraine.”

Referring to a conference to take place in London on post-war recovery, Zelensky said rebuilding Ukraine was “a vehicle and a guarantee of security” and a means of “protecting against any repetition of Russian aggression.”

Ukrainian forces ‘gnawing our way meter by meter’, says minister

Ukrainian forces have pushed Russian troops on a defensive in the battlefield as they recapture territory “metre by metre”, the war-hit country’s deputy defence minister said.

“We are moving forward gradually, with small steps but very confidently. And you can even cite an allegory that “we are gnawing away every meter by meter of land from the enemy,” Hanna Maliar said on Telegram last night.

In an update from the battlefield, the deputy defence minister said that the offensive continues in several directions.

“Everything happens there according to the plan established by the military. There are certain advances in all directions where our military is moving. But the enemy will not give up the occupied positions just like that, and that is why fierce battles and a very powerful duel continue,” Ms Maliar said.

She added that the “enemy mines the fields”, including in the Zaporizhzhia region where “the enemy mines even settlements where people live, without warning them”.

Ukrainian forces ‘destroying the enemy’ in east and south, says Zelensky

Ukrainian forces were destroying Russian forces in the two main theatres of the conflict, the east and south of the country, president Volodymyr Zelensky said.

“At this time, our soldiers in the south and east are actively destroying the enemy, physically cleansing Ukraine,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly video message.

“A defence against terror means destroying terrorists. And it is a guarantee that the state of evil will never have the opportunity to bring evil to Ukraine.”

The war-time president also said rebuilding Ukraine was “a vehicle and a guarantee of security” and a means of “protecting against any repetition of Russian aggression”, as he referred to a conference on post-war recovery expected to take place in London.

Cutting army size ‘beggars belief’, former armed forces chief tells MPs

Reducing the size of the army “beggars belief” and the lack of “properly functioning” reserve forces is a “national embarrassment”, a former head of the UK armed forces has said.

[*Lord*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lord) Nick Houghton, who was chief of the defence staff between 2013 and 2016, criticised the decision to cut regular troop numbers during an appearance before the House of Commons Defence Committee on Tuesday.

He said: “It beggars belief to me that we have a reduced size of army.

“We have witnessed the first real formalised warfare above the threshold of war in Ukraine and [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and within weeks both sides have sort of run out of troops.”

Christopher McKeon reports:

[*Cutting army size ‘beggars belief’, former armed forces chief tells MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/lord-david-cameron-russia-hms-prince-of-wales-mps-b2361036.html)

Russian Navy to get two new nuclear submarines by end of year

The Russian Navy will receive two new nuclear submarines by the end of this year, a top official told Russia’s state news agency TASS.

The strategic nuclear-powered submarine missile cruiser Emperor Alexander III and the multipurpose nuclear-powered submarine Krasnoyarsk will be operational by the end of 2023, said Alexei Rakhmanov, head of the United Shipbuilding Corporation.

Cyprus president declares 'zero tolerance' policy on evasion of Russia sanctions

The president of Cyprus on Tuesday affirmed a “zero tolerance” policy toward any Cypriot citizen or company helping to evade international sanctions imposed on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) following last year’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

President Nikos Christodoulides underscored his administration’s mission to safeguard Cyprus’ name as a “credible business and financial center” after the U.S. and the U.K. recently included a handful of Cypriot nationals and Cyprus-registered companies on a list of “enablers” helping Russian oligarchs skirt sanctions.

Christodoulides told a news conference on his administration’s first 100 days in office that the issue affords Cyprus an opportunity to rebrand itself as a financial node connecting “East and West, the European market with the [*Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/middle-east) , Asia and Africa.”

Read more:

[*Cyprus president declares 'zero tolerance' policy on evasion of Russia sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/cyprus-ap-russia-ukraine-nicosia-b2360985.html)

Ukraine repatriates three POWs from Russia via Hungary -Kyiv

Kyiv repatriated three Ukrainian prisoners of war from Hungary after a group of POWs was transferred there from Russia without coordination with Kyiv, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Hungary, which under Prime Minister Viktor Orban has forged strong political and economic ties with Moscow, said on 9 June that Budapest had received a group of 11 Ukrainian prisoners of war from Russia.

“The Embassy of Ukraine in Budapest managed to bring back three Ukrainian prisoners of war from Hungary,” Ukrainian foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko wrote on his Facebook page.

Nikolenko said they were already back on Ukrainian soil and were receiving the support they needed.

He said Ukrainian diplomats and other relevant Ukrainian authorities were working to try to bring back the remaining prisoners of war.

Ukraine said on Monday that Hungary has been ignoring its requests for contact with the prisoners of war. It has cast the transfer of the POWs to Hungary as a publicity stunt by Orban.

Hungarian and international media quoted Orban’s chief-of-staff Gergely Gulyas as saying the soldiers arrived in Hungary of “their own free will” and that Kyiv was informed after their transfer.

EU leaders set to call on China to help stop Ukraine war -EU official

EU leaders are set to call on China next week to help bring an end to the war in Ukraine, engage in global challenges, such as climate change, and rebalance its economic relations with the European Union, a senior EU official said on Tuesday.

EU leaders meet for a summit in Brussels on 29-30 June, with China and economic security among the main topics. The call to China is set out in draft conclusions prepared ahead of the summit, which could still change.

The official said the draft conclusions were in line with the Group of Seven (G7) declaration from May, but with more specific EU-China issues, such as rebalancing the economic relationship and the need for reciprocity.

“I think it’s important that we set the notion of de-risking in stone and diversification,” the official said, referring to an EU policy to reduce its economic reliance on China.

The official said leaders were likely to focus their discussions on the role of China towards Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and economic ties. Western leaders have urged China to use its influence over Russia to stop the conflict.

Earlier on Tuesday, the European Commission presented a new economic security strategy, advocating stronger control of exports and outflows of technology. The Commission did not name China, but the country was clearly a focus of its thoughts.

The official said some EU member states were currently quite cautious on the proposal, given that granting of export licences and security are national competences.

Why haven't China and the U.S. agreed to restore military contacts?

U.S. Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) has wrapped up a closely watched visit to [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) during which he and President Xi Jinping pledged to stabilize plunging U.S-[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) ties. But China refused the biggest U.S. request: restoring military-to-military contacts.

Blinken said he raised the issue of military communications “repeatedly” but was rebuffed by the Chinese. “It is absolutely vital that we have these kinds of communications,” he said, adding that it was something the United States will “keep working on.”

Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and President Joe Biden have called often over the past few months for China to reestablish military communication channels with the U.S.

China has attributed its refusal to restart military communications to sanctions imposed by Washington, a possible reference to sanctions on its defense minister, Li Shangfu. They were part of a broad package of measures against Russia, predating its invasion of Ukraine, imposed in 2018 over Li’s involvement in China’s purchase of combat aircraft and anti-aircraft missiles from Moscow.

Read more:

[*Why haven't China and the U.S. agreed to restore military contacts?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-antony-blinken-taiwan-china-beijing-b2360974.html)

Watch: Dom Joly recalls childhood in war-torn Lebanon as he visits Ukraine

What nuclear weapons does Russia have?

The Russian president [*reportedly has access to the largest stockpile of nuclear weapons in the world.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-nuclear-weapons-putin-war-b2284148.html)

As of 2023, Russia has about 5,977 nuclear warheads, an estimated 1,500 awaiting dismantling, 2,565 deployed strategic warheads and 466 Intercontinental ballistic missiles and submarine-launched ballistic missiles, according to the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

Ukraine also inherited a large number of nuclear weapons after the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 but the country decided to fully de-nuclearise under the 1994 Budapest Memorandum.

A brief history of Putin’s love for nuclear weapons

President Joe Biden has said the threat of Russian President Vladimir Putin using tactical nuclear weapons is “real”, days after denouncing Russia’s deployment of such weapons in Belarus.

Biden called Putin‘s announcement that Russia had deployed its first tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus “absolutely irresponsible”.

“When I was out here about two years ago saying I worried about the Colorado river drying up, everybody looked at me like I was crazy,” Biden told a group of donors in California on Monday.

William Mata reports:

[*A brief history of Putin’s love for nuclear weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-putin-nuclear-russia-ukraine-b2292646.html)

Disaster response to destruction of Kakhovka dam ‘disappointing and inadequate,’ says son of Warren Buffet

The son of one of the United States’ richest men criticised the international disaster response to the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in southern Ukraine this month as “disappointing” and inadequate, as he visited the nearby city of Kherson.

Howard Buffett, a businessman and philanthropist made the comments today, two weeks after Kherson and dozens of other settlements were hit by catastrophic flooding when the dam was destroyed on June 6.

Buffett, whose foundation has committed $450 million to Ukraine, was in Kherson taking part in the distribution of aid.

“It’s disappointing. It’s hard to understand, to be honest with you. There are certain organisations that are set up to really respond to emergencies. They do it all over the world and they’ve done it for years,” he said.

Buffett said the international disaster response needed to be stepped up, describing houses that had collapsed in the flooding, others where water was being pumped out of them and others that were still completely submerged.

“There’s just not a lot of activity here. People really need it, they really need the water. It’s a mess,” he said.

“There’s a lot of help needed here. I’ve been really surprised that the international community has not responded with a much broader and stronger help.”

His comments echoed president Volodymyr Zelensky who expressed shock on June 7 at what he said was the failure of the United Nations and the Red Cross to offer rapid help.

Russia and Ukraine have accused each other of deliberately sabotaging the dam, which has been in Russian hands since shortly after the start of Russia’s invasion in February 2022.

Western countries say they are still gathering evidence but believe Ukraine would have had no reason to inflict such a catastrophe on itself.

Buffett has travelled to Ukraine several times during the war. His foundation has delivered farm equipment, combines and tractors and has helped with demining in the Kherson region, he said.

Russian-backed officials: woman killed in Ukraine drone attack on town of Nova Kakhovka

Ukrainian forces struck the Russian-controlled town of Nova Kakhovka in southern Kherson region with drones on Tuesday, killing one person and wounding four, the local Russian-appointed authorities said.

The morning attack on public service faciliies, reported on the Telegram social platform, was carried out by loitering munitions, also known as kamikaze drones.

Reuters could not independently verify the report.

The officials said the injured were rushed to hospital, while a woman died later from her injuries.

Ukraine downs Russian drones but some get through due to gaps in air protection

Ukrainian air defences downed 32 of 35 Shahed exploding drones launched by Russia early Tuesday, most of them in the [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) region, officials said, in a bombardment that exposed gaps in the country’s air protection.

Russian forces mostly targeted the region around the Ukrainian capital in a nighttime drone attack lasting around three hours, officials said, but Ukrainian air defences in the area shot down about two dozen of them.

The attack was part of a wider bombardment of Ukrainian regions that extended as far as the [*Lviv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lviv) region in the west of the country, near Poland.

Read the full story:

[*Ukraine downs Russian drones but some get through due to gaps in air protection*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-lviv-iron-dome-b2360728.html)

Blinken, Ukraine foreign minister discuss reforms for investment

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba on Tuesday discussed the need for Ukraine to continue to implement reforms to establish an environment for investment, the State Department said.

“They discussed the need for Ukraine to continue to implement reforms in order to establish an environment for investment and sustained economic growth,” the State Department said in a statement.

EU to train 30,000 members of Ukraine’s armed forces this year

EU member states plan to train 30,000 members of Ukraine’s armed forces this year, including from territorial defence units, AFP reports.

“In 2023, the EU Military Assistance Mission for Ukraine plans to train 30,000 Ukrainian armed forces personnel, including soldiers of the territorial defence forces,” the defence ministry in Kyiv said.

The EU made a pledge to train Ukraine’s armed forces in February this year.

Today in pictures

UN complains Russia won't let aid workers into areas hit by dam collapse in southern Ukraine

The United Nations has rebuked [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) for allegedly denying its aid workers access to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) n-occupied areas affected by the recent Kakhova dam collapse in southern Ukraine, which stranded residents, threatened power supplies and caused an environmental calamity as the war approaches 16 months.

The U.N. humanitarian coordinator for Ukraine, Denise Brown, said in a statement late Sunday that the organization has engaged with Moscow and [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , each of which occupies parts of the southern [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) region where the dam and reservoir are located, to address the “devastating destruction” caused by the breach.

The Russian government “has so far declined our request to access the areas under its temporary military control,” Brown said.

Susie Blann reports:

[*UN complains Russia won't let aid workers into areas hit by dam collapse in southern Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-moscow-kyiv-kherson-b2360062.html)

Cleverly steps up demands for Putin’s allies to pay reparations to Ukraine

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) and his allies should shoulder the burden of funding the reconstruction of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after the war, Foreign Secretary [*James Cleverly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-cleverly) said.

Although there was a role for international allies and the private sector in rebuilding Ukraine’s economy, Mr Cleverly said a significant amount of the burden – “perhaps even the majority” – should fall on [*Russians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) involved in the invasion.

The UK is hosting a major conference on Ukraine’s recovery this week and Mr Cleverly discussed the situation with his US counterpart [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) in London on Tuesday.

David Hughes reports:

[*Cleverly steps up demands for Putin’s allies to pay reparations to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/james-cleverly-ukraine-vladimir-putin-antony-blinken-russia-b2360956.html)

Cyprus president declares 'zero tolerance' policy on evasion of Russia sanctions

The president of Cyprus on Tuesday affirmed a “zero tolerance” policy toward any Cypriot citizen or company helping to evade international sanctions imposed on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) following last year’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

President Nikos Christodoulides underscored his administration’s mission to safeguard Cyprus’ name as a “credible business and financial center” after the U.S. and the U.K. recently included a handful of Cypriot nationals and Cyprus-registered companies on a list of “enablers” helping Russian oligarchs skirt sanctions.

Christodoulides told a news conference on his administration’s first 100 days in office that the issue affords Cyprus an opportunity to rebrand itself as a financial node connecting “East and West, the European market with the [*Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/middle-east) , Asia and Africa.”

Read the full story:

[*Cyprus president declares 'zero tolerance' policy on evasion of Russia sanctions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/cyprus-ap-russia-ukraine-nicosia-b2360985.html)

Dom Joly recalls childhood in war-torn Lebanon as he visits Ukraine

[*Dom Joly*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dom-joly) recalled his childhood in [*Beirut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beirut) during [*Lebanon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lebanon) ’s civil war as he travelled to southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to meet families who have survived months of intense fighting on the front line of the war.

The [*Save the Children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/save-the-children) ambassador visited Mykolaiv and surrounding villages, which have been subjected to relentless shelling and missile attacks, forcing thousands to of families to flee their homes.

“I think what really interests me about it is because I grew up in that sort of situation,” the comedian and writer said.

“It must’ve really affected me.”

Holly Patrick reports:

[*Dom Joly recalls childhood in war-torn Lebanon as he visits Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-dom-joly-lebanon-b2360963.html)

Fighter for Ukraine is jailed for 16 years in Russia

A former deputy commander of a Ukrainian militia unit was sentenced by a Russian court on Tuesday to 16 years in a penal colony for taking part in what Moscow considers an illegal armed group and receiving “terrorist” training, Russian media reported.

Denis Muryga was a senior member of Aidar, one of dozens of volunteer battalions that emerged in Ukraine after fighting broke out in 2014 with Russian-backed groups that declared breakaway “republics” in the east of the country.

The units, some with ultra-nationalist roots, were later absorbed into Ukraine’s armed forces.

Muryga was detained in spring 2022 on the Russia-Ukraine border. Russian military news outlet Zvezda published video of him listening with his head bowed to the sentence, which was slightly less than the 18 years prosecutors had demanded.

The Ukrainian military did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the case.

Ukraine says it successfully deploys 1,000 km drone

Ukraine has successfully used a domestically produced drone with a range of 1,000 km (620 miles), state arms producer Ukroboronprom said on Tuesday.

Ukroboronprom spokesperson Natalia Sad posted a selfie with a smiling Valerii Zaluzhnyi, Ukraine’s commander-in-chief, Mykola Oleshchuk, commander for the air force, and Yurii Husev, head of Ukroboronprom on Facebook. She said the picture was taken “after successful use of our drone for 1000 km”.

She provided no other details nor say if use of the drone meant it had been tested or actually deployed in the conflict.

Ukraine’s military, government, and private companies are working to create an arsenal of cheap and easy-to-produce drones whch they hope could become a game changer in the war against Russia. It has already employed drones for both reconnaissance and attacks.

In autumn 2022 Ukroboronprom said it was finalizing work on a new drone that had a range of 1000 km and a warhead weighing 75 kg.

On Tuesday, president Volodymyr Zelenskiy signed into law legislation to exempt domestic drone producers from customs duties and value-added tax, lawmaker Yaroslav Zheleznyak wrote on Telegram.

Ukrainian kickboxing champion killed while fighting Russian forces

A Ukrainian kickboxing champion has been killed fighting Russian forces, a website that tallies athletes killed in the war reported.

Maksym Bordus, who was in his early twenties, was killed on June 11 in “fierce fighting against Russian invaders”, the Sport Angels website said.

“Every day he brought Ukraine’s victory closer with a weapon in his hands, but he himself will not see it,” the website said.

Bordus was killed by a Russian shell while on a combat mission in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia on 11 June.

A petition was posted on president Volodymyr Zelensky’s website calling for Bordus to be posthumously awarded the title of “Hero of Ukraine”.

Sport Angels said he had won dozens of tournaments and was the World Association of Kickboxing (WAKO) champion of Ukraine.

‘You break it, you bought it,’ foreign secretary warns Putin as new sanctions legislation put in place

Foreign secretary James Cleverly said the plan to maintain sanctions until Russian reparations were paid to Ukraine “follows that simple premise that you break it, you bought it”.

The Government has set out plans for new laws which will enable sanctions targeted at Russian oligarchs, members of Russian president Mr Putin’s inner circle and those involved in his war machine to remain in place until reparations are made.

The UK is putting in place new legislation which also creates a new route to allow sanctioned individuals to donate frozen funds to Ukrainian reconstruction.

“There is a very strong principle of natural justice, whereby a significant, perhaps even the majority, burden for the rebuilding should sit on the shoulders of those who have been responsible for funding or facilitated this brutal, full scale invasion of Ukraine,” he said.

Putin and his allies should shoulder burden of funding Ukraine reconstruction after war, says foreign secretary

Vladimir Putin and his allies should shoulder the burden of funding the reconstruction of Ukraine after the war, foreign secretary James Cleverly said.

Although there was a role for international allies and the private sector in rebuilding Ukraine’s economy, Mr Cleverly said a significant amount of the burden -“perhaps even the majority” -should fall on Russians involved in the invasion.

The UK is hosting a major conference on Ukraine’s recovery this week and Mr Cleverly discussed the situation with his US counterpart Antony Blinken in London today.

Both Mr Cleverly and Mr Blinken spoke of the need for Kyiv to implement reforms so that it had a strong, prosperous democracy.

Mr Blinken said international allies would help Ukraine have “the strongest possible democracy which is actually necessary to achieve a thriving economy and for reconstruction”.

“If Ukraine is going to attract the investment it needs, not just from government, not just from the international financial institutions but from the private sector, it has to build the best possible environment to attract that investment,” he said during a visit to London.

Mr Blinken said he would announce a new “robust US assistance package” for Ukraine on Wednesday.

Major international conference to seek private-sector funds to rebuild Ukraine, says foreign secretary

UK foreign secretary James Cleverly said a major international conference this week would seek private-sector funds for the rebuilding of Ukraine.

Ahead of the Ukraine Recovery Conference in London, the foreign secretary said firms needed assurances these investments were “safe” and the Kyiv administration also needed to implement reforms.

Speaking alongside US secretary of state Antony Blinken, he said: “This week is very much about encouraging the private sector to invest in Ukraine’s rebuilding and recovery.

“We recognise that means we need to demonstrate that those investments will be effective and that they will be safe.

“That means the ongoing assurance that the Ukrainians seek that they will not be reinvaded once they have successfully regained their territory, their further integration into the Euro-Atlantic institutions and European institutions that they understandably aspire to.

“But of course it also means supporting them as they perform the reform of their institutions that will facilitate the investment in their country.”

Ukraine wants to join Nato and benefit from the security guarantee that comes with membership of the alliance.

US and UK ‘stand shoulder to shoulder’ in defence of Ukraine, says foreign secretary

The US and the UK “stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of Ukraine”, UK foreign secretary James Cleverly said in a tweet.

Mr Cleverly met with US secretary of state Antony Blinken in London today.

The UK and the US stand shoulder to shoulder in defence of Ukraine.Welcome to London, [*@SecBlinken*](https://twitter.com/SecBlinken?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/tJYstCsNB5*](https://t.co/tJYstCsNB5) — James Cleverly (@JamesCleverly) [*June 20, 2023*](https://twitter.com/JamesCleverly/status/1671155258633097222?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** helped push German population up 1.3% last year

Large numbers of refugees from Ukraine fleeing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war fueled a 1.3% rise in Germany’s population last year, helping push up the number of inhabitants in the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) ‘s most populous country to more than 84.4 million, official statistics showed Tuesday.

Germany’s population expanded by 1.12 million in 2022, the Federal Statistical Office said. That compared with an increase of just 0.1%, or 82,000 people, the previous year.

All of Germany’s 16 states saw their populations increase. The largest proportional increases were in the country’s two biggest cities, [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) and [*Hamburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hamburg) , which both saw rises of 2.1%.

Read the full story:

[***Ukrainian******refugees*** *helped push German population up 1.3% last year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-berlin-european-union-hamburg-b2360761.html)

UN has told Moscow its grain deal grievances cannot be solved, says Russia

The United Nations has confirmed that it cannot do anything to address some of Russia’s central grievances around the Black Sea grain deal, the state TASS news agency cited Russia’s Foreign Ministry as saying on Tuesday.

The international body is unable, in particular, to ensure the resumption of piped ammonia exports from Russia, the reconnection of its agricultural bank to the SWIFT payment system, or to ensure supplies of spare parts for agricultural machinery, the ministry was cited as saying.

One dead in Russian shelling of rescuer workers in Ukraine’s Kherson -Kyiv

At least one emergency worker was killed and several others were wounded in Russian shelling in the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson on Tuesday, the head of the president’s office said.

Russian forces fired at rescuer workers who were clearing mud from flood-hit Kherson and seven people were wounded, the official, Andriy Yermak, said on the Telegram messaging app.

Interior minister Ihor Klymenko said in a separate post that eight of the rescuers were wounded. Russia denies targeting civilians.

Comedian Dom Joly calls for Ukrainian children to be supported

Comedian Dom Joly has called for support for children who are being mentally and physically impacted in Ukraine, saying: “Whatever your views on conflicts... they are not to blame.”

The comic and Save The Children ambassador, who grew up in Beirut during Lebanon’s civil war, recently visited the city of Mykolaiv and surrounding villages which have been subjected to shelling and missile attacks.

Joly documented his time meeting families who are trying to rebuild their homes, school and communities after surviving months of intensive fighting in their hometowns.

He told the PA news agency: “Whatever your views on conflicts, who’s right, who’s wrong, what the political rightness is of the whole situation, kids certainly didn’t ask to be in that situation.

“They are not to blame and they’re not making any choices in that.

“And I think they’re also the most vulnerable.”

Having previously visited eastern Ukraine in 2018 with the charity, he admitted he “didn’t quite realise how challenging it would be” this time round.

Joly noted that he found the impact on mental health was a “massive issue” from just witnessing the children in these affected areas.

“We met kids that had been literally standing on train stations with shells landing around them, not knowing whether their mother had survived,” he recalled.

“But apart from anything else, the fact that you’ve had to leave your house, you leave all your friends, you move to a new area, you have no schooling.

“So just even the fact that kids spent a vast amount of time in shelters at the moment underground in Ukraine, they do most of their education online, so it’s very isolating.”

Today in pictures

A brief history of Putin’s love for nuclear weapons

President Joe Biden has said the threat of Russian President Vladimir Putin using tactical nuclear weapons is “real”, days after denouncing Russia’s deployment of such weapons in Belarus.

Biden called Putin‘s announcement that Russia had deployed its first tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus “absolutely irresponsible”.

“When I was out here about two years ago saying I worried about the Colorado river drying up, everybody looked at me like I was crazy,” Biden told a group of donors in California on Monday.

William Mata reports:

[*A brief history of Putin’s love for nuclear weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-putin-nuclear-russia-ukraine-b2292646.html)

Russia sees grain deal over by July 18 but more talks possible before then -RIA

Russia considers that the Black Sea grain deal will be finished by July 18, but does not rule out fresh talks with the United Nations on the matter before than, the RIA news agency reported on Tuesday.

RIA was citing Russia’s foreign ministry, which it also quoted as saying that Russia’s demand to restart the Togliatti-Odesa ammonia pipeline as part of the grain deal still stood though Moscow understood it would be impossible to restart it quickly after a blast this month.

Blinken: U.S. to set out a 'robust' assistance package for Ukraine

US secretary of state Antony Blinken said he would set out a new assistance package for Ukraine on Wednesday, as he reiterated Washington’s commitment to support Kyiv during a visit to London.

“President Biden said ... that we would stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, and both of our countries are deeply committed to that,” Blinken told reporters in a press conference alongside British foreign minister James Cleverly.

“We will continue to deliver on that commitment, including through a new robust US assistance package that I’ll be able to announce tomorrow.”

Russian soldier gets $12,000 for destroying German tank in Ukraine

A Russian soldier who destroyed a German Leopard tank in a battle in Ukraine has been given a one million rouble ($11,842) reward by a private foundation, Russia’s defence ministry said on Tuesday.

Scholz calls on China to raise pressure on Russia over Ukraine war

German chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday said he had called on China to use its influence over Russia more in regards to the war in Ukraine.

Speaking alongside China’s premier Li Qiang after bilateral talks in the German capital, Scholz also said China should not supply weapons to Russia and that the war in Ukraine should not become a frozen conflict.

Kremlin says it sees scant grounds for Ukraine peace talks after African mission

Russia sees scant chance of peace talks with Ukraine due to Kyiv’s stance on the issue despite constructive efforts by an African peace mission, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Tuesday.

Russian president Vladimir Putin had held “very productive” talks with African leaders on Saturday and remained open to dialogue and contacts on Ukraine, said Peskov.

But he told reporters that what he called the history of Kyiv’s position meant “one can hardly talk about stable grounds” for peace negotiations.

Russia jails dual national for fighting for Ukraine

A Russian court has sentenced a dual Ukrainian-Russian national to 16 years in prison on terrorism-linked charges for fighting alongside Kyiv’s forces in Ukraine.

Denis Muryga was accused by a Russian military court of fighting as part of Ukraine’s Aidar battalion, Russian news agencies reported.

Muryga joined the Ukrainian force in 2015, according to investigators.

He was accused of blowing up a bridge in Russian-controlled Luhansk, which “led to the death of people”.

RIA Novosti reported: “The defendant fully admitted his guilt and repented. During the debate on the case, the prosecutor asked the court to appoint him 18 years in a penal colony with a strict regime, the lawyer asked him for a minimum term.”

Kyiv in talks with Western weapons makers about setting up production in Ukraine

Ukraine is in negotiations with western arms manufacturers to boost production of weapons, Reuters reported.

Sergiy Boyev, deputy minister for Strategic Industries in Ukraine said: “We are in very detailed discussions with them. And we are certain that we will have the contracts agreements signed within the next few months.”

Boyev said Ukraine is in talks with manufacturers from Germany, Italy, France and eastern [*Europe*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/europe-news) about them producing weapons, including drones, in Ukraine itself.

Contracts could be signed in the coming months, Boyev said.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*I was called 'Putin's propaganda girl'. But I quit*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6529-7NW1-DY4H-K2D2-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

March 22, 2022 Tuesday 10:30 PM GMT

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**Section:** LONG READS,INDEPENDENT PREMIUM; Version:1

**Length:** 2221 words

**Byline:** Johanna Ross

**Highlight:** She fell in love with Russia and spent years defending Putin and his policies. But now, watching the unprovoked and violent invasion of Ukraine, Johanna Ross is left bitterly disillusioned

**Body**

When I was a child, the word '[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ' was, for me, one synonymous with tragedy. As my father spoke about our family story, his face fell as if he himself could feel the pain of all those who had suffered at the hands of the communists.

Memories were bittersweet. His mother, Eugenie Fraser, was a Russian emigree to Scotland in 1917. In her autobiography, The House by the Dvina, she documented the dramatic tale of how, as a teenager, she had sought refuge aboard a ship bound for Dundee with her mother, their jewellery and roubles sewn into their petticoats. After the revolution, my grandmother would never see her father and grandparents again. Those left behind met a sorry fate, having lost everything.

I am reminded of this story today as I watch countless ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) leave their families, and everything they hold dear, at the hands of Russian aggression, and I ask myself if there is some tragic inevitability to all this. Is Russia a nation fated to be associated with tragedy and suffering?

Have no doubt: this is just the beginning of the end of Putin's Russia. The suicidal decision to invade [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is already having a severe effect on Russian society, as Soviet-style censorship takes hold and young people, barred from the social media they thrive on, desperately look at ways to abandon the sinking ship and make a new life abroad.

This senseless, reckless move by Putin took us all by surprise. And it changed my view of the Russian government and its policies. Up until then, I had shared the view of most Russians. Having seen the strides the country had made in the past 20 years, and in particular how the lives of friends and relatives had blossomed under his leadership, I was convinced that Putin was the best thing for Russia since sliced chleb.

I studied Russian at the University of Edinburgh and the state university in St Petersburg, and spent several years living in Russia's "Venice of the North". I fell in love with a country that seemed to have moved on so far since the dark days of communism. As one of the first students from Scotland to visit the Soviet Union, the place I described to my father was almost unrecognisable from the Russia he had seen in the 1960s. Dreary cafeterias had been replaced by glamorous bars and Starbucks. Customer service was now a thing. God now existed... or so we thought.

The Georgian invasion of South Ossetia in 2008 was a turning point for me. By now I was fluent in Russian and was a regular viewer of Vesti. I realised there was a complete disconnect between what the western mainstream media was reporting about the conflict - that Russia had invaded Georgia - and what the Russian news was reporting, which was that the South Ossetians had been targeted by Georgian president Mikheil Saakashvili, and Russian tanks had crossed the border to defend the South Ossetians.

Back then I had no doubt in my mind which story to believe: the Russian media had many more journalists on the ground, providing detail that the English-speaking western journos just couldn't provide as they sat tight in Tbilisi hotel rooms away from the action. Georgia had started the war - something that an EU report later confirmed.

Following the Maidan revolution of 2013, I also had no doubt in my mind as to who was to blame. I had seen footage of US assistant secretary of state Victoria Nuland handing out cookies to protesters in Kyiv; I'd heard her infamous "F\*\*\* the EU" phone call with colleagues as they discussed who they thought should be the next Ukrainian president, as if it were a game of chess.

The overthrowing of a democratically elected government was never something I was going to support, and it made it worse to think it could be part of a western regime-change plot. After all, it wouldn't be the first time the west had engaged in such covert action. The CIA and MI6 had supported fascist leader Stepan Bandera in the 1940s to subvert the USSR (read Rory Cormac's Disrupt and Deny for more on that). History was repeating itself.

Feeling an inherent sense of injustice at the way the Maidan revolution was being portrayed in the western media, with all its mistranslations and mispronunciations of Russian language, I felt compelled to do my own writing on the subject. I joined US expat media project Russia Insider - an English-language site aimed at reporting the truth on Russia. I volunteered there for several months, debunking inaccurate and misleading stories about Russia in the mainstream media.

At that time, there appeared to be a great deal of reporting taking place by journalists who did not speak Russian and were writing stories based on second-hand translations.

What has been interesting to observe is the transition Russian media has undertaken, in recent years, from left to right Then, one cold December day in 2015, I noticed a news item in The Herald about Russian news agency Sputnik opening an office in Edinburgh. Unlike many, I was aware of Sputnik as we had analysed Russian media sources at university. I jumped at the chance to apply, elated with the prospect that I could somehow "get the truth out" about Russia and its actions, which were always painted negatively. I wrote to a general email address displayed on the website, never really expecting to get a response. A few days later I was contacted by the bureau chief, Oxana, and we arranged a meeting at a location of my choice.Once hired, I became involved in everything from trips to Ikea to fit out the Sputnik office to writing job adverts for radio and journalist positions, barely knowing myself what they consisted of. Unfazed by the challenge, however, I was intent on proving I was up to the job, and did my research. Soon, over coffee and shortbread, we were interviewing prospective candidates in Edinburgh's five-star Sheraton Hotel, situated close to the Sputnik office in Exchange Tower. Then, as soon as we had built up a team and moved into the office, the British media launched its own attack on the company, labelling us "Putin's [*propaganda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/propaganda) girls". This was the beginning of a media onslaught that continues to this day. At Sputnik I was thrown in at the deep end like never before. But I learnt a huge amount during the three years I was there - about the news business in general, but also about how Russian media operates. That's for another day. What I will say is that it's far from the slick, well-oiled propaganda machine it is made out to be in the western press, and in its defence, it did provide platforms for alternative viewpoints that would not otherwise have been given airtime in the mainstream media. As for its motivations, I think that's pretty self-explanatory. But people would be mistaken to think its management was a bunch of militant ideologues. As a Russian journalist once said to me: "The best communists were the East Germans." The Russians, he explained, simply weren't disciplined enough. It's a stereotype, perhaps, but my time working in Russian media would only reinforce this idea. In the outlets I've worked for, opinions among senior management figures ranged from not supporting Putin at all to completely apolitical. What has been interesting to observe is the transition Russian media has undertaken, in recent years, from left to right. When I first joined this field, many anti-war activists and left-wingers were given a voice; in the past few years there has been a clear change of direction, reflecting the country's foreign policy position. Since roughly the time of Donald Trump's election at the end of 2016, Russia has self-identified as conservative and has attempted to align itself with right-wing parties across the globe, whether it be Viktor Orban's Fidesz, Marine Le Pen's Front National, or AfD in Germany. This approach backfired, however, in Britain. Instead of supporting Jeremy Corbyn and his anti-imperialism, Russia backed the Tories, not understanding that Conservative politics in the UK does not necessarily mean conservative policies, or taking a softer stance towards Putin. I didn't fully appreciate Russia's shift towards the far right until recently, when it invaded Ukraine. It is a tragic irony that Russia is waging war on Ukraine to "defeat neo-Nazism" when Russia itself has sunk further into the ultra-nationalist quagmire. As thousands of Russians marched every year on their Victory Day parade, or "Immortal Regiment", clutching photographs of their deceased relatives who defeated fascism in the Second World War, they have been oblivious of the road to perdition that their government was about to take them on. Yet extreme nationalism is nothing new for Russia. When I was studying in St Petersburg in 2006-7, neo-Nazi groups attacked, and in one case killed, a student from an ethnic minority background. At that time, violent racism was a problem in Russia, and Africans and Asians genuinely feared for their lives. Now, seeing videos of angry, bullish men in their black tops branded with the letter Z, like others I am sadly reminded of the Nazi swastika. Putin's imperialist mission in Ukraine is being compared to Hitler's Second World War ambitions, and it's hard to argue against this. The Navalny poisoning in 2020 did force me to question the official Kremlin narrative. After this, I decided I would cease writing for Russian media as soon as it was financially viable

I only wish I had seen the light earlier. Since my decision to abandon Russian media, cease writing for website InfoBrics, and oppose the war in Ukraine, I have been at the receiving end of a barrage of condemnation on Twitter. One ex-colleague said I had "lost it", another declared he would "turn his back on me and walk away in disgust". Many suggested I had somehow been forced into adopting the British stance.

This is not the case. No one has twisted my arm in this way: my opposition to the war in Ukraine is rooted in the basic human values and principles most of us hold dear. It is also not the first time I have had doubts about the Russian position on certain events. The Skripal poisoning of 2017 caused me to think twice about the Russian version of events - yet there seemed to me at the time discrepancies in the British story that still left room for doubt, as journalist Mary Dejevsky has also noted.

The Navalny poisoning in 2020 did force me to question the official Kremlin narrative. After this, I decided I would cease writing for Russian media as soon as it was financially viable. In particular I disliked Putin's arrogant and rather sinister response to questions about Navalny, that "they could have killed him if they wanted to", and I found it quite odd that he never had the guts to utter Navalny's name but would refer to him only as "the Berlin patient". In this way, the Russian president confirmed the widely held view that he is afraid of Navalny.

Around this time I began watching TV Rain, the only Russian channel that gave open, honest coverage of the story.

Tragically, such independent media in Russia is now consigned to the past. Veteran opposition radio station Echo Moskvi has been replaced by Sputnik on the Moscow airwaves. I now send friends in Russia reports on the Ukraine crisis they don't have access to there - such as those that include the confessions of Russian soldiers, or images of war crimes. One wrote to me saying she had been crying about the war, was looking to emigrate, and asked me to keep sending her news from British sources.

I feel it's the least I can do in the current situation, and part of me naturally regrets that I defended Putin and his policies for so long, given this brutal, unprovoked attack on a sovereign nation.

Perhaps I was incredibly naive, but I can only say that I believed what I was doing was right, and that Russia at that time was the only country standing up to US imperialism and catastrophic western regime-change operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya and elsewhere. Perversely, Russia is now waging its own regime-change operation, in the "western fashion", as one Sky News commentator said this week. How things have changed.

And I've changed also. For now, I don't trust a word that comes out of the Kremlin, regardless of whether it is true or not. I will always love Russia and its long-suffering, warm and generous people, but the fact is, they are worthy of a much, much better government. All the economic and social progress made in the last 20 years is being eroded in front of our eyes. The cycle of tragedy for the Russian people has to be broken - we're now living in the 21st century, in the globalised world, and they deserve a stable, democratic government.

I don't think Russia is a special case, as some would have us believe; that only a strong leader can rule it. Strength is what is being demonstrated right now by Volodymyr Zelensky and his people - not by Putin and his entourage, who don't even have the courage to use the word "war".

I may have defended Russia on the front lines of the information war, but I can no longer support the lies and barefaced aggression exhibited now by the Russian state. Make no mistake - 'Putin's propaganda girl' has quit.

Johanna Ross is a freelance writer on Russia. You can follow her on [*Twitter*](https://twitter.com/shottlandka) .

**Load-Date:** March 22, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9C-3R21-DY4H-K3TM-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 3880 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Joe Middleton

**Highlight:** Ukrainian troops shot down the Russian aircraft in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka, Kyiv claimed

**Body**

At least seven people, including three children, have been killed overnight after a Russian drone hit a petrol station in the north-eastern city of Kharkiv.

The strike caused a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses, while 50 people were evacuated as emergency workers tackled the blaze.

It comes as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced [*him with Oleksandr Syrsky.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/general-oleksandr-syrskyi-valerii-zaluzhnyi-b2493036.html)

It follows days of speculation that [*Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-when-time-b2492651.html) , who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In other developments, Ukrainian troops have shot down a [*Russian attack helicopter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/republican-senators-ukraine-border-trump-b2492267.html) in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) claimed.

Meanwhile, Russian forces launched the [*second largest combined drone*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html) and missile strike on Ukraine this year with around 64 munitions hitting the country, according to a [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) think tank.

Key Points

Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant Explosions rock Kyiv as Russia launches huge wave of strikes against Ukraine

Friday 9 February 2024 13:36 , Chris Stevenson We are pausing our coverage for now. Thanks for reading.For the latest on the reaction to Tucker Carlson’s interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin, please [*click here.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-video-news-b2493555.html)

Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership

[*Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-zelensky-zaluzhny-stalemate-b2490755.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries

[*Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-drones-baykar-kyiv-russia-b2491543.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Patients travelling to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, shadow health minister says

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced him with Oleksandr Syrsky.

It follows days of speculation that Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhnyf, who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In a separate statement, Zaluzhny said he had an “important and serious conversation” with Zelensky and that a decision had been made to change battlefield tactics and strategy.

“The tasks of 2022 are different from the tasks of 2024. Therefore, everyone must change and adapt to new realities as well. To win together too,” his statement said on Telegram messenger.

Colonel-General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who has led Ukraine’s ground forces since 2019, was promoted to commander of the armed forces on Thursday as the war with Russia nears its third year.

Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for another five years

[*Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for five years*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-britain-free-trade-war-latest-b2492596.html)

Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian presidential challenger banned from running against Putin

[*Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian challenger banned from running against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-nadezhdin-putin-russian-candidate-b2486367.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Belarusian special forces looking for Ukrainian informants

Belarus has been increasingly targeting Ukrainians living in the country over the last month and is actively “looking for informants”, Ukraine’s National Resistance Centre claimed.

The organisation, which is part of Kyiv’s Special Operations Forces, said cases of Ukrainians being summoned for questioning in Belarus had “become more frequent”.

“The Belarusian special services are looking for informants among Ukrainians and plan, on the contrary, to involve them in cooperation,” it said.

Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims

Ukrainian troops have shot down a Russian attack helicopter in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, Kyiv claimed.

Troops used a portable anti-aircraft missile to take down the Ka-52 Alligator aircraft, according to commander Oleksandr Tarnavskyi.

It comes after the UK ministry of defence said Avdiivka remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Ten Ukrainian attacks ‘repelled’ and up to 290 troops killed or wounded, Russia claims

Putin’s troops have repelled 10 Ukrainian attacks over Russian-occupied Donetsk, according to Moscow’s defence ministry.

The ministry said units had also killed or wounded up to 290 members of Ukraine’s military.

It said Russian forces had taken “more advantageous lines and positions” and “hit clusters of manpower and hardware” along defence brigades in the region.

Italy to help repair roof of Ukraine's Odesa cathedral

Italy will help with the rebuilding of a cathedral in the Ukrainian city of Odesa that was badly damaged by a missile strike last year, the Italian foreign ministry said.

Italy and UNESCO signed an agreement in Kyiv to provide 500 million euros ($539 million) towards the restoration of the roof of Odesa’s Spaso-Preobrazhenskyi Cathedral, or Transfiguration Cathedral.

“Italy is very committed, through its institutions and its industrial capacity, to the reconstruction of Ukraine,” ambassador Pier Francesco Zazo said.

Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’

[*Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/avdiivka-attack-latest-ukraine-russia-b2492747.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Two officers injured in overnight 'mass attack', says Ukraine's national police

Two officers have been injured in an overnight Russian drone attack, Ukraine’s national police has said.

The force said Russia launched a “mass attack” on the city of Odesa overnight, damaging a six-storey building and an “educational institution”, according to a post on Telegram.

It said the two policeman were patrolling and on their way to help residents when they were hit. They have both suffered mine-explosive injuries but they are in a stable condition, it added.

Germany’s Scholz praises Biden for united Russia response ahead of visit

US president Joe Biden’s leadership is critical in ensuring a united response to Russian aggression, German chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

“Our message is clear: We have to do our utmost to prevent Russia from winning” in Ukraine, Mr Scholz wrote in the Wall Street Journal.

“The long-term consequences and costs of failing to stop Mr. Putin’s aggression would dwarf any of the investments that we are making now.”

Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant

A huge explosion has rocked a Russian missile plant in what state media claimed was a “planned rocket engine test”, footage appears to show.

The blast was recorded near the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant, which manufactures missile engines and strategic ballistic missiles in Izhevsk, Russia.

“We received a notification from the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant. It was a rocket engine test. A planned event, not an emergency,” Zavyalovsky District united dispatch service said.

Russia launches 600 guided munitions at Avdiivka in last month, MoD says

Vladimir Putin’s troops have launched around 600 guided munitions at the besieged town of Avdiivka, Ukraine, over the last month, the UK’s ministry of defence said.

The MoD said the town remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 08 February 2024. Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3*](https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/4LnM1CcdGT*](https://t.co/4LnM1CcdGT) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*February 8, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1755513566872895488?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Biden blames trump for sinking US deal to fund Ukraine war effort

President Joe Biden has blamed Donald Trump for sinking a bill set to deliver billions of dollars of aid to Ukraine after Republicans ditched their support over pressure from the former president.

The $118bn deal would also include aid to Israel and Taiwan, as well as securing immigration along the US’s southern border with Mexico.

“He’d rather weaponise this issue than actually solve it. For the last 24 hours, he’s done nothing at all but reach out to Republicans in the House and the Senate and threaten them and try to intimidate them to vote against this proposal. And it looks like they’re caving,” Mr Biden said.

The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin

The sound of Colombian Spanish fills a hospital treating soldiers wounded fighting Russian forces.

Ukraine‘s ranks are depleted by two years of war. As it battles Putin’s war machine, Ukraine is welcoming hardened fighters from one of the world’s longest-running conflicts.

Professional soldiers from Colombia bolster the ranks of volunteers from around the world who have answered Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s call for foreign fighters to join his nation’s war with Russia.

[*The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/colombia-soliders-ukraine-putin-russia-b2492677.html)

11 out of 17 Russian drones downed over Ukraine, air force says

Ukrainian air defence and mobile drone hunter groups shot down 11 out of 17 Russia-launched drones over four regions of the country, the air force said.

It said in a statement the Iranian-made Shahed drones were downed over the Odesa and Mykolayiv regions in the south, the Dnipropetrovsk region in the southeast, and the central Vinnytsia region.

Regional officials said the drone attack damaged more than 20 residential houses and commercial buildings in the city of Mykolayiv and hit civilian infrastructure facilities in Odesa on the Black Sea in the south.

There were no casualties reported. Details of damage in other regions were not immediately clear.

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has ordered officials to create a separate branch of the army [*dedicated to drones as*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-drone-attack-putin-b2471862.html) they have been instrumental in [*Ukraine’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) [*fight against Russian forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-tucker-carlson-news-b2491210.html).

“I have just signed a decree [*initiating the establishment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-general-baranov-interview-b2438262.html) of a separate branch of our defence forces – the unmanned systems forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

Norway’s defence minister urged his country to be ready for a possible conflict with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) even after the end of Moscow’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

He said Russia might retaliate in response to [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) and [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s new Nato membership. Other Nato nations have also explicitly warned of Russia’s aggression and plans to disrupt peace in the region in the past few months.

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail

A [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) court has ordered the arrest of a bestselling novelist living in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on charges of “justifying terrorism” – the latest incident in a Kremlin [*crackdown on Russians opposing the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-kara-murza-russia-putin-prison-b2487232.html) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Grigory Chkhartishvili, known under the pen name Boris Akunin, was [*charged in absentia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-akunin-foreign-agent-russia-ukraine-b2478254.html) by Moscow’s Basmanny District Court on Tuesday. He is now under an arrest warrant and will be detained if he returns to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

[*A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-arrest-ukraine-war-boris-akunin-b2491473.html)

Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) fired cruise and ballistic missiles and Shahed-type drones at targets across Ukraine on Wednesday morning, authorities reported, killing at least three civilians and injuring 10 others, including a pregnant woman.

The attacks targeted at least three major cities, including the capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , where the European Union’s top diplomat, [*Josep Borrell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/josep-borrell) , was discussing military aid and financial support for Ukraine.

[*Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-josep-borrell-kyiv-b2491968.html)

NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin

U.S. national security adviser [*Jake Sullivan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jake-sullivan) said that he and his NATO counterparts cautioned [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) on Wednesday against further delaying Sweden’s membership in the military alliance, and he warned that patience in Washington has its limits.

Lawmakers from the party of Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) boycotted an emergency session of parliament on Monday where a vote was scheduled to place Sweden’s bid to join NATO on the legislative agenda, adding to 18 months of delays that have angered Hungary’s allies.

[*NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/jake-sullivan-ap-sweden-hungary-nato-b2492325.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum after police arrest him outside Oslo bar

A former commander of Russia’s [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) mercenary group who fled to Norway last year has been denied [*asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum) but will not be deported as it is too dangerous to send him back, his lawyer has said.

Andrei Medvedev, who escaped Russia in January 2023 across its Arctic border with Norway, has described running as Russian guards shot at him. He has spoken about his time fighting in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as part of Wagner.

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson’s false claim that no Western journalists tried to interview Putin

The [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) has slapped down a claim by far-right influencer [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) that no Western journalists have [*tried to interview*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/tucker-carlson-putin-interview-russia-b2491724.html) Russian president Vladimir Putin about his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr [*Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-donald-trump-fox-news-a9635091.html) accused the Western media of engaging in “fawning pep sessions” with Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , whom he has previously called a “dictator” and likened to a rat, while confidently asserting that “not a single Western journalist has bothered to interview the president of the other country involved in this conflict: Vladimir Putin”.

[*Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson claim that no Western media tried to interview Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-vladimir-putin-interview-b2492192.html)

Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army

After a brief discussion, the upper house of Russia’s parliament on Wednesday endorsed a bill that would allow authorities to confiscate money, valuables and other assets from people convicted of spreading “deliberately false information” about the country’s military.

The bill, which was approved equally quickly by the lower house last week, is expected to receive Russian President Vladimir Putin’s signature and become law soon.

[*Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-moscow-vladimir-putin-ukraine-soviet-b2492022.html)

Refugees going back to Ukraine and people pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, minister says

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.

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr Zelensky has ordered his officials to create a separate branch of the army specially dedicated to drones as they have been instrumental in Ukraine’s fight against Russian forces in the continuing invasion.

“I have just signed a decree initiating the establishment of a separate branch of our Defence Forces – the Unmanned Systems Forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address on Tuesday.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

North Korean missiles used in Kharkiv attack, claims local police official

Two of the five missiles fired at Ukraine’s second largest city on Wednesday morning were provided by North Korea, a local official has said.

Serhiy Bolvinov, head of the investigative department of the Kharkiv region police, said they had found the remnants of two North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.

"Metal fragments of ballistic missiles were collected by explosives on the territory of the industrial zone,” he said. “The preliminary conclusions of specialists are that they are North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.”

The United States, Ukraine and six allies have previously accused Russia of using North Korean ballistic missiles and launchers supplied by Pyongyang in aerial attacks against Ukraine, in violation of United Nations sanctions.

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*IKEA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ikea) has extended its trademark in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in a bid to stop copycat stores that are opening up across the country amid [*Putin’s war on Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-attack-news-b2491914.html)

The country has officially extended the validity of trademarks for the Swedish furniture giant until August 2033, a move brand owner Inter IKEA said was driven by the need to protect the company’s intellectual property rights.

Like many large Western firms, IKEA halted its Russian operations shortly after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and completed the sale of its factories the following year.

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Labour peer claims peace deal with Moscow would be ‘cheaper for all'

Seeking to strike a peace deal with Moscow and end the war in Ukraine would be “cheaper for all”, a Labour peer has told the House of Lords.

Former MP Lord Campbell-Savours made the call as the two-year anniversary of Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine approaches.

Foreign minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon responded to the Labour peer by noting that it was the Kremlin which was the aggressor and that Mr Putin had it in his power to end the war now.

The Labour frontbench also made clear it backed the UK government’s stance.

Russia claims to shoot down seven rockets over Belgorod

Russia’s air defence systems destroyed seven Ukraine-launched rockets and two drones over the southwestern region of Belgorod, the Russian defence ministry has claimed.

The Ukrainian strike was carried out with Czech-made Vampire rockets, the ministry said – the same type which, according to Moscow, was used in deadly strikes on the city of Belgorod in late December.

Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said two people had been injured.

‘No plan B’ to getting Ukraine aid package through US Congress, White House says

The White House is focused on getting a Ukraine aid package through the US Congress, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan has said – warning there was no “plan B”.

“We believe we still can and will deliver aid for Ukraine,” Mr Sullivan told reporters during a joint press conference with Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg.

The latter said it was vital the US Congress agreed on continued support for Ukraine in the near future, adding that Nato did not see “any imminent threat against any Nato ally”.

“We must sustain our support and that is a responsibility for all allies,” Mr Stoltenberg said.

Watch: Tucker Carlson reveals he's interviewing Putin in Moscow

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2024

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[*'Youngest Soviet defector' sees himself in Ukrainian children fleeing Putin: 'Reliving my plight to be free'*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:652X-0CP1-DY4H-K4JR-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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

**Length:** 2484 words

**Byline:** Rachel Sharp

**Highlight:** EXCLUSIVE : Exclusive: Walter Polovchak became known as the 'youngest Soviet defector' when, aged 12, he fought to stay in the freedom of America and not be sent back to Soviet-controlled Ukraine. Now, aged 54, he tells Rachel Sharp how he fears Putin is taking away Ukraine's freedom once again and why the country that welcomed him in with open arms as a boy over 40 years ago should be doing more today

**Body**

Walter Polovchak sees his 12-year-old self in the faces of the children fleeing from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) 's brutal attacks.

The new world that Mr Putin is now trying to force on the Ukrainian people is the very same world that he escaped when he left Soviet-controlled [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and fought for his freedom to stay in America more than four decades ago.

"To me it is like reliving my plight to live in the US and to be free, as this is the same stuff that I was leaving -the manipulation, the corruption, the government control," he tells The Independent.

"I see the horror and fear in the eyes of children, the people running for their lives.

"I watch this and it brings back a lot of emotions, fears, concerns -all the many feelings I went through when I was 12, 13, 14, 15 years old and wanted the freedom to stay in this country."

Now a 54-year-old married father-of-two living in a [*Chicago*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chicago) suburb, as a boy Mr Polovchak was known as the "youngest Soviet [*defector*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/defector) ".

It was January 1980 and his parents Michael and Anna Polovchak moved with their three children Nataly, Walter and Michael to the US from Ukraine.

At the time, Ukraine was part of the USSR and "everything was corrupt and the government took everything you had", he explains.

As they settled into their new life in 1980s Chicago and started learning to speak English, Mr Polovchak recalls experiencing freedom for the first time.

"All I saw when I came to this country was 'wow, we have freedom here'," he says.

"Freedom to speak your mind, freedom of religion -no one was following you to church and punishing you. Freedom to move from state to state."

He says it was what people growing up in the US would see as the "little basic things" that surprised him the most.

"I was amazed to walk into a food store and even dogs and cats had their own aisles for food. It was this basic kind of stuff," he says.

"There were no lines to buy food and the more you bought from stores, the happier the stores were.

"Being brought up under Soviet rule and Russian propaganda I was used to going into stores and there being no food so you would have to wait in line for hours."

But, while he and 17-year-old Nataly enjoyed their new-found freedom away from Soviet rule, his father struggled to adapt and, later that year, decided to take the family back.

The Russian government told his father that the whole family must return to the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) together.

"I asked my father to give it a chance here and he said 'no, you're coming back or I'll call the police and get them to tie you up and throw you on a plane to take you back'," says Mr Polovchak.

"That was how things went in Soviet Ukraine."

A boy at the centre of a Cold War battle

What happened next thrust 12-year-old Walter into the centre of a Cold War battle between the Soviet Union and the West, communism rule versus democracy and freedom.

It made him a household name across the globe.

And it also put a KGB target on his head.

Afraid of being forced back to Soviet Ukraine, Mr Polovchak and his older sister ran away from home to stay with their cousins.

"Having lived under the Russian government, I knew what was waiting for me and I knew that if I went back I would never get a chance at having this freedom again," explains Mr Polovchak.

Weeks later, the police tracked them down and arrested the 12-year-old boy.

But when he told them through a translator his reason for running away, the US government rallied behind Mr Polovchak's cause.

That same day, on the advice of the State Department, officials began custody proceedings in Illinois court so that he would be placed in state custody.

The 12-year-old also filed for political asylum in the US and, two days later, it was granted.

His parents wound up returning to Ukraine without him, taking their youngest son Michael, and later having another daughter Julia.

For the next five-plus years, they fought in both state family and federal courts to get their son back and take him back to the Soviet-controlled country.

Mr Polovchak's case dragged out until he reached the age of 18.

Then, just days after his birthday, he was sworn in as a US citizen, bringing an end to the legal wrangling.

"It was over five years of court battles and foster homes and 24-hour Secret Service protection for fear I would be kidnapped by the KGB," says Mr Polovchak.

"It became an international incident as I was speaking out against the Soviet Union and its repression and its government.

"It was a huge embarrassment to them during the Cold War and every effort was made by them to retrieve me and bring me back."

He adds: "I was just a 12-year-old old kid wanting to stay in America but, looking back at my story, I was kind of 50 million people who were hoping the world would come together and help them sustain democracy and freedom."

Heading backwards

It's a freedom and democracy that the rest of the Ukrainian people have also fought for and achieved over the last three decades, following the collapse of the Soviet Union in the 1990s.

But now, one month on from when [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) declared war on Ukraine, Mr Polovchak fears his native country is at risk of heading backwards to how he remembers it as a child if Mr Putin succeeds in taking control.

"There is absolutely this fear," he says.

"There's definitely a concern that Russia will keep on going as war criminal Putin has set in his mind that he wants to recreate the former Soviet Union."

The 54-year-old says it is "really disheartening" but "not shocking" to watch the "absolute horrors" being carried out by Russian forces on Ukrainians today.

"Russia is mercilessly killing Ukrainian children and families, destroying neighbourhoods, opera houses, churches and anything they can basically hit," he says.

"It's very shocking but not surprising. The Russian government and Putin are thugs. They cannot be trusted, they consistently lie about everything -it's nothing but lies and propaganda.

"I hope for the children and families today who are running for their lives and leaving everything behind that Ukraine will prevail and they can live their normal, free lives again."

For now, Ukrainian children have no choice but to leave their country in order to be free from Russian aggression.

It's an escape that echoes his own, where leaving behind his home country to begin a new life in the US was the only way he could experience freedom over 40 years ago.

But there is one major difference separating Mr Polovchak and the 12-year-olds in Ukraine today: the children fleeing their war-torn homes have known freedom their whole lives.

"The children there now have a different perspective as they were born into freedom. Most people aged 35 and under don't know anything about communism except for hearing about it in stories," he says.

"Ukraine is a free country now just like here in the US -there is freedom of movement, freedom of speech, freedom from oppression and that is what Russia is attacking."

Mr Polovchak says Russian citizens have "never experienced freedom" in their country as the government "has always controlled and lied to the people".

But, with Ukraine being free from Russian rule for decades, it is not surprising to see everyday people refusing to bow down to Mr Putin.

"You can't take a country that has had freedom for 30 years, where people have been able to live free and prosperous lives and then just pull the rug away," he says.

"That's why Russia has faced so much resistance from the Ukrainian military and why people young and old have united to stop it."

Welcome to the US

Mr Polovchak also sees a glaring difference in America's response to helping Ukrainians today compared with his experience when the country welcomed him in with open arms as a boy.

More than 3.6 million people have already fled to other countries since the start of the war -mostly to Poland, where officials have called on the US to do more to help with the escalating refugee crisis.

This week, the Biden administration finally announced that the US would welcome up to 100,000 ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** evacuating from the war-torn country.

Details of the plan are scarce but it is one of the first concrete actions taken to actively enable Ukrainians to seek refuge in America, where many already have relatives.

Mr Polovchak feels that the US could be doing more to welcome children and families who have been left with no choice but to leave their homes -and lives -behind.

"The US could do more, the whole world could do more," he says.

"Ukraine is blessed to have great border countries like Poland that have truly welcomed everyone fleeing Ukraine with open arms and are doing everything they can to help.

"But many countries are watching the terror of families and kids."

As both a Ukrainian and an American, Mr Polovchak says he is also "disheartened" by the political and military response from the country he chose to make a life in toward the situation in the country he was born in.

"What's most disheartening is that, while the world is providing weapons, no one wants to get involved as they say they don't want to start World War Three. But we're actually watching World War Three -it's happening before our eyes," he says.

He likens the US and other NATO nations refusing to send in troops because Ukraine is not a member to "sitting at a poker table and not being able to play because you don't have an ace card".

"It's like being here in a town in Chicago, seeing the town across on fire and not sending in the fire department because it's not your town," he says.

"That's the biggest and most difficult thing to watch that, yes, they're providing weapons and supporting Ukraine but there needs to be help closing the skies and protecting people."

He asks: "It's not only the US but also to NATO and the West and the entire democratic free world: where are you?

"Here you have free Ukrainians gasping for air and freedom, doing everything they can to protect their land and people and the world is just saying 'we can't get involved'.

"It's a disaster and it's not only the US but all NATO countries are shaking in their boots and don't know what to do."

Mr Polovchak's message to President Joe Biden is to help Ukraine by giving the country what President Volodymyr Zelensky is asking.

The Ukrainian president has been calling on NATO to issue a no-fly zone -a request that has been repeatedly rebuffed by NATO countries as officials say they don't want to escalate tensions between their own countries and Russia.

But, Mr Polovchak says that, with history repeating itself, it's clear Mr Putin isn't going to stop with Ukraine.

"Then are we going to keep sitting here and watching or are we going to do something about it?" he asks.

To his fellow Americans, Mr Polovchak urges people not to be complacent just because it's "not on your backyard".

"It doesn't mean it can't get here," he warns.

"We have a tendency to think it's not our problem because it's far away but it is truly a democratic free world problem."

Americans can all relate to being attacked "because somebody doesn't like the way they live", he says, pointing to the September 11 terrorist attacks and the attack on Pearl Harbor.

He adds: "I would love to see the younger generation be more educated on what freedom is and what we have in this country now."

No regrets

Mr Polovchak says his fears of Russia targeting his own personal freedom have now gone -something that was a concern for a long time even after he became an American citizen in 1985.

He was estranged from his parents for years before they rebuilt their relationship and, after the Soviet Union fell, he returned to visit his home country for the first time in 15 years.

Those first trips in 1995 and 1997 were tense as he says he was being followed.

But, after that, as Ukraine transformed into a country free of Soviet control, he says he has always felt free in his country of birth.

"I watched the country transition from corruption into the beautiful country that it became over 30 years of freedom," he says.

He has now visited 14 times -seeing his parents while they were alive and his younger sister Julia who still lives near Kharkiv.

Despite loving the country that Ukraine became once it was free from Soviet rule, Mr Polovchak says his home will always be in the US.

"I've been in the US for 42 years and I'm as happy today as I was when I made the decision to stay," he says.

"I love this country and I love my freedom. I have never regretted my decision."

Four decades on from his plight, Mr Polovchak lives in a suburb of Chicago with his wife Margaret, with whom he has two sons -28-year-old Alec who now lives in Maryland and 19-year-old Kyler who lives in Indiana.

He has taken both of his sons on trips to Ukraine as well as to places across the US and other parts of the world as he believes "it's important to see how other people live".

Meanwhile, his younger brother Michael -who later moved to join him in the US and is now happily married to a woman who lived across the street from him in Ukraine -and older sister Nataly also live close by.

Mr Polovchak says they are all worried about and are keeping in constant contact with Julia and his nephew and cousins who are still at their homes in Ukraine "afraid for their lives" as the war rages on.

His cousin Walter Polowczak -the cousin who helped him stay in the US four decades ago -is part of a charity called [*Ukraine Partnership Foundation*](https://upfmissions.org/) which is now providing a shelter in Lviv for people who have fled from other parts of the country. Meanwhile his niece Sarah ran the Los Angeles marathon last week to raise money for the foundation.

Mr Polovchak says the family are doing whatever they can to help the Ukrainian people from where they are in the US and urges his fellow Americans to do the same.

"Freedom is not free. It costs a lot of money and millions of lives to have this life in this country," he says.

"There is always a price to pay for the democracy and freedom that we have today."

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

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[*Coronation – live: Police arrest 52 people as King and Queen crowned in historic ceremony*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685N-SD21-JBNF-W1P4-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:31

**Length:** 6837 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Jane Dalton and Shweta Sharma

**Highlight:** Campaign groups brand detentions during republican protests as ‘incredibly alarming’ after Westminster Abbey ceremony

**Body**

The Metropolitan Police have been criticised after [*officers made 52 arrests on Saturday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronation-protest-arrests-republic-met-police-b2333719.html) as Britain crowned its first new monarch of the 21st century.

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) swore an oath of duty to serve, seven months after the death of his mother. His wife [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) was crowned Queen in an event that could barely have been imagined a decade ago.

Across the UK, cheers, bells and gun salutes marked the historic moment, as a modernised version of the traditional ceremony took place.

The King and Queen set the seal on their [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) day by twice appearing on Buckingham Palace’s balcony in lavish robes.

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) began making his way back to the US just minutes after the ceremony, and did not join his family at the palace, it was reported.

Rain fell persistently, just as in 1953 when the Queen was crowned, which meant the armed forces flypast was scaled down.

Campaign groups described detentions during republican protests as “incredibly alarming”.

Protesters from the anti-monarchy group, including its chief executive Graham Smith, were apprehended, as well as demonstrators from Just Stop Oil and Animal Rising.

Police said they understood public concern.

Coronation news – latest updates

Britain enters new era Charles is crowned Dozens of arrests ‘set dangerous precedent' King and Queen appear on balcony during flypast Prince Harry arrives alone at Westminster Abbey Prince Andrew booed as he arrives at The Mall Head of anti-monarch group Republic among protesters arrested

Coronation celebrations continue with royals at lunches and glittering concert

The coronation celebrations will continue on Sunday with big lunches attended by royals and a star-studded concert at Windsor Castle.

The King and Queen will join around 20,000 members of the public at the coronation concert where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Singers Perry and Richie were among the stars at Saturday’s coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

The show in Windsor, hosted by Paddington and Downton Abbey actor Hugh Bonneville, will see Hollywood star Tom Cruise, Dynasty actress Dame 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 figure 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 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.

Ahead of the show on Sunday evening, thousands of street parties are expected to be held with people encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh will attend a big lunch in Cranleigh, the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence will attend a community street party in Swindon, and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie will attend a big lunch in Windsor.

How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of the coronation

Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce outfit and stoney-faced sword-bearing.

Mordaunt on Saturday 6 May became the first woman to carry the sword of state – a symbol of the new king’s authority – during the procession at Westminster Abbey.

Her part in the ceremony included carrying the heavy sword for a full 51 minutes, which weighs eight pounds (3.6kg), before exchanging it for the jewelled sword of offering and presenting that to Charles. Mordaunt kept a serious face and did not break a sweat while she was watched by thousands of people.

As part of an ancient custom, Mordaunt then “bought back” the glittering sword – part of the new King’s regalia or collection of objects which symbolise his responsibilities as monarch – from the Archbishop of Canterbury in exchange for 100 newly-minted 50p pieces bearing an effigy of Charles.

[*Her appearance at the crowning ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/best-dressed-coronation-king-charles-b2333740.html) impressed royal fans on Twitter, with one person wondering: “Who had ‘Penny Mordaunt overshadowing everything’ on their bingo card?”

Read more here:

Everything you need to know about coronation concert

King Charles III’s coronation is well and truly upon us, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations in full swing.

The official coronation took place yesterday, on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place this evening (Sunday 7 May).

Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Last summer, a royal concert was staged at Buckingham Palace for the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, titled the Party at the Palace concert. Rod Stewart, Diana Ross and Queen were among those to perform.

Here’s everything you need to know:

Zoe Ball ‘absolutely gutted’ as sickness forces her to pull out of coronation concert

Zoe Ball has said she is “absolutely gutted” as she has been forced to pull out of King Charles III's coronation concert due to sickness.

The BBC Radio 2 presenter announced on social media on Sunday morning that she is “heading back to bed” instead of covering the concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday evening.

The 52-year-old tweeted: “Absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me. Was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the coronation concert on BBC Radio 2 later.”

She added Dermot O'Leary and Scott Mills would be covering for her as she recovers from her illness.

absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the [*#coronationconcert*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/coronationconcert?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on [*@BBCRadio2*](https://twitter.com/BBCRadio2?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) later [*@radioleary*](https://twitter.com/radioleary?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@scott\_mills*](https://twitter.com/scott_mills?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) have got you covered i’m heading back to bed ️— Zoe Ball (@ZoeTheBall) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall/status/1655106691157876741?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Culture Secretary denies police went too far in policing the coronation

The Culture Secretary has denied that police went too far in policing the coronation, saying they got the “balance right” and she has “huge confidence” in them.

Lucy Frazer also said police should take into account the context of events in determining their response.

She told Sky News: “What they have to do is balance the right to protest, which is important in a democracy. At the same time there’s the right of all those other people to enjoy what was a fabulous day. I think, overall, they managed to get that balance right.”

Asked whether she trusted the police to use new laws to prevent disruptive protests, she said: “Yes, I do trust them to use those new powers. I have huge confidence in the police.

“I think it’s absolutely right that they have the powers that they need in order to ensure that people can go to go on their day-to-day lives at the same time as respecting people’s rights to protest.”

She added: “I think it is really important that they take into account the context of the event because this was an event that would have raised questions about national security. This was an event on the world stage.”

Prince Harry shuns British brands to wear Dior to coronation

The Duke of Sussex eschewed British fashion brands to wear a suit by French label Dior to his father’s coronation, fuelling speculation he may be about to sign an endorsement deal with the company.

Prince Harry was photographed in a suit with a waistcoat for the ceremony, at which he sat in the third row.

Harry, who left swiftly after the coronation to catch a flight from Heathrow, wore his dark morning suit and tie with his Afghanistan and Jubilee medals pinned to his suit jacket.

He also wore a Royal Victorian Order star and neck decoration.

Luxury fashion house Dior tweeted that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born Kim Jones, saying to do so was an “honour”.

The brand has often been a go-to choice for Harry’s wife, Meghan, who wore a Dior outfit to the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations last summer.

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports women’s safety volunteers arrested at coronation

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The Metropolitan Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the Soho area of central London on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s nightlife safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

The three people – a 37-year-old woman, a 59-year-old woman and a 47-year-old man – were taken to a south London police station, where they were questioned.

The 47-year-old man was also further arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods, police said.

All three have since been released on bail pending further inquiries.

Avid bakers across the country create bespoke cakes for coronation

Avid bakers and cake business owners across the country have put their skills to the test creating bespoke cakes to celebrate the King’s coronation.

On Saturday, Charles was crowned King and while the UK witnessed its first coronation in more than 70 years, skilled bakers were hard at work to create intricately designed bakes.

From crown-shaped cakes to bakes imprinted with the King’s insignia, the sweet treats have garnered interest on social media for their complex designs.

Lee McAuliffe, from Shave in Blackburn – who has been baking for 10 years, said his coronation cake took 15 hours to make.

The two-tiered cake is compromised of a chocolate fudge crown with chocolate fudge buttercream and a gluten-free lemon sponge with lemon curd buttercream for the lower tier.

The 46-year-old used his “trademark” look whilst incorporating Union flag bunting to accompany the crown-shaped cake.

“I knew I wanted a crown to be the main part of the design and obviously, Union flag bunting had to make an appearance,” he said.

Catherine Davies, who turns 52 on Sunday, owns her own cake business but is also a teaching assistant in Tunbridge Wells, and created a triple-layered vanilla cake with lemon and elderflower buttercream ahead of the coronation.

The cake, which took around two hours to make, was part of a raffle with the winner feeling “delighted” after receiving the “beautiful” sweet treat.

“The drip cake is one of my most popular cakes. The lady who won it wanted a nod to the coronation on it,” said Ms Davies, from Crowborough in East Sussex. “I thought the insignia on the top was elegant and looked good in gold, matching the drip down the sides.”

The business owner, who has been baking professionally for five years, celebrated the coronation with her son, who is home from university dining on scones with cream and jam.

King Charles to attend a music concert as celebrations continue

King Charles will attend a music concert featuring the likes of singers Lionel Richie, Katy Perry and Andrea Bocelli at Windsor Castle on Sunday after street parties are held across Britain as part of celebrations to mark his coronation.

Amid scenes of pomp and pageantry, King Charles and his wife Queen Camilla were crowned at London’s Westminster Abbey on Saturday in Britain’s biggest ceremonial event for 70 years, embracing ancient tradition and elements of modernity.

The royals have not been seen since an appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace following the coronation, but senior members will be out in force on Sunday.

The king’s younger brother Prince Edward, his sister Princess Anne and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, the daughter of Charles’ other brother Prince Andrew, will attend ‘Big Lunch’ events, joining some of the estimated 50,000 thousand street parties being held around the country.

Prime minister Rishi Sunak will also be among those hosting a coronation lunch with the guests including Ukrainian families and youth groups.

Duke of Sussex returns to California on British Airways flight

The Duke of Sussex has returned to California after catching a British Airways flight within hours of his father’s coronation.

Harry arrived at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) at around 7.30pm local time (3.30am UK) to reunite with his son on his birthday.

Prince Archie turned four on Saturday and spent the day with his mother, the Duchess of Sussex, at their US home.

British Airways flight attendants confirmed Harry had been on the flight but said they were not permitted to discuss the details of his trip.

The duke’s appearance at the coronation marked his first public appearance alongside the royals since he lambasted his family in his controversial memoir Spare.

He was seated in the third row for the crowning of Charles and the duke’s stepmother the Queen in Westminster Abbey, and was placed two rows behind his brother the Prince of Wales.

His abrupt return to the US meant he did not appear on the Buckingham Palace balcony for the finale of the day, with the Palace confirming earlier that he had no formal role at the event.

Princess Anne obstructs Prince Harry’s view of coronation with feather-adorned military uniform

Prince Harry’s view of the historic coronation ceremony for his father King Charles III was blocked by his aunt Princess Anne’s red-feathered hat.

On Saturday 6 May, the [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) [*arrived at Westminster Abbey solo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/where-prince-harry-today-coronation-b2334006.html) for the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. Once inside the abbey, Harry, who wore a morning suit for the occasion, sat in the third row alongside members of his family, including cousins Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie and their husbands.

The Princess Royal, 72, meanwhile, played a special role in the coronation procession following the ceremony, which meant that she wore her military uniform to the historic ceremony, during which she was seated in the second row, directly in front of her nephew Harry.

[*Princess Anne obstructs Prince Harry’s view of coronation with feather-adorned hat*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-princess-anne-coronation-hat-b2334121.html)

Rishi Sunak to host coronation lunch for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and volunteers

The British prime minister and his wife will welcome volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, and youth groups to Downing Street for a lunch to mark the coronation.

Rishi Sunak and Akshata Murty will host the event on Sunday as part of the Big Lunch celebrations taking place across the country over the coronation weekend.

They will dine on food sourced from across the UK, including beef from Gloucestershire, Scottish Loch Duart salmon, Northern Irish soda bread, and ice cream from Wales, according to No 10.

Crockery will be donated by Emma Bridgewater, a pottery with strong royal connections, including a limited edition King Charles III teapot.

Recipients of the Points of Light Award, given to ordinary people doing extraordinary things for their community, have been invited.

They include a couple who founded a charity supporting people who have gone through baby loss, Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, breast cancer campaigner Laura Ashurst, and Navjot Sawhney, who designed a hand-cranked washing machine used by thousands of people with no access to electric ones.

Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme after Russia invaded their country, as well as their UK sponsors, will also attend.

Mr Sunak said: “Come rain or shine, thousands of friends and neighbours are coming together this weekend to put up the bunting, pour the tea and cut the cake at street parties and community events across the UK.

“I am proud to welcome Ukrainians forced to flee their homes and some incredible community heroes to Downing Street for our very own coronation lunch to celebrate this historic moment.

“In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland -and across our Overseas Territories and the wider Commonwealth -people are marking this momentous occasion in the spirit of unity and hope for the future”.

Leader of anti-monarchy protest released

The chief executive of an anti-monarchy group who was among 52 people arrested on the day of the King’s coronation has been released after nearly 16 hours in police custody.

Graham Smith was released by the Met Police around 11pm on Saturday, while the majority of his Republic colleagues continued to be held.

Posting to Twitter, Mr Smith said there was “no longer a right to peaceful protest in the UK”.

“I have been told many times the monarch is there to defend our freedoms. Now our freedoms are under attack in his name.”

The Metropolitan Police has been heavily criticised over the detentions, with some campaign groups likening the “incredibly alarming” arrests to “something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London”.

Celebrations continue in Scotland with parade to Glasgow Cathedral

Following the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, one of the main events north of the border on Sunday is a ceremony and parade in Glasgow.

Scores of community celebrations are also being held across the country.

In Glasgow, the city’s Lord Lieutenant Jacqueline McLaren will officially mark the coronation with a ceremony in George Square followed by a parade to Glasgow Cathedral.

The ceremony includes inspection of a guard of honour, speeches and three cheers for the King and Queen, followed by the national anthem.

The Lord Lieutenant will then take the salute as a parade of military servicemen and women, cadets and veterans marches past the City Chambers.

The parade will then head through the city to the cathedral for a thanksgiving service at 11am.

The cathedral was one of the locations in Scotland where the coronation was broadcast to the public.

Scores of people attended the historic building to witness the event, while in Edinburgh the public watched on a big screen in West Princes Street Gardens.

Across Scotland, more than 200 Coronation Big Lunch celebrations have been registered across the weekend of the coronation.

People across the UK ‘excited’ for the coronation Big Lunch

Thousands of people across the country will celebrate the Coronation Big Lunch on Sunday to celebrate the crowning of the King, causing a buzz of excitement for organisers.

A palace spokeswoman said big lunches will take place from Saturday to Monday “in a nationwide act of celebration and friendship”.

Alongside the thousands of street parties expected to be held at the weekend, people are encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

Members of the public and organisers from a number of charities have expressed their enthusiasm ahead of the event.

Lucinda Spelman-Ives, from Wilstock, who raised over £1m to fund a community hub, hopes the Big Lunch will “unify and bring everyone together being part of history, making amazing memories, laughing and meeting lots of people who have never met before”.

Royal fans praise Pippa Middleton’s ‘stunning’ coronation look: ‘Stealing the show again’

The [*Princess of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princess-of-wales) wasn’t the only member of her family to [*earn praise*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/kate-middleton-tiara-headpiece-diamonds-coronation-b2333802.html) during the King and Queen’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) , as royal fans were also excited to see Kate’s siblings and parents in attendance.

On Saturday 6 May, [*Kate Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kate-middleton) ’s sister [*Pippa Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pippa-middleton) , 39, arrived at Westminster Abbey[*ahead of the crowning of King Charles III and Queen Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html) alongside their brother [*James Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-middleton) , 36, and their parents Michael and Carole Middleton.

For the occasion, Pippa, the younger sister of the Princess of Wales, wore a pale yellow suit dress with a matching fascinator, while her brother James wore a morning suit consisting of a black blazer, grey trousers, and a yellow waistcoat in the same shade as his sister’s dress.

Read more here:

[*Royal fans praise Pippa Middleton’s ‘stunning’ coronation look*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/pippa-middleton-coronation-james-kate-b2334172.html)

US First Lady Jill Biden says coronation ‘amazing'

First Lady Jill Biden, who attended the lavish ceremony along with granddaughter Finnegan Biden, spoke of her delight:

[*US First Lady Jill Biden says King Charles’ coronation ‘was just amazing’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jill-biden-king-charles-coronation-b2334142.html)

Behind the scenes of the coronation with William and Kate

[*William and Kate share behind the scenes video of King Charles coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-william-kate-children-b2334158.html)

Feeling is believing: Inside the abbey

Reporter Danica Kirka was at the actual ceremony:

[*Feeling is believing: Inside the abbey for king's coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-elizabeth-ii-london-westminster-abbey-b2334137.html)

Stella McCartney to appear at coronation concert

Stella McCartney will deliver a spoken word performance with a conservation theme at the Coronation Concert to celebrate the crowning of the King and Queen.

The speech by the fashion designer, who has championed a vegan lifestyle and sustainable design throughout her career, will reflect her and the King’s “shared passion for environmental sustainability”, the BBC has said.

McCartney, who is the daughter of former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney and his late wife photographer Linda, was made a CBE earlier this year for her services to fashion and sustainability.

Her performance will be part of a broader nature-themed section of the concert, which is being held in the grounds of Windsor Castle on Sunday.

Classical-soul composer Alexis Ffrench and London-based singer-songwriter Zak Abel will also be part of the segment as they perform a rendition of a 1980s hit alongside a house orchestra, band and choir.

A visual display will accompany the performance, with images spanning across the large screen at the top of the stage as well as being projected onto the facade of the castle.

The performance will also be interspersed with footage of drone displays taking place above the Eden Project in Cornwall, an eco visitor attraction, and the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff.

The section is due to end with a ‘Did You Know?’ video, which will reveal “little-known information” about Charles’ relationship with the natural world, the BBC has said.

The broadcaster added that the stage has also been designed and built almost entirely of rental stock to make it as sustainable as possible, with the majority of the lighting being LED to improve energy saving.

Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie are also among the star-studded line-up as well as Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli and Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel.

The concert, produced by BBC Studios Productions, will be broadcast live on BBC One, BBC iPlayer, BBC Radio 2 and BBC Sounds from 8pm on Sunday.

Liverpool fans boo national anthem

Liverpool fans have booed the national anthem on the day of the coronation:

[*Why do Liverpool fans boo the national anthem?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/liverpool-fans-boo-national-anthem-why-b2333876.html)

Nothing is weirder than the Coronation Concert line up – Brian May, Kermit the Frog and Atomic Kitten…

As Katy Perry and Take That prepare to perform during Charles’s coronation weekend, [*Katie Rosseinsky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/katie-rosseinsky) salutes the chaotic and confusing tradition of incredibly divergent celebrities coming together to sing for royalty.

Brian May on the roof of [*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) , guitar aloft. Tom Jones and Blue duetting to “You Can Leave Your Hat On”. A guest appearance from Kermit the Frog. A finale that saw Paul McCartney, Ozzy Osbourne and… Atomic Kitten, all together on stage. This was the miscellany of acts that, on 3 June, 2002, were gathered at Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) ’s official London residence for Party at the Palace. The televised extravaganza marked 50 years since her accession to the throne – and provided the blueprint for royal pop concerts going forward.

The formula? Throw in some golden oldies (McCartney doing a Beatles medley and Shirley Bassey blasting out a Bond theme) alongside some solid, family-friendly pop fixtures and the odd wildcard. Since then, these showcases have only become more head-spinningly eclectic. In The Independent’s four-star review of 2022’s Platinum Party at the Palace (where Rod Stewart covered “Sweet Caroline” and Diversity danced their way through the history of British music), Mark Beaumont hailed the event as “one of the most bizarre and unrelenting barrages of random entertainment ever staged”. During King Charles’ [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) weekend, [*one of the biggest events will be a concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/who-is-playing-at-the-coronation-concert-b2323293.html) featuring the likes of Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Take That, plus the Royal Shakespeare Company and incoming Doctor Who, Ncuti Gatwa, performing excerpts from the Bard.

Read the full story here:

[*‘The Queen wore earplugs’: Royal pop concerts have always been weird*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/coronation-concert-performers-lineup-history-b2334081.html)

How the world celebrated King Charles’s coronation

The world tuned in to watch the crowning of His Majesty [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/coronation-king-charles-camilla-queen-b2334107.html) during his coronation on 6 May 2023. But how has each nation and culture celebrated the occasion in their own way?

As part of the global celebrations, countries and world leaders from across the Commonwealth and beyond have given their support in shows of symbolism and pageantry. As thousands line the streets of London and across the United Kingdom, we explore from North America to Gibraltar just how the world has greeted the new king.

Watch here:

[*How the world celebrated King Charles’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-celebrations-international-b2334108.html)

Anti monarchy protesters start to be released from police custody

Members of the anti-monarchy group who were arrested on Saturday have started to be released from police custody.

Shortly before 11pm on Saturday, Republic released a short statement that the first of its members who were arrested just before the coronation had been released.

The group posted to Twitter: “Update: first member of the team out (nearly 16 hours in). Phone confiscated.”

In a follow-up post, Republic said its chief executive Graham Smith had also just been released, adding that his phone had also been confiscated.

The Met Police have been heavily criticised over the arrests, with some campaign groups likening them to “something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London”.

Mr Smith confirmed his release from police custody, adding that Republic’s other members were still being held.

He posted to Twitter: “I’m now out of the police station. Still waiting for my colleagues.

“Make no mistake. There is no longer a right to peaceful protest in the UK.

“I have been told many times the monarch is there to defend our freedoms. Now our freedoms are under attack in his name.”

Diverse coronation reflected King’s bid to modernise monarchy

The coronation was the most diverse in the 1,000-year history of the ceremony, with a guest list that embodied the King’s determination to modernise the monarchy and reflect a multi-cultural Britain:

[*How diverse coronation reflected King’s bid to modernise monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-king-diversity-black-monarchy-b2334053.html)

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports of volunteers arrested on coronation day

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The [*Metropolitan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/met) Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the [*Soho*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soho) area of central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s night life safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

Read the full story here:

[*Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports of volunteers arrested on coronation day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/metropolitan-police-westminster-city-council-arrest-coronation-b2334184.html)

Princess Anne receives praise as King Charles’ personal bodyguard at coronation: ‘Totally boss’

[*Princess Anne*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princess-anne) has been praised for the special role she played at her brother’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation).

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Camilla were [*crowned during a coronation service at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html). As part of the ceremony, the King gave his younger sister an important role during the historic day in recognition of her service.

The Princess Royal, 72, served as the Gold Stick during the Coronation Procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace. As King Charles and Queen Camilla made their way to the Palace in the Gold State Coach after the ceremony, Princess Anne led 6,000 armed services personnel through the streets of London.

Read more here:

[*Princess Anne receives praise as King Charles’ personal bodyguard at coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-princess-anne-horse-b2334132.html)

From the Grim Reaper to Prince Louis: The breakout stars

Some unexpected stars at the coronation stole the limelight:

[*From the Grim Reaper to Prince Louis: The breakout stars of the coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/stars-coronation-king-charles-b2333981.html)

Expat remembers 1953 coronation

A British expat who participated in preparations for the late Queen’s coronation in 1953 says worldwide interest in royal events shows that “human beings love ceremony”.

Michael Vincent had been one of the “test groups” and had marched in a practice procession almost exactly 70 years ago -when he was 18 years old.

Mr Vincent, now 88, watched replays of the King’s coronation on Saturday morning from Ye Olde King’s Head pub in Santa Monica, California, alongside fellow expats and US anglophiles.

Recalling the build-up to the previous coronation, he said: “My aunt came down to see me march past.

“I was playing the tenor drum because I couldn’t carry a tune so I had the easy job, just twirling the sticks.

“You just did what you were told in those days. It was historic but we didn’t really think of it that way.”

Asked his opinions on the coronation events going on back in the UK, he added: “Human beings love ceremony”.

“Everywhere you go, whether you go to Cairo and look at the Pyramids, there is always ceremonies,” he said.

“The weakness of human beings is that they’re always showing off, that’s why they go dancing on Saturday night.”

Prince and Princess's ‘precious’ sibling moment

Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis stole the show, writes Meredith Clark:

[*Prince Louis and Princess Charlotte’s ‘precious’ sibling moment praised by fans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-charlotte-louis-holding-hands-b2334029.html)

Police say they ‘understand public concern’ around arrests

Police have said they “understand public concern” after officers made 52 arrests throughout the King’s coronation day -including alleged affray, public nuisance and breach-of-the-peace offences.

The Metropolitan Police came under heavy criticism on Saturday after what campaign groups described as “incredibly alarming” detentions during republican protests.

Protesters from the anti-monarchy group, including its chief executive Graham Smith, were apprehended during the day -as well as demonstrators from Just Stop Oil and Animal Rising.

The Met said it received information that protesters were “determined to disrupt” the coronation -including defacing public monuments with paint, breaching barriers and disrupting official movements.

But campaigners said the protests were “peaceful”, describing the arrests as “a dangerous precedent for us as a democratic nation”.

The force confirmed reports from Just Stop Oil that 13 demonstrators were detained on the Mall and six public nuisance arrests on St Martin’s Lane following protests from Republic.

Three people were also apprehended in Soho, three at Wellington Arch and five on Whitehall on conspiracy to cause public nuisance, with another in Whitehall arrested for religiously aggravated behaviour likely to cause harassment.

The Met said a further 14 people were detained in east London on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

All suspects remain in custody, the force said.

Over 100 King Charles Spaniels join dog parade

Over 100 dogs that share the King’s name participated in a pup parade after the coronation:

[*Over 100 King Charles Spaniels join dog parade on Coronation Day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/king-charles-spaniels-dog-parade-b2334011.html)

King Charles to attend a music concert as celebrations continue

King Charles will attend a music concert featuring the likes of singers Lionel Richie, Katy Perry and Andrea Bocelli at Windsor Castle on Sunday after street parties are held across Britain as part of celebrations to mark his coronation.

Amid scenes of pomp and pageantry, King Charles and his wife Queen Camilla were crowned at London’s Westminster Abbey on Saturday in Britain’s biggest ceremonial event for 70 years, embracing ancient tradition and elements of modernity.

The royals have not been seen since an appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace following the coronation, but senior members will be out in force on Sunday.

The king’s younger brother Prince Edward, his sister Princess Anne and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, the daughter of Charles’ other brother Prince Andrew, will attend ‘Big Lunch’ events, joining some of the estimated 50,000 thousand street parties being held around the country.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will also be among those hosting a coronation lunch with the guests including Ukrainian families and youth groups.

Watch: Royal fans sing Katy Perry songs on packed Tube

Commentary battle for BBC, ITV and Sky

Television critic Nick Hilton compares how the broadcasters did:

[*How the battle of coronation commentary played out for BBC, ITV and Sky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/coronation-tv-coverage-bbc-itv-sky-b2334009.html)

The day that belonged to Charles and Camilla

Britain crowned its first new monarch of the 21st century on Saturday as King Charles III swore an oath of duty – “not to be served, but to serve” – seven months after the death of his mother. Report by Alastair Jamieson:

[*Britain enters new era as King Charles and Queen Camilla are crowned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-queen-camilla-coronation-new-monarch-b2334013.html)

New King and Queen: official photos

Images released by Buckingham Palace show the King and Queen watch the flypast from the balcony of Buckingham Palace:

Braverman thanks police

Home Secretary Suella Braverman thanked the police for their “hard work” amid criticism of the arrest of protesters.

She said: “I’d like to thank the police for all their hard work at today’s celebration to ensure it was safe and passed without incident.

“It was a magnificent procession and ceremony enjoyed by tens of thousands of people in London. It was a great tribute to our country and monarchy.”

Watch: Six blink-and-you’ll-miss-it moments

Police ‘understand concern’ over arrests

Police have said they “understand public concern” after officers made 52 arrests.

Commander Karen Findlay, who led the policing operation, said: “Protest is lawful and it can be disruptive.

“We have a duty to intervene when protest becomes criminal and may cause serious disruption.”

Commander Findlay added: “This depends on the context.

“The coronation is a once-in-a-generation event and that is a key consideration in our assessment.

“A protest involving large numbers has gone ahead today with police knowledge and no intervention.”

Human Rights Watch labelled the arrests “incredibly alarming”, adding: “This is something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London.”

Outside London, hundreds of people joined a march through Cardiff city centre in protest against the monarchy as the King was crowned.

Demonstrators shouted “Down with the Crown, not my King” and “God save the poor”.

Nick Wall, member of campaign group Republic and chairman of the Labour For Republic organisation, addressed crowds at a Not My King rally in Cardiff, where he called the arrests of protesters in London “disgraceful”.

On Wednesday, the Met said it would have an “extremely low threshold” for protests during the celebrations, and that demonstrators could expect “swift action”.

Dozens of arrests ‘alarming'

The Metropolitan Police came in for heavy criticism after officers made 52 arrests on coronation day, including for alleged affray, public nuisance and breach-of-the-peace offences.

Campaign groups described detentions during republican protests as “incredibly alarming”.

Protesters from the anti-monarchy group, including its chief executive Graham Smith, were apprehended during the day -as well as demonstrators from Just Stop Oil and Animal Rising.

The Met said it received information that protesters were “determined to disrupt” the coronation, including defacing public monuments with paint, breaching barriers and disrupting official movements.

But campaigners said the protests were peaceful, describing the arrests as “a dangerous precedent for us as a democratic nation”.

The force confirmed reports from Just Stop Oil that 13 demonstrators were detained on the Mall and six public nuisance arrests on St Martin’s Lane following protests from Republic.

Footage from the Mall showed the Just Stop Oil protesters being handcuffed and taken away by a heavy police presence.

Animal Rising said a number of supporters were apprehended while at a training session “miles away from the coronation“.

Spokesman Nathan McGovern described the arrests as “nothing short of a totalitarian crackdown on free speech and all forms of dissent”.

Spooked horse crashes into barrier behind King's carriage

Sand patches mystery solved

Westminster Council cleared up the mystery surrounding patches of sand that lined the procession route.

A spokesman said they were covering drain and inspection covers to help the horses.

The council said it does this for other road surfaces too, such as inclines or sharp turns.

Theories abounded about the mysterious yellow sand patches -including that it could have been an effort to smooth out potholes for the King’s carriage.

Anti-monarchists protest in Scotland

Hundreds of people gathered on Calton Hill in Edinburgh for an anti-monarchy rally organised by Our Republic.

Some waved Saltire flags, while others wore them as cloaks, and held signs with slogans such as “Not our King” and “down with the crown”.

Speakers included Scottish Greens co-leader Lorna Slater, who is a Scottish Government minister.

She said: “When it comes to the monarchy, Scotland says no.

“Let’s do better, let’s build a better, brighter democratic future in an independent Scottish republic.”

Onlooker recalls Queen’s funeral

Linda Old went to see Buckingham Palace after watching the coronation in Hyde Park.

She told the PA news agency that the ceremony brought back memories of other royal events, most recently the Queen’s funeral when she camped overnight to see the late Queen lying in state.

Ms Old, from Islington, north London, said: “It has been very well organised. I was emotional watching it.

“I’ve come with my family. Just being here with everybody is special. We all stood up for ‘God Save the King’. It’s special, there’s a lot of memories.”

Royal fans from as far as Australia among crowds

Huge crowds flocked to London and braved the rain to celebrate the coronation -with some royal fans travelling from as far as [*Australia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/australia) :

[*Royal fans from as far as Australia among huge crowds to celebrate King’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-charles-camilla-crowds-travel-b2333885.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6B9C-8FY1-DY4H-K4G6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 4278 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Joe Middleton

**Highlight:** Ukrainian troops shot down the Russian aircraft in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka, Kyiv claimed

**Body**

At least seven people, including three children, have been killed overnight after a Russian drone hit a petrol station in the north-eastern city of Kharkiv.

The strike caused a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses, while 50 people were evacuated as emergency workers tackled the blaze.

It comes as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced [*him with Oleksandr Syrsky.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/general-oleksandr-syrskyi-valerii-zaluzhnyi-b2493036.html)

It follows days of speculation that [*Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-when-time-b2492651.html) , who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In other developments, Ukrainian troops have shot down a [*Russian attack helicopter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/republican-senators-ukraine-border-trump-b2492267.html) in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) claimed.

Meanwhile, Russian forces launched the [*second largest combined drone*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html) and missile strike on Ukraine this year with around 64 munitions hitting the country, according to a [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) think tank.

Key Points

Three children killed in Russian drone strike in Kharkiv Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant Explosions rock Kyiv as Russia launches huge wave of strikes against Ukraine

Russian drones targeted Odesa and Kharkiv overnight

The Ukrainian air force said air defence systems destroyed 23 out of 31 drones launched by Russia overnight.

The drones primarily targeted the north-eastern Kharkiv region and the southern province of Odesa, the statement said.

Odesa regional governor Oleh Kiper said four people were injured there by the overnight drone attacks.

The attacks came in three waves, he said. The first targeted the regional capital -the port city of Odesa. All nine drones were shot down, but the debris damaged port infrastructure and injured one person.

The second and the third waves targeted port infrastructure in the Danube river area, Mr Kiper said. A total of 12 drones were shot down and three people were injured.

Zelenksy appoints a new commander-in-chief – but will it help the war against Russia?

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine is rapidly approaching its second anniversary – and the war is not going according to plan for either side.

In a major reset that [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) believes can change the trajectory of the conflict, he has [*sacked his commander-in-chief, General Valery Zaluzhny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-ukraine-war-military-valery-zaluzhny-b2493026.html). After a series of disagreements, the president has called for a “united approach across the whole front line and a new vision for the war, mobilisation and recruitment”.

It is a herculean task for his new chief, Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky, previously commander of ground forces, given the reality of the current phase of the war.

Read the full article from Orysia Lutsevych [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-strategy-zelensky-b2493689.html)

[*Zelenksy appoints a new commander-in-chief – but will it help the war against Russia?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-strategy-zelensky-b2493689.html)

Three children killed in Russian drone strike in Kharkiv

A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, killed at least seven people overnight, including three children, their region governor Oleh Syniehubov has said.

A Iranian-made Shahed drone hit civilian infrastructure in the Nemyshlyan district on the city, causing a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said more than 50 people had been evacuated and that emergency workers had contained the blaze by Saturday morning.

Friday 9 February 2024 13:36 , Chris Stevenson We are pausing our coverage for now. Thanks for reading.For the latest on the reaction to Tucker Carlson’s interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin, please [*click here.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-video-news-b2493555.html)

Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership

[*Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-zelensky-zaluzhny-stalemate-b2490755.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries

[*Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-drones-baykar-kyiv-russia-b2491543.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Patients travelling to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, shadow health minister says

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced him with Oleksandr Syrsky.

It follows days of speculation that Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhnyf, who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In a separate statement, Zaluzhny said he had an “important and serious conversation” with Zelensky and that a decision had been made to change battlefield tactics and strategy.

“The tasks of 2022 are different from the tasks of 2024. Therefore, everyone must change and adapt to new realities as well. To win together too,” his statement said on Telegram messenger.

Colonel-General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who has led Ukraine’s ground forces since 2019, was promoted to commander of the armed forces on Thursday as the war with Russia nears its third year.

Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for another five years

[*Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for five years*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-britain-free-trade-war-latest-b2492596.html)

Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian presidential challenger banned from running against Putin

[*Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian challenger banned from running against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-nadezhdin-putin-russian-candidate-b2486367.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Belarusian special forces looking for Ukrainian informants

Belarus has been increasingly targeting Ukrainians living in the country over the last month and is actively “looking for informants”, Ukraine’s National Resistance Centre claimed.

The organisation, which is part of Kyiv’s Special Operations Forces, said cases of Ukrainians being summoned for questioning in Belarus had “become more frequent”.

“The Belarusian special services are looking for informants among Ukrainians and plan, on the contrary, to involve them in cooperation,” it said.

Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims

Ukrainian troops have shot down a Russian attack helicopter in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, Kyiv claimed.

Troops used a portable anti-aircraft missile to take down the Ka-52 Alligator aircraft, according to commander Oleksandr Tarnavskyi.

It comes after the UK ministry of defence said Avdiivka remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Ten Ukrainian attacks ‘repelled’ and up to 290 troops killed or wounded, Russia claims

Putin’s troops have repelled 10 Ukrainian attacks over Russian-occupied Donetsk, according to Moscow’s defence ministry.

The ministry said units had also killed or wounded up to 290 members of Ukraine’s military.

It said Russian forces had taken “more advantageous lines and positions” and “hit clusters of manpower and hardware” along defence brigades in the region.

Italy to help repair roof of Ukraine's Odesa cathedral

Italy will help with the rebuilding of a cathedral in the Ukrainian city of Odesa that was badly damaged by a missile strike last year, the Italian foreign ministry said.

Italy and UNESCO signed an agreement in Kyiv to provide 500 million euros ($539 million) towards the restoration of the roof of Odesa’s Spaso-Preobrazhenskyi Cathedral, or Transfiguration Cathedral.

“Italy is very committed, through its institutions and its industrial capacity, to the reconstruction of Ukraine,” ambassador Pier Francesco Zazo said.

Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’

[*Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/avdiivka-attack-latest-ukraine-russia-b2492747.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Two officers injured in overnight 'mass attack', says Ukraine's national police

Two officers have been injured in an overnight Russian drone attack, Ukraine’s national police has said.

The force said Russia launched a “mass attack” on the city of Odesa overnight, damaging a six-storey building and an “educational institution”, according to a post on Telegram.

It said the two policeman were patrolling and on their way to help residents when they were hit. They have both suffered mine-explosive injuries but they are in a stable condition, it added.

Germany’s Scholz praises Biden for united Russia response ahead of visit

US president Joe Biden’s leadership is critical in ensuring a united response to Russian aggression, German chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

“Our message is clear: We have to do our utmost to prevent Russia from winning” in Ukraine, Mr Scholz wrote in the Wall Street Journal.

“The long-term consequences and costs of failing to stop Mr. Putin’s aggression would dwarf any of the investments that we are making now.”

Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant

A huge explosion has rocked a Russian missile plant in what state media claimed was a “planned rocket engine test”, footage appears to show.

The blast was recorded near the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant, which manufactures missile engines and strategic ballistic missiles in Izhevsk, Russia.

“We received a notification from the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant. It was a rocket engine test. A planned event, not an emergency,” Zavyalovsky District united dispatch service said.

Russia launches 600 guided munitions at Avdiivka in last month, MoD says

Vladimir Putin’s troops have launched around 600 guided munitions at the besieged town of Avdiivka, Ukraine, over the last month, the UK’s ministry of defence said.

The MoD said the town remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 08 February 2024. Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3*](https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/4LnM1CcdGT*](https://t.co/4LnM1CcdGT) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*February 8, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1755513566872895488?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Biden blames trump for sinking US deal to fund Ukraine war effort

President Joe Biden has blamed Donald Trump for sinking a bill set to deliver billions of dollars of aid to Ukraine after Republicans ditched their support over pressure from the former president.

The $118bn deal would also include aid to Israel and Taiwan, as well as securing immigration along the US’s southern border with Mexico.

“He’d rather weaponise this issue than actually solve it. For the last 24 hours, he’s done nothing at all but reach out to Republicans in the House and the Senate and threaten them and try to intimidate them to vote against this proposal. And it looks like they’re caving,” Mr Biden said.

The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin

The sound of Colombian Spanish fills a hospital treating soldiers wounded fighting Russian forces.

Ukraine‘s ranks are depleted by two years of war. As it battles Putin’s war machine, Ukraine is welcoming hardened fighters from one of the world’s longest-running conflicts.

Professional soldiers from Colombia bolster the ranks of volunteers from around the world who have answered Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s call for foreign fighters to join his nation’s war with Russia.

[*The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/colombia-soliders-ukraine-putin-russia-b2492677.html)

11 out of 17 Russian drones downed over Ukraine, air force says

Ukrainian air defence and mobile drone hunter groups shot down 11 out of 17 Russia-launched drones over four regions of the country, the air force said.

It said in a statement the Iranian-made Shahed drones were downed over the Odesa and Mykolayiv regions in the south, the Dnipropetrovsk region in the southeast, and the central Vinnytsia region.

Regional officials said the drone attack damaged more than 20 residential houses and commercial buildings in the city of Mykolayiv and hit civilian infrastructure facilities in Odesa on the Black Sea in the south.

There were no casualties reported. Details of damage in other regions were not immediately clear.

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has ordered officials to create a separate branch of the army [*dedicated to drones as*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-drone-attack-putin-b2471862.html) they have been instrumental in [*Ukraine’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) [*fight against Russian forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-tucker-carlson-news-b2491210.html).

“I have just signed a decree [*initiating the establishment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-general-baranov-interview-b2438262.html) of a separate branch of our defence forces – the unmanned systems forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

Norway’s defence minister urged his country to be ready for a possible conflict with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) even after the end of Moscow’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

He said Russia might retaliate in response to [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) and [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s new Nato membership. Other Nato nations have also explicitly warned of Russia’s aggression and plans to disrupt peace in the region in the past few months.

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail

A [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) court has ordered the arrest of a bestselling novelist living in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on charges of “justifying terrorism” – the latest incident in a Kremlin [*crackdown on Russians opposing the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-kara-murza-russia-putin-prison-b2487232.html) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Grigory Chkhartishvili, known under the pen name Boris Akunin, was [*charged in absentia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-akunin-foreign-agent-russia-ukraine-b2478254.html) by Moscow’s Basmanny District Court on Tuesday. He is now under an arrest warrant and will be detained if he returns to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

[*A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-arrest-ukraine-war-boris-akunin-b2491473.html)

Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) fired cruise and ballistic missiles and Shahed-type drones at targets across Ukraine on Wednesday morning, authorities reported, killing at least three civilians and injuring 10 others, including a pregnant woman.

The attacks targeted at least three major cities, including the capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , where the European Union’s top diplomat, [*Josep Borrell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/josep-borrell) , was discussing military aid and financial support for Ukraine.

[*Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-josep-borrell-kyiv-b2491968.html)

NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin

U.S. national security adviser [*Jake Sullivan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jake-sullivan) said that he and his NATO counterparts cautioned [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) on Wednesday against further delaying Sweden’s membership in the military alliance, and he warned that patience in Washington has its limits.

Lawmakers from the party of Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) boycotted an emergency session of parliament on Monday where a vote was scheduled to place Sweden’s bid to join NATO on the legislative agenda, adding to 18 months of delays that have angered Hungary’s allies.

[*NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/jake-sullivan-ap-sweden-hungary-nato-b2492325.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum after police arrest him outside Oslo bar

A former commander of Russia’s [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) mercenary group who fled to Norway last year has been denied [*asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum) but will not be deported as it is too dangerous to send him back, his lawyer has said.

Andrei Medvedev, who escaped Russia in January 2023 across its Arctic border with Norway, has described running as Russian guards shot at him. He has spoken about his time fighting in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as part of Wagner.

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson’s false claim that no Western journalists tried to interview Putin

The [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) has slapped down a claim by far-right influencer [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) that no Western journalists have [*tried to interview*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/tucker-carlson-putin-interview-russia-b2491724.html) Russian president Vladimir Putin about his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr [*Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-donald-trump-fox-news-a9635091.html) accused the Western media of engaging in “fawning pep sessions” with Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , whom he has previously called a “dictator” and likened to a rat, while confidently asserting that “not a single Western journalist has bothered to interview the president of the other country involved in this conflict: Vladimir Putin”.

[*Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson claim that no Western media tried to interview Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-vladimir-putin-interview-b2492192.html)

Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army

After a brief discussion, the upper house of Russia’s parliament on Wednesday endorsed a bill that would allow authorities to confiscate money, valuables and other assets from people convicted of spreading “deliberately false information” about the country’s military.

The bill, which was approved equally quickly by the lower house last week, is expected to receive Russian President Vladimir Putin’s signature and become law soon.

[*Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-moscow-vladimir-putin-ukraine-soviet-b2492022.html)

Refugees going back to Ukraine and people pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, minister says

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.

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr Zelensky has ordered his officials to create a separate branch of the army specially dedicated to drones as they have been instrumental in Ukraine’s fight against Russian forces in the continuing invasion.

“I have just signed a decree initiating the establishment of a separate branch of our Defence Forces – the Unmanned Systems Forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address on Tuesday.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

North Korean missiles used in Kharkiv attack, claims local police official

Two of the five missiles fired at Ukraine’s second largest city on Wednesday morning were provided by North Korea, a local official has said.

Serhiy Bolvinov, head of the investigative department of the Kharkiv region police, said they had found the remnants of two North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.

"Metal fragments of ballistic missiles were collected by explosives on the territory of the industrial zone,” he said. “The preliminary conclusions of specialists are that they are North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.”

The United States, Ukraine and six allies have previously accused Russia of using North Korean ballistic missiles and launchers supplied by Pyongyang in aerial attacks against Ukraine, in violation of United Nations sanctions.

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*IKEA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ikea) has extended its trademark in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in a bid to stop copycat stores that are opening up across the country amid [*Putin’s war on Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-attack-news-b2491914.html)

The country has officially extended the validity of trademarks for the Swedish furniture giant until August 2033, a move brand owner Inter IKEA said was driven by the need to protect the company’s intellectual property rights.

Like many large Western firms, IKEA halted its Russian operations shortly after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and completed the sale of its factories the following year.

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Labour peer claims peace deal with Moscow would be ‘cheaper for all'

Seeking to strike a peace deal with Moscow and end the war in Ukraine would be “cheaper for all”, a Labour peer has told the House of Lords.

Former MP Lord Campbell-Savours made the call as the two-year anniversary of Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine approaches.

Foreign minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon responded to the Labour peer by noting that it was the Kremlin which was the aggressor and that Mr Putin had it in his power to end the war now.

The Labour frontbench also made clear it backed the UK government’s stance.

Russia claims to shoot down seven rockets over Belgorod

Russia’s air defence systems destroyed seven Ukraine-launched rockets and two drones over the southwestern region of Belgorod, the Russian defence ministry has claimed.

The Ukrainian strike was carried out with Czech-made Vampire rockets, the ministry said – the same type which, according to Moscow, was used in deadly strikes on the city of Belgorod in late December.

Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said two people had been injured.

‘No plan B’ to getting Ukraine aid package through US Congress, White House says

The White House is focused on getting a Ukraine aid package through the US Congress, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan has said – warning there was no “plan B”.

“We believe we still can and will deliver aid for Ukraine,” Mr Sullivan told reporters during a joint press conference with Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg.

The latter said it was vital the US Congress agreed on continued support for Ukraine in the near future, adding that Nato did not see “any imminent threat against any Nato ally”.

“We must sustain our support and that is a responsibility for all allies,” Mr Stoltenberg said.

Watch: Tucker Carlson reveals he's interviewing Putin in Moscow

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Zelensky to make surprise appearance in person at G7 summit in Japan*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6885-Y291-DY4H-K42M-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Highlight:** G7 nations to announce more sanctions on Russia during their summit in Hiroshima

**Body**

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) will travel to Hiroshima, [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) , on Sunday to join the leaders of the world’s advanced democracies for the Group of Seven ([*G7*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g7) ) summit in person, Reuters reported, citing a European Union source.

The nations were set to unleash new sanctions against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) as they gathered for the G7 summit in a symbolic backdrop for their effort to make Moscow end the war.

The UK is expected to announce a ban on Russian diamonds and imports of metals from Russia including copper, aluminium and nickel, while the US will add 70 entities to its export blacklist.

Meanwhile, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) said its forces repelled day-long attacks by Russia in the embattled city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) on Thursday.

While Russia boosted its forces in the city and attacked suburbs to the north and south, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s forces advanced up to one 1km, deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said.

It comes as explosions rocked cities across Ukraine overnight as millions were subject to air raid alerts ahead of a much-anticipated counteroffensive.

Key Points

Ukraine’s Zelensky to attend G7 summit in person Ukraine deputy defence minister says Russia on offensive in Bakhmut Air raid alerts blare across Ukraine, military warns of strikes Ukraine says territory gained in Bakhmut, Wagner firing all weapons

Sunak issues stark warning to Putin as G7 vows more Russian sanctions

Prime minister Rishi Sunak has issued a stark warning to president Vladimir Putin as Group of Seven (G7) leaders gather in Japan.

Mr Sunak told the BBC he hopes to “ensure that Russia pays a price for its illegal activity,” hours after the UK announced a ban on imports of Russian diamonds.

In an interview with Sky News, the prime minister also told the Russian president: “We’re not going away,”

“Russia needs to know that we and other countries are steadfast in our resolve to support Ukraine, not just in the here and now with the resources it needs to protect itself, but for the long term as well,” he said.

He added to ITV News: “They can’t just outlast us in this conflict.

“One of the common topics of conversation I’ll be having and have been having with my fellow leaders is about the longer-term security agreements that we put in place in Ukraine, to deter future Russian aggression.”

Mr Sunak said he believes other G7 nations will follow suit, and ban Russian diamonds and imports of metals from Russia including copper, aluminium and nickel.

The diamond export industry was worth more than £3 billion to Russia in 2021, but No 10 conceded direct imports have been low since the UK sanctioned state-owned miners Alrosa last year.

The G7 are set to unleash new sanctions against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in an effort to make Moscow end the war in Ukraine.

The UK is also preparing new individual sanctions against 86 people and companies to apply further pressure on the Russian president and his supporters.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) will travel to Hiroshima, [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) , on Sunday to join the leaders of the world’s advanced democracies at the G7 summit, Reuters reported, citing a European Union source.

It comes after president Zelensky travelled to the UK to seek more [*support for his country’s war effort last week, joining Rishi Sunak at*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-putin-nuclear-war-uk-missiles-b2337448.html) Chequers.

Mr Sunak’s official spokesman said: “Guarding against economic coercion is something that the Prime Minister is pushing for.”

Russia’s Wagner chief says Bakhmut will not fall in next two days

Wagner founder Yevgeny Prigozhin said on Friday that the city of Bakhmut was unlikely to fall to his mercenary forces in the next two days.

The Ukrainian city of Bakhmut is in ruins after months of intense fighting between Ukrainian and Russian forces.

“Bakhmut has still not been taken,” Prigozhin said in a voice message posted on Telegram. “Bakhmut is unlikely to be taken either tomorrow or the day after tomorrow.”

“There is a quarter known as the ‘Airplane’ -it is like an impregnable fortress from a bed of multi-storey buildings in the southwest of Bakhmut, where incredibly heavy battles are going on.”

Russia has been trying to capture Bakhmut since last summer in the longest and bloodiest battle of the war, but Ukrainian defenders have held out.

If Russia took the city, it would provide a stepping stone to advance on two bigger cities it has long coveted in the Donetsk region: Kramatorsk and Sloviansk.

Russian PM to meet Xi in China next week

Russian prime minister Mikhail Mishustin will visit China on May 23-24, where he will meet Chinese president Xi Jinping, the Russian government announced on Friday.

Russian mental producer says British sanctions won't affect company

Russian metals producer Severstal said on Friday that British sanctions against it will not affect the company, the TASS news agency reported.

Russian forces enhance defensive positions at Ukrainian nuclear power plant, witnesses say

Russian military forces have been enhancing defensive positions in and around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant in southern Ukraine in recent weeks, four witnesses said, ahead of an expected counteroffensive in the region.

New trenches have been dug around the city and more mines have been laid. Surveillance cameras at the plant are pointing north across a wide reservoir towards Ukrainian-controlled territory.

The Russians have had firing positions set up atop some of the plant’s buildings for several months. Nets have been erected in a possible deterrent to drones.

The measures described by two Ukrainians who work at the power plant and two other residents in the city of Enerhodar underline the risks the war poses to the security of the facility.

The sources spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears for their safety in a city under Russian occupation.

The Ukrainian military intelligence agency, the Russian defence ministry and Russian state nuclear energy company Rosatom did not respond to requests for comment on fortifications at Enerhodar and the security risks the counteroffensive may pose.

Some nuclear industry experts said they were alarmed and warned that any damage to the plant could have dire consequences for people, the surrounding area, the war and the global nuclear industry.

“Nuclear reactors were not designed for war zones and I do not believe they can be safe or secure in a war zone,” said Nickolas Roth, director at think tank the Nuclear Threat Initiative.

Petro Kotin, chief of Ukraine’s Energoatom nuclear agency, told Reuters he did not believe Ukrainian forces would stage an attack directly on the site and could instead try to force the Russians to retreat by cutting off supply lines.

But there is concern in the international community that the six-reactor nuclear plant, Europe’s largest, could be caught up in fighting, particularly as military analysts expect Ukraine to try to push Russian forces back in Zaporizhzhia region.

The U.N. nuclear watchdog says that the military presence and activity is growing in the region, underlining the need for urgent action. It has warned for months of the danger of a major accident at the plant.

The agency plans to present a deal between Russia and Ukraine to the U.N. Security Council later this month to protect the facility, four diplomats told Reuters.

UK issues new Russian sanctions targeting grain theft

Britain announced a new wave of sanctions against Russia on Friday, targeting companies connected to the theft of Ukrainian grain and those involved in the shipment of Russian energy.

Along with the United States, Britain and the rest of the Group of Seven major economies are set to unveil sanctions and export controls targeting Russia over its war against Ukraine, at the G7 summit in Japan this weekend.

Britain said in a statement that it was sanctioning 86 individuals and entities as part of a new crackdown on what it called “shady individuals and entities” connected to the theft and resale of Ukrainian grain.

The sanctions would also target Russia’s major energy and arms shipping companies, including those connected to Russia’s state-owned nuclear energy company Rosatom, and the owner of the Russian Copper Company, Igor Altushkin.

Ukraine repels latest drone and missile attack, says military

Ukrainian air defence repelled another Russian air attack early on Friday morning, destroying 19 drones and missiles out of 28 launched, Ukrainian military said.

“Three calibre missiles launched from the Black Sea and 16 drones were shot down. Shelling continues on an almost daily basis,” Ukrainian air force spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat told Ukrainian television.

“Not all targets were hit,” he added.

Russia has increased the number of missile and drone attacks this month, which Kyiv attributes to Moscow’s fear of an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive.

Ukrainian authorities do not report hits on critical infrastructure or military facilities.

Sunak unveils new sanctions against Russia

Britain is banning Russian diamonds in a new wave of sanctions to pressure Vladimir Putin over his invasion of Ukraine as Rishi Sunak warns allies against complacency at the G7 summit in Japan.

The prime minister announced the new measures against Russia, also including a prohibition on imports of Russian-origin copper, aluminium and nickel, on the eve of the meeting in Hiroshima yesterday.

Having signed a new defence and security pact with Tokyo, Mr Sunak will visit the atomic bomb dome ruin with his Japanese counterpart, Fumio Kishida, to reflect on the nuclear devastation in the Second World War.

More here.

[*Sunak unveils new sanctions against Russia as he meets allies at G7 summit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/prime-minister-russia-fumio-kishida-britain-narendra-modi-b2341755.html)

Why Ukraine’s spring offensive still hasn’t begun

For months, Western allies have shipped billions of dollars worth of weapons systems and ammunition to Ukraine with an urgency to get the supplies to Kyiv in time for an anticipated spring counteroffensive.

Now summer is just weeks away.

While Russia and Ukraine are focused on an intense battle for Bakhmut, the Ukrainian spring offensive has yet to begin.

Last week Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensyy said it’s been delayed because his country lacks enough Western weapons to succeed without suffering too many casualties. Weather and training are playing a role too, officials and defense experts say.

Officials insist the counteroffensive is coming. Preliminary moves by Ukraine to set the conditions it wants for an attack have already begun, a US official said on the condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive matters.

More here.

[*Why Ukraine's spring offensive still hasn't begun — with summer just weeks away*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-washington-weather-b2341855.html)

Putin clashes with own finance minister over damage done to Russian economy by oil sanctions

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has shot down concerns of his own finance minister who acknowledged “a problem” with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s energy revenues, underscoring the damage done by Western sanctions to its economy.

In a televised meeting chaired by President Putin through a video link, Anton Siluanov said on Wednesday that Russia’s revenues from [*oil*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oil) and gas have taken a hit, blaming deep discounts offered to countries following the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) invasion.

“Russia’s non-energy revenues are on track for growth as planned, with the potential for a small surplus by year-end, but there is a problem with energy revenues,” said Mr Siluanov.

Shweta Sharma reports:

[*Putin clashes with own finance minister over damage by oil sanctions to Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oil-revenue-sanctions-putin-b2341221.html)

US signals to European allies it won’t stop them from sending F-16s to Ukraine

The Biden administration has conveyed to European allies in recent weeks that Washington will allow the export of F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine, CNN reported, citing sources.

The White House is facing mounting pressure from Congress members and allies urging the administration to help Ukraine procure the jets in order to counter aggressive Russian attacks.

Several European countries have a supply of the US-made F-16s and have expressed willingness to export some of them to Ukraine. But the US would have to approve that third-party transfer because of the jets’ sensitive US technology.

While the US remains reluctant to send any of its own F-16s to Kyiv, US officials told CNN that the administration is prepared to approve the export of the jets to Ukraine if that is what allies decide to do with their supply.

US lawmakers and congressional staffers have joined in the F-16 lobbying campaign, urging the administration to provide the jets to Ukraine.

“As a bipartisan group of lawmakers, we view the transfer of F-16 fighter aircraft to Ukraine as essential for providing Kyiv with the air support capability required to fully defend their nation against Russia’s unprovoked, illegal, and brutal invasion, and to make the territorial gains necessary to reclaim their country,” a group of Republican and Democratic lawmakers wrote in a letter to president Joe Biden.

The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary

UK-supplied cruise missiles have been used by Ukraine, confirms Wallace

Ukrainian forces have used UK-supplied Storm Shadow cruise missiles against Russian targets, Ben Wallace has confirmed.

The defence secretary suggested the Storm Shadow missiles could help provide some of the same capabilities to strike at Russian positions behind the front line.

The UK confirmed it would supply the weapons to Ukraine earlier this month.

Ukraine’s leader Volodymyr Zelensky has lobbied Western leaders to supply Nato fighter jets to his nation, particularly F-16s which the UK does not possess.

At a press conference at the UK’s Permanent Joint HQ in Northwood with his Norwegian counterpart Bjorn Arild Gram, Mr Wallace said: “It is my understanding that it (Storm Shadow) has been used since we announced its deployment to Ukraine.”

More here.

[*UK-supplied cruise missiles have been used by Ukraine, Wallace confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ben-wallace-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-norwegian-nato-b2341566.html)

Zelensky to attend G7 summit in person

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky will travel to Hiroshima, Japan, on Sunday to join the Group of Seven (G7) leaders summit in person, a European Union source told Reuters.

Earlier, the Japanese officials said that Mr Zelensky would join virtually.

Accounting error overvalued Ukraine weapons aid by $3bn -report

The Pentagon reportedly overestimated the value of the missiles, ammunition and other equipment it sent to Ukraine by around $3bn, an error that may pave the way for more weapons being sent to Kyiv.

The error was the result of assigning a higher than warranted value on weaponry that was taken from US stocks and then shipped to Ukraine, Reuters reported, citing two senior defence officials.

“We’ve discovered inconsistencies in how we value the equipment that we’ve given” to Ukraine, one of the defence officials said.

Congress is being notified of the accounting adjustment, the sources said.

Since August 2021, the US has sent weapons valued at about $21.1bn to Ukraine from its stockpiles.

Russia sent waves of drones toward Kyiv, says military

The head of Kyiv’s military administration said Russian forces had sent waves of drones toward the capital.

This was the 10th attack this month and the second in less than 24 hours.

“This Kremlin tactic is an attempt to overwhelm our anti-aircraft forces and put psychological pressure on civilians. It won’t happen!” Serhiy Popko wrote on Telegram.

“All air targets sent toward Kyiv were destroyed by our anti-aircraft defences.”

The military had warned that central regions and Kyiv were at risk from drones.

Air raid alerts throughout Ukraine

Air raid alerts sounded throughout Ukraine early today, with some areas later reporting explosions and officials saying anti-aircraft units were pressed into action in several regions.

The alerts extended to all regions of the country for about an hour from 2 am (local time).

However, there were no reports of strikes on infrastructure or civilian targets and no indications of casualties as the alerts were withdrawn in Kyiv and in central and southern regions.

Politics explained: Why does Japan matter to the UK?

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) is in [*Tokyo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tokyo) to announce a new defence partnership with [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) and support £18bn of private business deals, and will then join in the wider G7 talks with the other leaders, from Canada, France, Germany, Italy and the United States. They’ll be focusing on strategy towards Russia and China, with an obvious focus on the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , writesSean O’Grady.

[*Why does Japan matter to the UK?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/politics-explained/rishi-sunak-uk-japan-relations-defence-pact-hiroshima-b2341690.html)

Russia extends detention of US consular worker by three months

A [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) court on Thursday extended by three months the detention of a former employee of the US consulate in [*Vladivostok*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladivostok) on charges of cooperating with a foreign state.

The US state department has condemned the arrest of Robert Shonov, which was reported this week. He was detained in Vladivostok on the Pacific coast and brought to Moscow.

The specifics of the charges haven’t been reported, including Shonov’s alleged actions or what country he was suspected of cooperating with.

[*Russia extends detention of US consular worker by 3 months*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-evan-gershkovich-moscow-vladivostok-b2341604.html)

UN official hopes for breakthrough on Russian food, fertilizer shipments

A top UN official said Thursday that he hopes for a breakthrough soon after months of efforts to ensure that Russian food and fertilizer can be shipped to developing countries struggling with high prices.

A day after Moscow agreed to renew a wartime accord allowing Ukraine to export critical food supplies, UN humanitarian chief Martin Griffiths told The Associated Press that secretary-general Antonio Guterres recently met with insurance titan Lloyds to help iron out coverage for shipments of Russian agricultural products.

[*UN official hopes for breakthrough on Russian food, fertilizer shipments*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-moscow-black-sea-antonio-guterres-recep-tayyip-erdogan-b2341665.html)

Watch: CIA urges Russians to spill secrets in new video campaign

China says Ukraine envoy met with Zelensky during talks in Kyiv

[*China says Ukraine envoy met with Zelenskyy during talks in Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-ap-china-beijing-xi-jinping-b2341280.html)

Ukraine repels Russian forces in Bakhmut after overnight strikes on Kyiv

Ukraine said it had repelled a day of Russian attacks in and around Bakhmut on Thursday, making small gains while buying time for other “planned actions”.

While Russia boosted its forces in the city and attacked suburbs to the north and south, Ukraine’s forces advanced up to one 1km, deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said on her Telegram channel.

“The defence of Bakhmut and its outskirts is meeting its military objectives,” she said. “As of now, we control the southwestern part of Bakhmut.”

More on this story here:

[*Ukraine repels Russian forces in Bakhmut after overnight strikes on Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-missiles-russia-overnight-strike-b2341472.html)

Latest images from contested Bakhmut

Russia has ‘intent and ability’ to target underwater infrastructure

There is no doubt [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has “the intent and the ability” to target the West’s underwater energy and communication lines, [*Ben Wallace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ben-wallace) said as he launched a security partnership with Norway.

At a press conference alongside his Norwegian counterpart at the Northwood military base on Thursday, the [*defence secretary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/defence-secretary) said [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) has submarines and spy ships “specifically designed” to “potentially sabotage or attack critical national infrastructure belonging to its adversaries”.

More on this story here:

[*Russia has ‘intent and ability’ to target underwater infrastructure*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ben-wallace-russia-moscow-ministry-of-defence-defence-secretary-b2341600.html)

Crimea’s return to Ukraine will ‘happen for certain’, says Zelensky

President Volodymyr Zelensky has set up a reintegration council to advise on the restoration of Ukrainian rule over Crimea, saying liberation of the peninsula, seized by Russia in 2014, will “happen for certain”.

He was speaking at a gathering in Kyiv to mark the anniversary of the mass Soviet-era deportation of Crimean Tatars from the peninsula in 1944.

Zelensky said that more and more countries realised it would be impossible “to return peace to international relations and the full force of international law” without first returning Crimea.

“We continue our work in order to liberate the Crimea. It will happen for certain -its full-fledged return to Ukraine‘s state system,” Zelensky told Tatar community leaders and senior officials.

“We are preparing to reintegrate Crimea. I signed the decree about the advisory council on reintegration and de-occupation of our Crimea and the (Crimean port) city of Sevastopol.”

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in EU forced to travel back for abortions, study warns

[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) women who sought refuge in [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) countries are being forced to travel through dangerous conflict zones to access [*abortions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/abortion) and [*contraception*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/contraception) in their native country, a study has warned.

Research found some women from Ukraine now living in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) are having to temporarily return home as it is “easier” to access reproductive healthcare there, despite the stress of travelling back into the wartorn country.

The study, by the Center for Reproductive Rights and eight human rights organisations, warned refugees are being put “at risk” as they grapple with issues such as legal restrictions and cost barriers when trying to access the right care.

Our women’s correspondentMaya Oppenheim reports:

[***Ukrainian******refugees*** *living in EU forced to travel back for abortions, study warns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-abortions-contraception-eu-b2339974.html)

Ukraine deputy defence minister says Russia on offensive in Bakhmut

Ukrainian deputy defence Minister Hanna Maliar said in a Telegram post that Kyiv’s forces had repelled day-long attacks by Russia in the embattled city of Bakhmut on Wednesday.

“The enemy gathered most of its reserves to Bakhmut and significantly strengthened the group,” she said. “Today the enemy attacked Bakhmut for the entire day. All attacks were repelled.”

Stoltenberg expects new defence investment pledge at Vilnius summit

Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg has said he expected allies would agree on a new investment pledge to spend 2 per cent of their GDP on defence at the alliance’s summit in Vilnius, Lithuania, in July.

Nato members needed to “commit more”, Stoltenberg told a joint press conference with Portuguese prime minister Antonio Costa in Lisbon.

The Nato chief has repeatedly urged allies to speed up increases in defence spending as the world had “become more dangerous” following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year.

Seven of the alliance’s 30 countries met the current goal of spending 2 per cent of GDP on defence in 2022 -one fewer than in 2021, before the war in Ukraine -according to estimates in the Nato secretary-general’s annual report, released in March.

Revealed: Boris Johnson’s first words to Zelensky on night of Russia attack

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) told [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) “I hope this is not the last time we speak” at the dawn of the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , according to the former PM’s comms chief.

Those were among the first words the pair shared during a 4am interaction on the night of the advance in February 2022, Guto Harri said, describing it as a “man-to-man thing” between the PM and the Ukrainian president.

[*Former GB News presenter Mr Harri*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/guto-harri-gb-news-taking-knee-b1886084.html) told his Unprecedented podcast on Thursday that the two leaders were on the phone within minutes of Mr Johnson being woken to be told the news.

William Mata has more:

[*Revealed: Boris Johnson’s first words to Zelensky on night of Russia attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-johnson-first-words-zelensky-b2341553.html)

Norway donating F-16 jets to Ukraine 'not on the agenda' now -defence minister

Norway donating F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine is not on the agenda at the moment, the country’s defence minister Bjoern Arild Gram said.

“When it comes to F-16 ... it’s not on the agenda now and I really don’t want to speculate on any possible future donations,” he said during a news conference with British counterpart Ben Wallace, when asked by a reporter whether Norway would be giving F-16s to Ukraine.

Storm Shadow missiles have been used in Ukraine

Long-range Storm Shadow missiles provided to Ukraine by Britain have been used, British defence minister Ben Wallace said on Thursday.

“All I can say is it is my understanding that it has been used since we announced its deployment to Ukraine, but I’m not going to go into further details,” Wallace said at a press conference.

Black Sea grain corridor has not yet resumed operations -Ukrainian official

The Black Sea grain corridor designed to ensure the safe supply of Ukrainian food to world markets has not yet resumed operation despite statements by Turkey and Russia on extending the agreement, a senior Ukrainian official said on Thursday.

The deal has been extended for two more months, in what U.N. secretary-general Antonio Guterres hailed on Wednesday as “good news for the world,” a day before Russia could have quit the pact over obstacles to its grain and fertiliser exports.

“This was announced yesterday, but so far these statements have not led to the resumption of work and the joint centre in Istanbul did not inspect vessels for entry yesterday or today,” Yuriy Vaskov, Ukraine’s deputy restoration minister told Reuters.

“We expected it to be yesterday immediately after the statements of our partners. We are expecting the partners’ position today and believe that they will be able to resolve this issue,” he told in an interview.

He said 62 vessels are ready for inspection and some of them have been standing by for several months.

Turkish president Tayyip Erdogan announced the extension in a televised speech on Wednesday and it was later confirmed by Russia, Ukraine and the United Nations.

The United Nations and Turkey brokered the deal for an initial 120 days in July last year to help tackle a global food crisis that has been aggravated by Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine, one of the world’s leading grain exporters.

Pope hopes to send peace envoys to Kyiv and Moscow

Pope Francis hopes to send personal peace envoys to the Ukrainian and Russian presidents to try to broker a ceasefire in the war, a Catholic website reported on Thursday.

Il Sismografo, which specialises in Vatican news, said this is the “mission” Francis spoke of cryptically when he was returning from Hungary last month.

According to the website, the plan would be for Cardinal Matteo Zuppi of Bologna to go to Kyiv for talks with Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and for Archbishop Claudio Gugerotti, the head of the Vatican’s department for Eastern Churches, to go to Moscow to meet president Vladimir Putin.

It said both presidents had agreed to meet with the papal envoys, without citing sources or giving details.

Vatican spokesman Matteo Bruni said he had no comment on the report but pointed a reporter to recent comments by Vatican secretary of state cardinal Pietro Parolin that “now is the moment to take the initiative to create a just peace in Ukraine”.

Zuppi and Gugerotti could not be reached for comment and a key diplomatic source said nothing was yet “concrete”.

If the envoys are sent, it would be identical to a gesture by the late Pope John Paul II, who in 2003 sent high-level representatives to Washington and Baghdad in an unsuccessful attempt to thwart the start of the Iraq War.

President Zelensky met Pope Francis at the Vatican last Saturday but in comments afterwards he appeared to downplay the possibility of a papal mediation.

“With all due respect for His Holiness, we do not need mediators, we need a just peace ... Putin only kills. We don’t need a mediation with him,” president Zelensky said on Italian television.

In pictures: Ukrainians celebrate Vyshyvanka day

Ukrainians are celebrating Vyshyvanka day today, a holiday dedicated to celebrating the vyshyvanka -a traditional Ukrainian embroidered shirt.

The shirt is said to be a symbol of the Ukrainian people's heritage.

Kyiv residents ‘sleep deprived’ and ‘angry’ after attack on capital

A Ukrainian MP said Kyiv residents are “very angry” following the ninth attack on the capital this month in a noticeable escalation after a quieter period.

In the early hours of Thursday, Ukraine shot down 29 out of 30 cruise missiles amid an escalation of attacks on the country, according to Ukrainian officials.

Speaking in Kyiv, Ukrainian MP Inna Sovsun said: “I think people are very angry. This is the major feeling. Everybody is angry.

“Everybody is sleep deprived very much, including myself today, because it’s not like you can easily go back to sleep when this happens and just pretend that nothing happened.”

Ms Sovsun said she woke up to the sound of “one big explosion” in the early hours.

“A couple of hours after that, I got a message from my neighbour and she sent me the picture of the fragment of the missile, which landed on our building, which is goddamn scary,” she said.

Ms Sovsun believes the escalation of attacks by Russia is an attempt to “undermine our spirit” and hit warehouses possibly storing ammunition to weaken Ukraine’s ability to defend itself.

Russia fails “dramatically” to dampen Ukrainians’ determination, Ms Sovsun said, “because after every single attack, people are getting more angry and less willing to negotiate, if there was anyone willing to do that”.

The MP believes Russia is “trying to find and to hit the warehouses with weapons ammunition, which we have received for the counter offensive”.

Ms Sovsun said the country is “extremely grateful” to the UK for No 10’s announcement that Britain will send hundreds of air defence missiles and additional unmanned aerial systems to Ukraine, saying the UK has been “a great friend” to Ukraine.

She said: “I remember when there was a change of leadership, there was speculation that maybe the new leadership will not be as supportive, will not be providing so much help, but I always believe that this UK position about this war is based on an understanding of the UK interests.

“It is not just humanitarian help, it is an understanding to what extent Russia is a threat to the UK national interest as well, and that is why I’m very happy to see this coming through, that the new leadership is still as supportive.

“We really wish that the rest of the world were as proactive as the UK is in helping Ukraine to protect ourselves.”

The recent escalation of attacks shows Russia is “concerned about a counter-offensive”, Ms Sovsun said, adding: “They’re definitely not happy about their so-called winter counter-offensive not being successful.

“They were talking about their counteroffensive for so long but they still do not have the full control of Bakhmut city, which they have been trying to claim for three months now.”

Ms Sovsun believes “questions are being raised in the Russian army but also among Russian people” about how much the army can achieve.

“I think that that is why they are trying to target civilian infrastructure and cities, and then try to scare people, because they believe that they cannot do much on the frontline,” she said.

The MP said the country’s residents have to “continue to live our lives”, adding: “I am absolutely sure that we will win.”

Japan and US to continue Russia sanctions and Ukraine support

Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida has agreed with U.S. president Joe Biden to continue sanctions against Russia and support of Ukraine, prime minister Kishida told reporters as the two leaders met in the Japanese city of Hiroshima on Thursday.

Prime minister Kishida added that both countries also affirmed the importance of working together on common issues regarding China.

Ukrainian troops in Bakhmut advance by more than a mile as Wagner group reports retreats

Ukrainian troops have advanced by more than a mile on the outskirts of the besieged city of Bakhmut, according to reports.

Ukraine’s military, which has been cautious so far in reporting gains in the area, said troops had advanced in places by more than a mile. Its forces had been on the defensive for half a year, weathering a huge winter and spring offensive by Moscow that saw only slow gains.

“Despite the fact that our units do not have an advantage in equipment ... and personnel, they have continued to advance on the flanks, and covered a distance of 150 to 1,700 metres (1.1 miles),” military spokesperson Serhiy Cherevatyi said in televised comments.

It comes after the head of the Russian Wagner mercenary group Yevgeny Prigozhin accused commanders of Russia’s regular forces of abandoning vital ground on the flanks north and south of Bakhmut.

In May, Prigozhin announced his intention to withdraw his troops from Bakhmut in a row over support from [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s government -but appeared the backtrack on this claim soon after.

The Wagner group reported Russian retreats from Bakhmut today.

“Unfortunately, units of the Russian Defence Ministry have withdrawn up to 570 metres (1,880 feet) to the north of Bakhmut, exposing our flanks,” Prigozhin said in his latest voice message on Thursday.

“I am appealing to the top leadership of the Ministry of Defence -publicly -because my letters are not being read,” Prigozhin said, addressing Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov.

“Please do not give up the flanks.”

The Russian defence ministry has acknowledged some withdrawals from positions near Bakhmut over the past week but denies Prigozhin’s assertions that flanks are crumbling, or that it has withheld ammunition from Wagner.

However, Russia’s presence remains on the battlefield. Ukrainian troops near the front line said Russia was bombarding access roads to slow the Ukrainian assault on Bakhmut ahead of the country’s planned counter-offensive.

“Now, for the most part, as we have started to advance, they are shelling all the routes to front positions, so our armoured vehicles can’t deliver more infantry, ammunition and other things,” said Petro Podaru, commander of a Ukrainian artillery unit.

Russian ministry says struck Ukrainian targets using high-precision missiles -TASS

The Russian defence ministry said on Thursday that it had struck Ukrainian military targets using high-precision missiles, a day after a major wave of missile strikes on Ukrainian cities, Russian state-owned news agency TASS reported.

China says Ukraine envoy met with Zelensky during talks in Kyiv

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) said Thursday its special envoy met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during talks in Kyiv earlier this week.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said the meeting came amid discussions between envoy Li Hui and Ukraine’s foreign minister and other government officials.

“There is no remedy to resolve the crisis,” Wang told reporters at a daily briefing. “All parties should create favorable conditions and accumulate mutual trust for the political settlement.”

Read the full story:

[*China says Ukraine envoy met with Zelenskyy during talks in Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-ap-china-beijing-xi-jinping-b2341280.html)

Leaders begin arriving in Japan for meeting of G-7 nations, with war in Ukraine high on the agenda

Japanese Prime Minister [*Fumio Kishida*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fumio-kishida) arrived in Hiroshima on Thursday as he prepared to welcome world leaders to a Group of Seven meeting in the western Japanese city that was the site of the world’s first atomic bomb attack.

The Japanese leader planned to hold separate meetings with U.S. President Joe Biden and British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak later in the day, before the wider summit kicks off Friday.

The G-7 leaders are expected to touch on a range of issues during their three-day meeting, with Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) likely to be high on the agenda.

Adam Schreck reports:

[*Leaders begin arriving in Japan for meeting of G-7 nations, with war in Ukraine high on the agenda*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/fumio-kishida-ap-ukraine-japan-china-b2341188.html)

Devastation of Putin’s war on Ukraine laid bare in new satellite images

Fresh satellite images taken from the frontline city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , that has become the epicentre of Ukraine’s conflict, reveal heavy destruction of infrastructure reduced to smouldering rubble.

The war for the control of Bakhmut has carried on for nearly 10 months now as Russian forces continued to bomb the critical mining city in a bid to seize control.

Rows of apartment buildings, schools, stores and other infrastructure across the length and breadth of the city have been reduced to rubble and ash, with smoke visible in several places, according to stark, high-resolution satellite images from Maxar technologies.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Devastation of Putin’s war on Ukraine’s Bakhmut laid bare in new satellite images*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/bakhmut-satellite-images-schools-apartments-maxar-b2341267.html)

Pictures show damage after Odesa air strikes that killed one

Russia's Lavrov says Moscow, despite grain deal renewal, does not see progress

Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said on Thursday that Moscow had agreed to renew the Black Sea grain deal for two months even though it did not see results when it came to implementing the parts of it which apply to Russia.

Speaking at a press conference with his Ugandan counterpart, Lavrov said the deal was aimed at bolstering the food security of the world’s poorest people.

Lavrov denied that Russia’s renewal of the part Turkish-brokered deal was related to presidential elections in Turkey.

G7 will tighten Russia sanctions to prevent bypassing of restrictions, Germany’s Scholz says

The Group of Seven (G7) nations will further tighten sanctions against Russia in order to prevent circumvention of such restrictions, German chancellor Olaf Scholz told reporters as he arrived for a three-day G7 leaders’ summit in Japan.

Tightening of sanctions would be done in a good and pragmatic way, Scholz said at the summit in Hiroshima.

Russian mercenary boss accuses regular army of leaving Bakhmut's flanks exposed

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the chief of Russia’s Wagner mercenary group, on Thursday accused regular Russian army units of pulling back 570 metres north of the eastern Ukrainian city of Bakhmut, leaving his own fighters’ flanks exposed.

The claims have not been independently verified and there was no immediate comment from the defence ministry.

Wagner forces have been spearheading the assault on Bakhmut, one of the bloodiest and longest battles of the war, something Moscow calls “a special military operation,” with some support from the regular army in recent months.

Prigozhin, who has repeatedly accused Russia’s top military brass of not doing enough to back his men, asked the defence ministry to do all it could to protect Bakhmut’s flanks after what he alleged was a withdrawal.

“Unfortunately, units of the Russian Defence Ministry have withdrawn up to 570 metres to the north of Bakhmut, exposing our flanks,” Prigozhin said in a voice message.

“I am appealing to the top leadership of the Ministry of Defence -publicly -because my letters are not being read,” Prigozhin said.

“Please do not give up the flanks,” he said, addressing Russian Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu and Valery Gerasimov, chief of the General Staff.

Wagner says it has taken most of the shattered city -albeit at enormous human cost. But Ukraine says its forces have retaken territory around Bakhmut in recent days.

Moscow sees Bakhmut, a city of about 70,000 before the war, as a potential stepping stone towards capturing the rest of the eastern industrial Donbas region bordering Russia.

More than 1,000 Russians fled conscription to Finland

A total of 1,109 Russian citizens have fled to Finald to avoid military conscription in Russia, the Finnish Immigration Service has said.

Finland now awaits a decision from the EU about their stance on the fate of Russians who have fled conscription, before the country decides whether to grant over 1,000 Russian asylum.

it is not known when such a decision will be made by the EU.

“We haven’t been able to issue decisions regarding asylum,” Sanna Sutter, the interior ministry’s immigration director, told Finnish news agency STT.

Russia to export up to 55 million tonnes of grain in 2023-24, Russian agricultural minister says

Russian agricultural minister Dmitry Patrushev on Thursday said that Russia’s grain exports would be between 50 million and 55 million tonnes in the 2023-2024 season.

Speaking at a televised government meeting, Patrushev said that Russia’s 2023 wheat crop was seen at 78 million tonnes, and that 93% of winter grains had made it through the winter in normal condition.

Putin says Russia increased food exports last year

Russian president Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the country had increased its food exports last year, and that Russia needed to help farmers in the regions it claims to have annexed from Ukraine last year.

Kremlin says freezing of Finland’s bank accounts in Russia was forced retaliatory step

The Kremlin said on Thursday that a decision to freeze the bank accounts of Finnish embassies and consulates in Russia was a response to what it called the unfriendly acts of “the collective West”, including Finland.

Officials from Finland and Denmark said on Wednesday that the diplomatic bank accounts of both countries in Russia had been frozen, prompting their embassies to make payments in cash.

Putin ‘bans officials from resigning to avoid impression of defeat’

Russia has banned its own top officials from resigning to avoid “any impression of defeatism,” according to UK.

The British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said regional leaders, security officials and members of the powerful Presidential Administration have been banned from resigning while the ‘Special Military Operation’ continues.

In an intelligence update posted on Twitter, the ministry said: “In private, many officials are likely highly sceptical about the war, as well as often experiencing work stress within the dysfunctional wartime apparatus. The ban is likely enforced with strong hints that resignees will face trumped up criminal charges.”

“As well as being concerned about capability gaps resignees would leave, the authorities are likely also attempting to prevent any impression of defeatism, and to bolster a sense of collective responsibility for the war,” the ministry claimed.

It comes as explosions rocked cities across [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) overnight as millions were subject to air raid alerts ahead of a much-anticipated counteroffensive.

Air strikes hit Kviv in the ninth Russian air raid to target the capital this month, and one person was killed in the Odesa region after a Russian missile attack.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -18 May 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/m2Jer1K5tu*](https://t.co/m2Jer1K5tu) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/hCyZxu5xEK*](https://t.co/hCyZxu5xEK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*May 18, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1659073859411144711?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Putin clashes with own finance minister over damage done to Russian economy by oil sanctions

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has shot down concerns of his own finance minister who acknowledged “a problem” with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s energy revenues, underscoring the damage done by Western sanctions to its economy.

In a televised meeting chaired by President Putin through a video link, Anton Siluanov said on Wednesday that Russia’s revenues from [*oil*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oil) and gas have taken a hit, blaming deep discounts offered to countries following the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) invasion.

“Russia’s non-energy revenues are on track for growth as planned, with the potential for a small surplus by year-end, but there is a problem with energy revenues,” said Mr Siluanov.

Shweta Sharma reports:

[*Putin clashes with own finance minister over damage by oil sanctions to Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oil-revenue-sanctions-putin-b2341221.html)

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[*Ukraine news – live: Moscow to take up UN Security Council presidency as Kyiv blasts ‘absurd’ move*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-B6N1-JBNF-W19D-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** It comes as the International Monetary Fund approves $15.6bn loan for Ukraine

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) will take up the monthly presidency of the 15-member UN Security Council from today, despite its invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) that has seen mass destruction across the country.

Kyiv has lashed out at the development which is in line with a rotation that has not changed despite [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s aggression.

“As of 1 April, they’re taking the level of absurdity to a new level,” Sergiy Kyslytsya, the Ukrainian permanent representative said.

“The Security Council as it is designed is immobilised and incapable to address the issues of their primary responsibility, that is prevention of conflicts and then dealing with conflicts,” he told The Guardian.

Ukraine’s ambassador will stay away from the Security Council in April except in the case of an “issue of critical national security interest”.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund ([*IMF*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/imf) ) said its executive board had approved a four-year $15.6bn loan programme for Ukraine.

The loan is a part of a global $115bn package to support the country’s economy as it battles Russia’s ongoing invasion.

Key points

Russia to take up UN Security Council presidency IMF approves $15.6bn loan package for Ukraine Civilian casualty figure of 8,400 'tip of the iceberg' says UN Ukraine has endured 400 days of Putin’s invasion, says Zelensky Wagner has lost ‘substantial manpower’ in Bakhmut fight

Russia to take up UN Security Council presidency

Russia will take up the monthly presidency of the 15-member UN Security Council from Saturday, in line with a rotation that has been unaffected by the Ukraine war.

Ukraine has lashed out at the development as the Russian invasion in the country continues.

“As of 1 April, they’re taking the level of absurdity to a new level,” Sergiy Kyslytsya, the Ukrainian permanent representative was quoted as saying by The Guardian.

“The Security Council as it is designed is immobilised and incapable to address the issues of their primary responsibility, that is prevention of conflicts and then dealing with conflicts.”

Ukraine’s ambassador will stay away from the Security Council in April except in the case of an “issue of critical national security interest”.

While Ukraine is not a current Council member, it is often called to speak on issues related to the war.

Waall Street Journal reporter in Russia 'detained on suspicion of spying’

Russia’s FSB security service has claimed that a reporter with The Wall Street Journal, Evan Gershkovich, had been detained in the Urals city of Yekaterinburg on suspicion of espionage, the Interfax news agency reported.

In a statement quoted by Interfax, the FSB said it had “stopped the illegal activities of U.S. citizen Gershkovich Evan, born in 1991, a correspondent of the Moscow bureau of the American newspaper The Wall Street Journal, accredited at the Russian Foreign Ministry, who is suspected of spying in the interests of the American government”.

The statement said Gershkovich had been tasked “by the American side” with gathering information on “the activities of one of the enterprises of the military-defence complex”. It provided no evidence.

Four bankers who helped Putin's friend set up Swiss bank account convicted

Four bankers who helped a close friend of Vladimir Putin move millions of francs through Swiss bank accounts have been convicted of lacking diligence in financial transactions.

The four were found guilty on Thursday of helping Sergey Roldugin, a concert cellist who has been dubbed “Putin’s wallet” by the Swiss government.

The executives -three Russians and one Swiss -helped Roldugin, who is godfather to Putin’s eldest daughter Maria, deposit millions of francs in Swiss bank accounts between 2014 and 2016.

The men, who cannot be identified under Swiss reporting restrictions, were found guilty at a hearing at Zurich District Court and were given suspended sentences of seven months each.

China’s role in Ukraine conflict vital to EU relations, says von der Leyen

China must play a part in pressing for a “just peace” in Ukraine and its role in the conflict will be vital in shaping relations with the European Union, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Thursday.

China, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, had a responsibility to play a constructive role in advancing a peace based on the territorial integrity of Ukraine, with the withdrawal of invading Russian forces.

“Any peace plan which would in effect consolidate Russian annexations is simply not a viable plan. We have to be frank on this point,” von der Leyen said in a speech in Brussels on the eve of a trip to Beijing.

“How China continues to interact with Putin’s war will be a determining factor for EU-China relations going forward.”

Russia in contact with IAEA on 'evolving' idea of Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant safety zone

Moscow is still in talks with the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency about the idea of a safety zone around the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant that is controlled by Russian forces in Ukraine, Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov was reported as saying.

RIA quoted him as saying that the idea was “evolving”. Interfax quoted Ryabkov as saying Moscow was in “constant contact” with IAEA chief Rafael Grossi.

Kremlin says US reporter ‘caught red-handed’

The Kremlin said on Thursday that the arrest of Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich by Russia’s FSB security service on suspicion of spying was “a matter for the FSB”, but that it understood Gershkovich had been “caught red-handed”.

Russian did not publish any evidence of Gershkovich’s guilt. The Wall Street Journal vehemently denied the allegation.

Zelensky describes ‘horrific’ year in Kyiv region

The past year had been “the most horrific” in the lives of many residents of the Kyiv region, Ukraine‘s president said on Thursday, where Russian troops are accused of committing war crimes before withdrawing a year ago

The Ukrainian military recaptured the small towns of Irpin and Bucha outside the capital, Kyiv, in late March last year.

International investigators are now collecting evidence in Irpin, Bucha and other places where Ukraine says Russian troops committed large-scale atrocities. Russia denies the allegations.

“For many residents of the Kyiv region, the past year has become the most horrific in their entire lives. And the liberation of the Kyiv region has become a symbol of the fact that Ukraine will be able to win this war,” president Volodymyr Zelensky wrote in English on the Telegram messaging app.

“Events that could not be imagined in the 21st century have become a reality in the satellite cities of Kyiv, Bucha and Irpin. Russian troops marched on the Ukrainian capital from the north and brought death and destruction.”

Zelensky wrote his Telegram post under video footage showing heavily damaged buildings and vehicles that had been destroyed in Bucha and Irpin.

Russia to keep missile test notices under Cold War-era deal

Russia will continue to give the US advance notice about its missile tests despite suspending the last remaining nuclear arms treaty between the two countries, a top Russian diplomat has said.

Deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov’s statement reversed one he made on Wednesday, when he said Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington envisioned under the 2011 New START nuclear pact, including missile test warnings.

More on this here:

[*Russia to keep missile test notices under Cold War-era deal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/ap-washington-moscow-vladimir-putin-soviet-b2310855.html)

‘Too early’ to talk of prisoner swap for US reporter, Russian minister says

Russian deputy foreign minister Sergei Ryabkov says it is too early to talk of a possible prisoner swap involving a detained US reporter who has been held on suspicion of spying, the state RIA news agency reported.

The Interfax news agency cited Ryabkov as saying that such exchanges had previously taken place for those already convicted, and that it was necessary to wait to see how the story with Evan Gershkovich developed.

FSB requests formal arrest of US reporter

Investigators from Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) on Thursday requested the formal arrest of American Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, detained on suspicion of espionage, the state-owned news agency TASS reported, citing Moscow’s Lefortovo district court.

Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’

[*Orlando Bloom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orlando-bloom) has praised the strength of the Ukrainian people as he met the country’s president, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , and encouraged him to “go win” the war.

The [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) actor, 46, who is a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador, travelled to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) in his first visit back to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since 2016.

In the meeting, Bloom told Mr Zelensky it is “remarkable to see how you are holding this country” and said it was a “real honour” to meet the Ukrainian president.

More on this story here:

[*Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/volodymyr-zelensky-orlando-bloom-ukraine-unicef-british-b2308581.html)

Russia’s Lavrov to visit Turkey in early April -Turkish broadcaster NTV

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov will visit Turkey on 6-7 April Turkish private broadcaster NTV reported on Thursday.

The war in Ukraine and developments in Syria would be discussed in talks during Lavrov’s visit, as well as commerce, energy issues and bilateral ties, NTV said.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Sweden’s Nato hopes falter amid fresh objection from Hungary

Sweden’s foreign minister has indicated that he was no longer sure his country would be able to join Nato by July, after fresh signs of objections from Hungary.

Sweden applied to join the military alliance after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine last year, but Hungary and fellow Nato member Turkey held off from approving the bid.

Foreign minister Tobias Billstrom said last week that “it goes without saying” Sweden would become a member by the time of a Nato summit in Vilnius in July.

But he told TT news agency on Thursday: I have noted the things that have been said in recent days, especially from Hungary’s side, and that means you always have reason to alter your words.

“I think ‘hopeful’ in this context is better,” he added.

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

King Charles praises Germany’s generosity in hosting millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has praised [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) for showing “extraordinary hospitality” in hosting more than one million [*refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since the outbreak of war.

In the first state banquet speech of his reign on Wednesday evening (29 March), Charles also pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) and Germany after arriving in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin).

“I did want to pay a particular tribute to Germany’s extraordinary hospitality in hosting over one million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***,” the King said.

“This, it seems to me, so powerfully demonstrates the generosity and spirit of the German people.”

Watch:

[*King Charles praises Germany’s generosity in hosting millions of* ***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/germany-ukraine-war-king-charles-b2311045.html)

White House releases statement on Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia

The White House has released a statement following the arrest of a Wall Street Journal journalist in Russia.

[*Evan Gershkovich*](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/evan-gershkovich) was arrested in Yekaterinburg on spying charges, according to Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) – the successor to the KGB.

He was brought to Moscow where a court at a closed hearing ordered him held in pre-trial detention until 29 May. The TASS state news agency said he pleaded not guilty. The authorities released no evidence publicly and the case is said to have been marked “top secret”.

A newly-released statement from White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre reads:

“We are deeply concerned by the troubling reports that Evan Gershkovich, an American citizen, has been detained in Russia.

“Last night, White House and State Department Officials spoke with Mr. Gershkovich’s employer, the Wall Street Journal. The Administration has also been in contact with his family.

“Furthermore, the State Department has been in direct touch with the Russian government on this matter, including actively working to secure consular access to Mr. Gershkovich.

“The targeting of American citizens by the Russian government is unacceptable. We condemn the detention of Mr. Gershkovich in the strongest terms.

“We also condemn the Russian government’s continued targeting and repression of journalists and freedom of the press.

“I want to strongly reiterate that Americans should heed the U.S. government’s warning to not travel to Russia. U.S. citizens residing or travelling in Russia should depart immediately, as the State Department continues to advise.”

Wall Street Journal reporter seen for first time since being arrested in Russia

New footage has captured a Wall Street Journal reporter seen for the first time since being arrested in Russia.

Journalist [*Evan Gershkovich*](https://www.wsj.com/news/author/evan-gershkovich) was arrested in Yekaterinburg on spying charges, according to Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) – the successor to the KGB.

He was brought to Moscow where a court at a closed hearing ordered him held in pre-trial detention until 29 May. The TASS state news agency said he pleaded not guilty. The authorities released no evidence publicly and the case is said to have been marked “top secret”.

The arrest is the most serious public move against an international journalist since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in February last year. Espionage charges against someone from an American news outlet have not been seen since the end of the Cold War – with the detention coming amid a bitter war of words between Moscow and Washington over the Ukraine war. If convicted, Mr Gershkovich could face up to 20 years in prison.

The Wall Street Journal said in a statement it was “deeply concerned” for Mr Gershkovich’s safety and that it “vehemently denies the allegations from the FSB and seeks the immediate release of our trusted and dedicated reporter”.

Watch here:

Read the full story here:

[*Russia arrests Wall Street Journal reporter on ‘espionage’ charges*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wsj-reporter-arrested-russia-espionage-evan-gershkovich-b2310976.html)

Finland says Russia spy operations weakened in Nordic nation

Expulsions of [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) intelligence officers and visa refusals have substantially weakened Moscow’s intelligence operations in neighboring [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) in the past year, the Finnish Security and Intelligence Service said Thursday.

The intelligence agency, known by the abbreviation SUPO, said in a statement that Russian intelligence has been “squeezed” in the [*Nordic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nordic) country because of the agency’s ability to compromise spy operations in 2022.

“The Russian intelligence station (in Finland) shrank to about half of its former size last year,” SUPO Director Antti Pelttari said, adding that the main reason for the decline were expulsions of suspected spies and visa refusals on the advice of his agency.

The falling number of intelligence officers and restrictions on travel across the Russian-Finland border amid [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ‘s war in Ukraine have significantly undermined operating conditions for Russian spies in Finland, SUPO said.

It noted that operations under diplomatic cover have traditionally been the main instrument of Russian intelligence abroad, and Moscow was seeking to use, among other methods, cyberespionge to make up for the shortfall in human intelligence.

Read more:

[*Finland says Russia spy operations weakened in Nordic nation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/finland-ap-helsinki-russia-nordic-b2310830.html)

White House says Russia looking to trade food for North Korean munitions

The [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) said [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is “actively seeking” to acquire North Korean-made munitions for use against [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and has offered to trade Pyongyang food in exchange for the weapons.

National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby told reporters on Thursday that Russia’s quest for North Korean munitions is a consequence of the American and European sanctions that have been imposed on Moscow since Russian forces began invading Ukraine last year.

In January, the White House claimed that Russia’s Wagner Group had received trainloads of arms from North Korea last year.

Mr Kirby said the Biden Administration remains “concerned” that Pyongyang will provide further support for Russia’s war in Ukraine, and said a private arms dealer has been trying to broker a secret agreement between the two countries.

Andrew Feinberg reports:

[*White House says Russia looking to trade food for North Korean munitions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/russia-north-korea-food-munitions-weapons-b2311184.html)

NATO, US forces join Romania-led Black Sea military drills

Romania’s navy led multinational military drills in the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) region Thursday that brought together U.S. and NATO troops as the 30-nation alliance looks to boost security on its southeastern flank amid Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The sea and air exercises are part of a series of drills known as Sea Shield 2023 that involve some 3,400 military personnel from 12 NATO member countries and some partner nations.

Romania’s navy said Thursday’s drills in the Mahmudia region of the Danube Delta, which flows into the Black Sea, would demonstrate how the combined forces would “neutralize an enemy air landing” in an area adjacent to such a waterway.

More than 30 naval ships, 14 aircraft and 15 “fast intervention” boats and other patrol vessels are taking part in Sea Shield 2023, which started March 20 and runs until April 2. Anti-explosive divers have participated in drills, as have chemical, biological, and nuclear defence specialists.

In response to Russia’s February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, NATO bolstered its presence on Europe’s eastern flank by sending additional multinational battlegroups to alliance members Romania, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Slovakia.

Read more:

[*NATO, US forces join Romania-led Black Sea military drills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-nato-romania-black-sea-ukraine-b2311128.html)

Blinken compares Bosnia Serb leader to Putin

U.S. Secretary of State [*Antony Blinken*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antony-blinken) has compared the policies of the Bosnia Serb separatist leader to those of Russian [*President*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) following his moves to curb dissent and LGBTQ rights.

Blinken tweeted late Wednesday that “Milorad Dodik’s attacks on basic rights and freedoms in Republika Srpska show he is on President Putin’s authoritarian path.”

Republika Srpska is the name for the half of Bosnia that is dominated by the country’s Serbs. Dodik is the entity’s president and leading politician who has repeatedly advocated for the breakup of Bosnia and clashed with Western officials in the Balkan country.

Earlier this month, Dodik’s government faced criticism from the U.S. and the European Union for pushing forward with a law to recriminalize libel and insult offences, which was seen as an attack on the freedom of expression and independent media.

Dodik also announced a law in the upcoming months to prohibit access for LGBTQ activists to kindergartens, schools and universities. This came only days after a group of hooligans attacked LGBTQ activists and journalists in Banja Luka, Republika Srpska’s administrative centre.

Read more:

[*Blinken compares Bosnia Serb leader to Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/ap-bosnia-and-herzegovina-antony-blinken-vladimir-putin-president-b2310932.html)

Putin calls up 147,000 Russians for spring conscription

Russian President Vladimir Putin has signed an annual decree outlining how many citizens should be enlisted to fight as part of its spring conscription campaign.

The decree states that 147,000 Russian citizens should be drafted for military service, Tass news agency reports.

In September 2022, Putin previously signed an order calling for the conscription of 120,000 people as part of its autumn campaign.

At present, all men between the ages of 18 and 27 are required to carry out one year’s military service or the equivalent training if in higher education.

Inside Zelenskyy’s efforts to buoy a nation

The caravan of unmarked vehicles tears across the muddy grass next to the playground. On the merry-go-round, the children stop swinging and spinning. The curious — parents and other residents of this southeastern town — gather around. Car doors swing open, and heavily armed security guards in battlefield fatigues spill out.

And just like that, he is among them: Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, wartime leader and his country’s chief morale officer.

This week, Zelenskyy shuttled across the country on a 48-hour train trip to rally soldiers who are battling Russian forces — and, just as important, to buoy the communities often caught in the crossfire.

Read more below:

[*Ukraine by rail: Inside Zelenskyy's efforts to buoy a nation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kyiv-zaporizhzhia-donald-trump-b2310627.html)

Zelensky painting up for auction

An original painting of Volodymyr Zelensky signed by the Ukrainian president is being sold at auction, and proceeds from the sale will be used to benefit the nation’s people suffering during its war with Russia.Bidding on the 40-by-24-inch painting by American artist Oleg Jones starts at $50,000, and the goal is to sell it for at least $100,000, Bobby Livingston, executive vice president of auctioneer RR Auction in Boston, said Thursday.The painting features an image of Zelenskyy against the background of Ukraine‘s blue and yellow flag. Several raised stars in the upper left of the piece form a heart around the gold trident from the nation’s coat of arms.

ICYMI: Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests

Russia will no longer tell the US before carrying out missile tests, a senior Kremlin diplomat said on Wednesday, signalling an end to a decades-long practice that has eased the threat of nuclear escalation.

Sergei Ryabkov, Russian deputy foreign minister, said in remarks carried by Russian news agencies that Moscow had halted all information exchanges with Washington after recently withdrawing from the last remaining nuclear arms pact with the US.

The two nations have exchanged advance warnings about test launches for decades, along with information about the current state of their nuclear forces.

Read more below:

[*Russia to stop warning US before carrying out missile tests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-missile-warning-nuclear-us-b2310322.html)

Trump claims ‘ignorant and foolish’ DeSantis comments about Putin could lead to nuclear war

In his latest campaign video posted to Truth Social, [*Donald Trump*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donald-trump) again took aim at [*Ron DeSantis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ron-desantis) , this time slamming him for his recent remarks on [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) which took a tougher stance regarding [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The former president sought to tie the Florida governor to remarks made in the past by Senator [*Mitt Romney*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mitt-romney) and even the late Senator [*John McCain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/john-mccain).

“Calling Russia a gas station with a bunch of nuclear weapons, or calling Putin, quote, ‘an authoritarian gas station attendant with some legacy of nuclear weapons from the old Soviet Union’ is exactly the kind of simple-minded thinking that has produced decades of failed diplomacy and ultimately war,” said the former president.

“And where is that war going? Those such as Mitt Romney and Ron DeSantis, very much alike, who insist on arrogantly treating Russia as deeply inferior to the other nations of the world with no history or culture or pride, are not only ignorant and foolish, but their attitude makes it impossible to negotiate peace. Absolutely impossible,” he continued.

Oliver O’Connell reports:

[*Trump claims ‘ignorant’ DeSantis remarks about Putin could lead to nuclear war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-desantis-putin-nuclear-war-b2311246.html)

Ukraine has endured 400 days of Putin’s invasion, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has lauded Ukrainian strength faced against 400 days of Russia’s full-scale invasion in his nightly address.

“Four hundred days... Four hundred days of our defence against full-scale aggression. This is a colossal path that we have endured . All together -everyone who fought and fights for Ukraine. Who took care and takes care about the state and Ukrainians. Who helped and helps our logistics. Who strengthened and strengthens Ukrainian resilience,” Mr Zelensky said.

He added: “Ukraine went through the most terrifying days of that February. We survived this winter as well. There is a colossal effort behind these words...”

“We passed last spring, which turned the tide of this war in favour of our defence,” he siad.

“Last summer and autumn, we proved that the spring liberation of our northern regions was no accident. The battle for Kyiv, Chernihiv and Sumy regions... The return of the territories of our Kharkiv region, the return of Kherson, the defence of Bakhmut and Donbas in general -this is the heroism of Ukrainians that the world will not forget,” Mr Zelensky said.

Scuffles at Kyiv monastery over alleged Russian ties

Scuffles broke out outside a Kyiv monastery on Thursday after a Ukrainian branch of the Orthodox Church that the government says has ties with Russia defied an eviction order.

Tensions over the presence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church (UOC) at the 980-year-old Kyiv-Pechersk Lavra monastery have risen since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February last year.

Kyiv accuses the UOC of maintaining ties with the Russian Orthodox Church, which has supported Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine. The UOC says it broke all links with the Russian Church in May 2022.

Hours after a deadline to leave the monastery passed at midnight on Wednesday, members of the UOC refused entry to representatives of a government commission who wanted to inspect buildings in the gold-domed monastery’s sprawling complex.

Shortly afterward, scuffles broke out in which a Reuters reporter was hit and shoved by an unidentified man and another reporter was pushed away by a cleric as she tried to approach him. No one was hurt.

Wagner has lost ‘substantial manpower’ in Bakhmut fight

Russia’s onslaught on Bakhmut can turn bleak as Wagner group and conventional Russian forces have likely lost manpower in their ongoing fight in the salt mining city, analysts say.

“Western officials reported that Wagner Group and conventional Russian forces have likely lost a substantial amount of manpower in the Bakhmut area, which will further constrain Russia’s offensive on Bakhmut,” the US-based Institute for the Study of War said in its latest analysis.

The think-tank monitoring the war referenced a statement by the US chairman of the joint chief of staff general Mark Milley who said that the Wagner Group has around 6,000 professional personnel and 20,000 to 30,000 recruits, mostly convicts, fighting in the Bakhmut area.

This is lower than the number mentioned by the national security council spokesperson John Kirby in December where he said that the Wagner Group had 50,000 personnel in Ukraine including 10,000 contractors and 40,000 convict recruits.

“It is likely that the difference between Kirby’s 50,000 figure in Ukraine and Milley’s 26,000 to 36,000 figure in the Bakhmut area is the result of casualties from Wagner’s attritional offensive on Bakhmut,” the ISW said.

It added: “Kirby reported on 17 February that the Wagner Group had suffered 30,000 casualties, with 9,000 dead, in operations in Ukraine.

“The Wagner Group may lose thousands more convict recruits in the upcoming weeks as convicts finish their six-month military contracts, and the Wagner leadership appears for now to be allowing pre-pardoned convicts to return from the frontlines to Russia at the conclusion of those contracts,” the ISW said.

Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy

[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Executive Editor Julie Pace interviewed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as Zelenskyy visited the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, which still faces regular shelling from Russian forces, and northern towns in the Sumy region that were liberated shortly after the war began a year ago.

Zelenskyy spoke to the AP aboard a train shuttling him across Ukraine to cities near some of the fiercest fighting and others where his country’s forces have successfully repelled Russia’s invasion. Zelenskyy rarely travels with journalists, and the president’s office said AP’s two-night train trip with him was the most extensive since the war began.

Read the full transcript below:

[*Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-english-europe-china-b2311272.html)

Ukrainian soldiers finish Patriot missile training

Sixty-five of Ukrainian soldiers have completed their training on Patriot air defence systems in Oklahoma’s Fort Sill and returned to Europe, Pentagon spokesperson Patrick Ryder has said.

“Just this week, 65 Ukrainian air defenders completed Patriot training at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, and have now arrived back in Europe,” the top official said.

He added that the newly trained Ukrainian soldiers will return to existing air defence units and are expected to share with fellow soldiers what they’ve learned about using the Patriot system.

“The United States, Germany and the Netherlands have all pledged Patriot systems to Ukraine,” Mr Ryder said.

Belarus detains Russian dad convicted in antiwar art case

Authorities in Belarus said Thursday they have detained a fugitive single father who escaped house arrest in neighboring Russia shortly before he was convicted of discrediting the army and sentenced to prison following his daughter’s antiwar sketch at school.

Alexei Moskalyov was taken into custody in the [*Minsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minsk) region of Belarus, according to Natalya Sakharchuk, a spokeswoman for the country’s [*Interior Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/interior-ministry). Her comments were reported by Russian state news agency RIA-Novosti and the Sputnik Belarus news site, saying he was being held “upon request of the Russian police.”

Moskalyov, 54, drew international attention this week in a case that underscored the scale of the Kremlin’s crackdown on dissent when he was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. He wasn’t in the courtroom in his hometown of Yefremov for the verdict Tuesday because he had fled his apartment, where he was under house arrest, just the day before.

Moskalyov was charged over social media posts criticizing the invasion under a law adopted shortly after the February 2022 invasion of Ukraine. During his one-day trial, which concluded Monday, he insisted he had nothing to do with the posts.

Read more:

[*Belarus detains Russian dad convicted in antiwar art case*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-tallinn-estonia-maria-minsk-b2311212.html)

Journalist Evan Gershkovich detained in Russia ‘brave, committed’

Russia’s Federal Security Service says the 31-year-old [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) reporter Evan Gershkovich for The Wall Street Journal has been arrested on charges of espionage. The FSB, the country’s top security agency and successor to the KGB, said Gershkovich was collecting information on an enterprise of the military-industrial complex.

Friends and colleagues were shocked by the news and took to social media to describe him as a committed journalist, dismissing the allegations as bogus and ridiculous.

“Journalism is not a crime,” they posted.

Henry Foy, the Financial Times’ European diplomatic correspondent based in Brussels, tweeted: “Evan is an exemplary foreign correspondent, a brilliant reporter and a wonderful, kind-hearted friend.”

Joshua Yaffa, a Russia-Ukraine reporter for The New Yorker, posted: “Evan was not unaware or naïve about the risks. It’s not like he was in Russia because no one bothered to tell him it was dangerous. He is a brave, committed, professional journalist who traveled to Russia to report on stories of import and interest.”

Read the full story here:

[*American detained in Russia a 'brave, committed' journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-american-russia-soviet-union-moscow-b2311341.html)

A year to Bucha massacre: ‘Bodies of people in civilian clothing were scattered’

The cratered roads have been repaved and the damaged houses are gradually being repaired. But the scenes that emerged from this town near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) a year ago, after it was retaken from Russian forces, have indelibly linked its name to the savagery of war.

On the northwestern fringes of the Ukrainian capital, [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha) had been occupied by Russian troops for about a month, taken as they swept toward Kyiv at the start of the invasion of Ukraine that began in late February 2022. When they withdrew, they left behind scenes of horror.

Bodies of civilians lay where they had fallen, beside their bicycles, in their cars, on the sides of roads, in yards, buildings and homes.

Read the full story here:

[*1 year ago, scenes of horror emerged from Ukraine's Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-bucha-kyiv-associated-press-b2311197.html)

Latest: Destruction in Kharkiv amid Russia’s attack of Ukraine

In pictures: One year ago, scenes of horror emerged from Ukraine’s Bucha

In pictures: Explosions reported in Zaporizhzhia district, Ukraine

Two explosions were reported in the southern Ukrainian city of Zaporizhzhia just after midnight local time on Friday, local monitoring groups have said.

The head of a Russian-installed governing council in occupied parts of the Zaporizhzhia region also reported explosions.

Boston auction of signed Zelenskyy painting to help Ukraine

An original painting of Volodymyr Zelenskyy signed by the Ukrainian president is being sold at auction, and proceeds from the sale will be used to benefit the nation’s people suffering during its war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Bidding on the 40-by-24-inch (101.5-by-61-centimeter) painting by [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) artist Oleg Jones starts at $50,000, and the goal is to sell it for at least $100,000, Bobby Livingston, executive vice president of auctioneer RR Auction in [*Boston*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boston) , said Thursday.

The painting features an image of Zelenskyy against the background of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s blue and yellow flag. Several raised stars in the upper left of the piece form a heart around the gold trident from the nation’s coat of arms.

The acrylic paints are coated in resin sprinkled with glass dust, giving it a sparkling effect.

It is signed, in English, “Zelenskyy, Glory to Ukraine.” It’s also signed by the artist.

Read the full story:

[*Boston auction of signed Zelenskyy painting to help Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-boston-russia-american-b2311277.html)

Bucha a ‘symbol of atrocities’: Ukraine marks anniversary of liberation of city

Ukrainians were marking the first anniversary of the liberation of the town of Bucha from Russian occupation on Friday, with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy saying Kyiv would never forgive those responsible for alleged atrocities there.

Ukrainian forces recaptured the small towns of Bucha and Irpin to the northwest of Kyiv in late March last year as Russian invasion forces abandoned an attempt to seize the capital.

International investigators are now collecting evidence in those towns and other places where Ukraine says Russian troops committed large-scale atrocities. Russia denies the allegations.

After Ukraine took back control of Bucha, harrowing images of dead bodies lying in the street were beamed across the world.

Russia’s occupation of the town lasted 33 days, resulting in more than 1,400 deaths, including 37 children, Kyiv said.

“More than 175 people were found in mass graves and torture chambers. 9,000 Russian war crimes. 365 days since it is a free Ukrainian city once again,” Zelenskiy said.

“A symbol of the atrocities of the occupying country’s army. We will never forgive. We will punish every perpetrator,” he wrote on social media.

Bucha, a leafy suburb that is now a regular port of call for visiting foreign leaders, was expected to hold commemorative events to mark the anniversary later on Friday.

Fighting is still raging in the east and south of Ukraine, where Russian forces hold swathes of territory captured after they invaded in February 2022.

For places like Bucha hundreds of miles from the fighting, the war is still felt with regular air raid sirens telling residents to take cover from air strikes that have caused sweeping power outages.

Residents in Bucha told Reuters this week of the deep psychological wounds left by the occupation and said it would take generations to get over it.

Some buildings remain battered in the town and a scrapyard is full of cars and military vehicles destroyed during last year’s fighting.

“We should understand that it’s easy to rebuild walls, but it’s much harder to rebuild a wounded soul,” said Andriy Holovin, a priest at a Ukrainian Orthodox parish.

UAE cancels license for Russia's sanctioned MTS bank branch

The United Arab Emirates Central Bank said on Friday it will cancel the license for a branch of Russia’s MTS bank, which it approved to operate last year and which was made subject of British and US sanctions in February.

Operations at the bank, which is licensed in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, will be wound down within six months under central bank supervision, it said.

“This decision comes after considering the available options regarding the new status of the MTS Bank, and taking into account the sanctions risks associated with the bank after the designation,” the statement said.

During the winding down process the branch will not be allowed to open new accounts or conduct transactions apart from clearing prior obligations, for which purpose alone it will be allowed to use the central bank’s payment systems, it said.

MTS Bank is a fintech unit of Russia’s largest mobile operator Mobile TeleSystems.

Ballerinas from Kyiv City ballet perform on stage in York

US: Russia seeks arms-for-food deal with North Korea

The White House on Thursday said it has new evidence that Russia is looking again to North Korea for weapons to fuel the war in Ukraine, this time in a deal that would provide Pyongyang with needed food and other commodities in return.It’s the latest accusation that Russia, desperate for weaponry and restricted by sanctions and export controls, is turning to “rogue” nations to help it continue to prosecute the 13-month-old war.

“As part of this proposed deal, Russia would receive over two dozen kinds of weapons and munitions from Pyongyang,” White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

“We also understand that Russia is seeking to send a delegation to North Korea and that Russia is offering North Korea food in exchange for munitions.”

The administration has previously declassified intelligence to present evidence that Iran sold hundreds of attack drones to Russia over the summer and that the Wagner Group, a private Russian military company, has taken delivery of arms from North Korea to help bolster its forces as they fight side-by-side with Russian troops in Ukraine.

Experts believe the food situation in North Korea is the worst it has been under Kim Jong Un’s 11-year rule, but they still say they see no signs of imminent famine or mass deaths. Kim vowed to strengthen state control over agriculture and take a spate of other steps to increase grain production, North Korean state media reported earlier this month.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken said last month that U.S. intelligence suggested China was considering providing arms and ammunition to Russia, though White House officials have said they have yet to see evidence of Beijing following through with weapons delivery.

The publicizing of Russia’s efforts to get weapons from North Korea is just the latest example of the Biden administration loosening restrictions on intelligence findings and making them public over the course of the grinding war in Ukraine.

The administration has said it has sought to disseminate the intelligence findings so allies and the public remain clear-eyed about Moscow’s intent and Russian President Vladimir Putin thinks twice about his actions.

North Korea, an outlier on the global stage, has sought to enhance relations with Russia since its invasion of Ukraine brought an avalanche of sanctions from the West and broad international condemnation.

Any arms deal with Russia would be a violation of U.N. resolutions that ban North Korea from exporting to or importing weapons from other countries.

North Korea is the only nation aside from Russia and Syria to recognize the independence of Russia-backed separatist territories, Donetsk and Luhansk, in eastern Ukraine.

Belarus' Lukashenko: Need talks over Ukraine conflict immediately

Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko on Friday called for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine and for talks to start on a lasting peace settlement.

In a scheduled address to the nation, Lukashenko said there should be no preconditions for a ceasefire. He warned Ukraine against launching an anticipated counter-offensive, saying it would make negotiations between Moscow and Kyiv impossible.

Lukashenko says Russian nuclear deployment is safeguard for Belarus

Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said on Friday that Russia’s plans to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of his country were a chance to safeguard Belarus from Western threats.

In a scheduled address to the nation, Lukashenko said the West was building up its military forces in Poland, on Belarus’ borders, and planning to invade and destroy it.

Latest: Destruction in Kharkiv amid Russia’s attack of Ukraine

At least nine Russian missiles have destroyed homes and vehicles in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Kharkiv, according to the regional governor.

Three civilians were injured in the blasts that hit the area late last night, said Oleh Sinegubov this morning.

The missiles were launched from the southern Russian region of Belgorod, just across the border to the north of Kharkiv, said the governor.

Ukraine war passes 400 days as Russia suffers major losses in Bakhmut

The war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has engulfed the European country for more than 400 days and tested the strength of Ukrainian resilience, president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said on Thursday.

“Four hundred days... Four hundred days of our defence against full-scale aggression. This is a colossal path that we have endured,” the war-time president said in his nightly address.

He added: “All together -everyone who fought and fights for Ukraine. Who took care and takes care about the state and Ukrainians. Who helped and helps our logistics. Who strengthened and strengthens Ukrainian resilience.”

“Ukraine went through the most terrifying days of that February. We survived this winter as well. There is a colossal effort behind these words.

“We passed last spring, which turned the tide of this war in favour of our defence,” he said.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Ukraine war passes 400 days as Russia suffers major losses in Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-400-days-russia-bakhmut-putin-b2311555.html)

Watch: Aerial footage of Ukrainian forces destroying Russian storage site near Bakhmut

Kremlin: Foreign journalists can carry on working in Russia

The Kremlin said on Friday that all accredited foreign journalists could continue to work in Russia, a day after the country’s FSB security service said it had arrested a Wall Street Journal reporter on espionage charges.

The Kremlin said reporter Evan Gershkovich had been carrying out espionage “under the cover” of journalism. Russia has presented no evidence to support the charges -the first such case against an American reporter since the end of the Cold War -which have been denied by the WSJ.

Russia to exercise all its rights as U.N. Security Council president -Kremlin

The Kremlin said on Friday that Russia plans to exercise all its rights at the United Nations as it takes over the rotating presidency of the Security Council in April.

The United States on Thursday urged Russia to “conduct itself professionally” when it assumes the role, saying there was no means to block Moscow from the post.

Belarus detains Russian dad convicted in antiwar art case

Authorities in Belarus said Thursday they have detained a fugitive single father who escaped house arrest in neighbouring Russia shortly before he was convicted of discrediting the army and sentenced to prison following his daughter’s antiwar sketch at school.

Alexei Moskalyov was taken into custody in the [*Minsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minsk) region of Belarus, according to Natalya Sakharchuk, a spokeswoman for the country’s [*Interior Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/interior-ministry). Her comments were reported by Russian state news agency RIA-Novosti and the Sputnik Belarus news site, saying he was being held “upon request of the Russian police.”

Moskalyov, 54, drew international attention this week in a case that underscored the scale of the Kremlin’s crackdown on dissent when he was convicted and sentenced to two years in prison. He wasn’t in the courtroom in his hometown of Yefremov for the verdict Tuesday because he had fled his apartment, where he was under house arrest, just the day before.

Read the full story:

[*Belarus detains Russian dad convicted in antiwar art case*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-tallinn-estonia-maria-minsk-b2311212.html)

Russia says Ukraine ceasefire now would not achieve Moscow's goals

The Kremlin said on Friday that it had noted a call by Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko for an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine on Friday and would discuss it with him, but that it could not at the moment achieve the goals of its “special military operation” in this way.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said president Vladimir Putin would discuss Lukashenko’s call for negotiations next week, but added that some elements of a peace plan proposed by China were unworkable because Ukraine was following Western orders not to negotiate with Moscow.

U.N. human rights chief decries 'shockingly routine' abuses in Ukraine war

The United Nations Human Rights chief Volker Turk deplored on Friday how grave human rights violations were “shockingly routine” in Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and said the number of civilian casualties was far higher than official figures.

Addressing the United Nations Human Rights Council in Geneva, Mr Turk said Ukraine was a nation “struggling to survive” in the face of Russia’s invasion.

“After 13 months of the Russian Federation’s war against Ukraine, severe violations of human rights and international humanitarian law have become shockingly routine,” he said.

“People across the country face massive suffering and loss, deprivation, displacement and destruction.”

Fighting is still raging in eastern and southern Ukraine, where Russian forces hold swathes of territory captured after they invaded in February last year.

Russia has repeatedly denied accusations that its forces have committed atrocities.

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has verified more than 8,400 civilian deaths and more than 14,000 civilians wounded.

“These figures are just the tip of the iceberg,” Turk said. “Most of the casualties resulted from Russian forces’ use of wide-impact explosive weaponry in residential neighbourhoods.”

The U.N. Human Rights Council is the only body made up of governments to protect human rights worldwide. It does not have legally binding powers but its debates can spur investigations that feed evidence to national and international courts.

The Council next week is expected to adopt a resolution to extend and deepen the mandate of a U.N. investigative body set up to probe possible atrocities in Ukraine.

Ukrainian authorities, who have called for the establishment of a special tribunal to prosecute the Russian political and military leadership over the invasion, have said the investigative body was essential to holding Russia accountable.

Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelensky

[*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) Executive Editor Julie Pace interviewed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as Zelenskyy visited the southeastern city of Zaporizhzhia, which still faces regular shelling from Russian forces, and northern towns in the Sumy region that were liberated shortly after the war began a year ago.

Zelenskyy spoke to the AP aboard a train shuttling him across Ukraine to cities near some of the fiercest fighting and others where his country’s forces have successfully repelled Russia’s invasion. Zelenskyy rarely travels with journalists, and the president’s office said AP’s two-night train trip with him was the most extensive since the war began.

Read the full transcript here:

[*Transcript of AP interview with Volodymyr Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-english-europe-china-b2311272.html)

Norway wealth fund still unable to divest from Russia, government says

Norway’s $1.3 trillion wealth fund, one of the world’s largest investors, is still unable to divest its holdings in Russia, which the government decided it must do after the invasion of Ukraine, the Norwegian finance ministry said on Friday.

At the time of the invasion in February last year, the fund’s Russian assets consisted of shares in 47 companies and some government bonds, which had been valued at a combined 25 billion Norwegian crowns ($2.40 billion) at the end of 2021.

“The market for trading in Russian financial instruments is still subject to comprehensive sanctions and has not been normalised as of March 2023,” the Norwegian finance ministry said in a policy document.

“Hence, divestment cannot be executed for the time being.”

Kremlin: Trump indictment an ‘internal’ matter for the US

Donald Trump’s indictment is an “internal” matter for the US, the Kremlin says.

Russia will not comment on the [*indictment of former US President*](https://www.cnn.com/2023/03/30/politics/donald-trump-indictment/index.html) Donald Trump, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said on Friday during a regular call with journalists, CNN reported.

The Kremlin said the indictment is an “internal” matter for the United States and not a matter for Russia.

“I do not think that this is a topic for any of our comments. These are internal American processes that we do not consider it necessary to comment on in any way,” Mr Peskov said.

Belarus' Lukashenko says he does not fear sanctions over Russian nuclear weapons

Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said on Friday he does not fear the possibility of fresh Western sanctions against his country over the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus.

In an hours-long televised address to the nation, Lukashenko said Minsk was prepared to defend its sovereignty through any means necessary, including nuclear.

He also said Belarus had deployed a special forces contingent to its southern border with Ukraine “to prevent provocations.”

American detained in Russia a 'brave, committed' journalist

Working as a journalist in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) seemed a natural fit for Evan Gershkovich, the son of immigrants from the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) who grew up speaking [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) at home in [*Princeton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princeton) , N.J.

After he graduated in 2014 from Bowdoin College, one of the country’s most selective schools, however, “it took me a while to figure out that journalism was the career for me,” he said in a 2020 interview on the school’s website.

Now Russia’s Federal Security Service says the 31-year-old [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) reporter for The Wall Street Journal has been arrested on charges of espionage. The FSB, the country’s top security agency and successor to the KGB, said Gershkovich was collecting information on an enterprise of the military-industrial complex.

The Journal denied the allegations and demanded his release.

Read the full story:

[*American detained in Russia a 'brave, committed' journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-american-russia-soviet-union-moscow-b2311341.html)

Watch: Moment Austria's pro-Russia lawmakers walk out of Zelensky's speech

Russia's Lavrov: Russia ready to respond to 'existential threats

Foreign minister Sergei Lavrov said on Friday that Russia faced “existential threats” to its security and development from “unfriendly states” as he presented president Vladimir Putin with an updated foreign policy doctrine.

Mr Lavrov told a televised meeting of the Kremlin’s Security Council that the new concept would outline how Russia could take “symmetrical and asymmetric measures in response to unfriendly actions against Russia”, referring to “unprecedented pressure” being placed on Russia by its Western foes.

In pictures: Bucha one year on after liberation from Russian occupation

Ukrainians are marking the first anniversary of the liberation of the town of Bucha from Russian occupation on Friday, with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy saying Kyiv would never forgive those responsible for alleged atrocities there.

Russia sends bombs as Ukraine marks grim Bucha anniversary

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) used its long-range arsenal to bombard anew several areas of Ukraine on Friday, killing at least two civilians and damaging homes as Ukrainians commemorated the anniversary of the liberation of [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha).

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Bucha, a town near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , stands as a symbol of the atrocities the Russian military has committed since its full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

“We will never forgive,” Zelenskyy said in a post on his Telegram channel. “We will punish every perpetrator.”

Hanna Arhirova reports:

[*Russia sends bombs as Ukraine marks grim Bucha anniversary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-bucha-russia-kyiv-b2311678.html)

Players from Russia and Belarus cleared to compete at Wimbledon this year

[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Belarusian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) players will be allowed to compete at Wimbledon this year, the All England Club has announced.

Athletes from the two countries must sign declarations of neutrality and must not express support for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while players who receive funding from the Russian or Belarusian states, including sponsorship from state owned or controlled companies, will remain barred.

The same conditions will apply for the other [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) grass-court tournaments including Queen’s, reversing the decision made by the All England Club and [*Lawn Tennis Association*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/lawn-tennis-association) 12 months ago.

Eleanor Crooks reports:

[*Players from Russia and Belarus cleared to compete at Wimbledon this year*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/russia-belarus-lawn-tennis-association-british-anastasia-potapova-b2311718.html)

Russia might put strategic nukes in Belarus, leader says

The president of [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) says [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) strategic nuclear weapons might be deployed in his country along with part of Russia’s tactical nuclear arsenal.

Russian President Vladimir Putin announced this week that his country intended to deploy tactical, comparatively short-range and small-yield nuclear weapons in Belarus, its neighbour and ally.

The statement from Belarusian President [*Alexander Lukashenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexander-lukashenko) about strategic nuclear weapons such as missile-borne warheads would pose an even greater threat if it comes to pass.

Lukashenko spoke during his state-of-the-nation address on Friday, amid escalating tensions over the conflict in Ukraine and contentions that Western powers want to ruin Russia and Belarus.

Read the full story here:

[*Russia might put strategic nukes in Belarus, leader says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/belarus-ap-alexander-lukashenko-russia-estonia-b2311752.html)

Ukraine looks to block athletes from competing with Russians

The Ukrainian government is looking to block its athletes from sports competitions, particularly qualifying events for next year’s Paris Olympics, which readmit Russian athletes.

The [*International Olympic Committee*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-olympic-committee) recommended Tuesday that sports federations allow Russians and Belarusians to compete as neutral athletes without national symbols. Ukraine wanted to continue the full exclusion, which had been in place in most sports since shortly after last year’s Russian invasion.

Government minister Oleh Nemchinov said Thursday that a decision had been taken only to enter events with no Russians involved, according to public broadcaster Suspilne.

Read the full story:

[*Ukraine looks to block athletes from competing with Russians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-international-olympic-committee-billie-jean-king-cup-b2311791.html)

Biden to Russia on detained US journalist: 'Let him go'

President Joe Biden on Friday urged Russia to release Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich after the country’s security service arrested him on espionage charges — allegations that the newspaper denies.“Let him go,” Biden told reporters at the White House on Friday morning when asked about his message to Russia on the arrest of Gershkovich.

Russia’s Federal Security Service has accused Gershkovich, a U.S. citizen, of trying to obtain classified information. It is the first time an American journalist has been detained on accusations of spying since the Cold War. The Journal has said it “vehemently denies” the charges.The Biden administration said Thursday that it was working to secure consular access to Gershkovich. Asked Friday morning whether he would expel Russian diplomats or journalists in the U.S., Biden responded: “That’s not the plan right now.”Karine Jean-Pierre, the White House press secretary, called the targeting of U.S. citizens in Russia “unacceptable” and that the administration condemns the detention of Gershkovich “in the strongest terms.”The Biden administration has also warned U.S. citizens not to travel to Russia, and for Americans in the country now to depart immediately.

EU may need to reintroduce tariffs on Ukrainian grain, PMs say

Tariffs on Ukrainian agricultural imports may need to be reintroduced if an influx of products that is pushing down prices in European Union markets cannot be stopped by other means, the prime ministers of five eastern states said on Friday.

In a letter to European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen published on a Polish government website, the prime ministers of Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia said that the scale of the increase of products including grains oilseeds, eggs, poultry and sugar had been “unprecedented”.

Ukraine, one of the world’s largest grain exporters, had its Black Sea ports blocked following Russia’s February 2022 invasion and found alternative shipping routes through European Union states Poland and Romania.

Logistical bottlenecks mean large quantities of Ukrainian grains, which are cheaper than those produced in the EU, have ended up in central European states, hitting prices and sales of local farmers.

In the letter the prime ministers called for a variety of measures to limit market distortions caused by Ukrainian imports, but said that if these were not successful tariffs and tariff quotas should be reintroduced.

“Let’s support Ukraine, but let’s do it wisely and, above all, let’s put the interest of the country and Polish farmers in the first place,” Polish prime minister Mateusz Morawiecki said on Twitter.

Among the measures proposed in the letter was a joint solution between the EU and the World Food Program to ensure Ukrainian grain does not end up in EU markets.

They reiterated calls for more funds to help farmers and for faster development of transport infrastructure to help with the transport of goods from Ukraine.

They also called for changes to laws on agricultural imports that would help regulate the volume and direction of the inflow of agricultural products.

Ukrainian Orthodox Church members block entrance to church at compound of Kyiv Pechersk Lavra monastery

IMF approves $15.6 billion loan for Ukraine

The International Monetary Fund’s executive board has approved a four-year $15.6 billion financing package for Ukraine, it confirmed on Friday.

The loan marks Ukraine’s largest since Russia’s invasion in February 2022, alongside the first IMF-approved package to a country involved in an active conflict.

Finland to join Nato as hold-out Turkey approves membership bid

Finald is set to join Nato “in days” after Turkey’s parliament voted to ratify its membership bid, submitted in the wake of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Turkey was the last among Nato’s members to ratify the bid, after months of negotiations between Ankara and Helsinki. All 276 MPs present voted in favour.

“All 30 Nato allies have now ratified the accession protocol,” the alliance’s secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said on Friday. “Finland will formally join our alliance in the coming days.”

Borzou Daragahi reports:

[*Finland to join Nato as hold-out Turkey approves membership bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-nato-finalnd-turkey-b2310922.html)

In pictures: Ukrainians mark anniversary of Bucha liberation from Russia occupation

Journal reporter's arrest threatens reporting from Russia

The arrest of a [*Wall Street Journal*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wall-street-journal) reporter on espionage charges in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has news organizations based outside the country weighing for the second time in a year whether the risks of reporting there during wartime are too great.

The Journal and other news outlets continued to press Friday for the release of Evan Gershkovich, He was taken into custody by Russian security officials a day earlier and accused of spying, charges the newspaper vehemently denies.

More than 30 press freedom groups and news organizations, including the Journal, The [*New York*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-york) Times, BBC, The Associated Press, The New Yorker, Time and The Washington Post, signed a letter Friday to Anatoly I. Antonov, Russia’s ambassador to the U.S., expressing concern about “a significant escalation in your government’s anti-press actions.

“Russia is sending the message that journalism within your borders is criminalized and that foreign correspondents seeking to report from Russia do not enjoy the benefits of the rule of law,” they said.

A reporter for The New York Times who was temporarily in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , Valerie Hopkins, left after Gershkovich’s arrest, the newspaper said.

David Bauder reports:

[*Journal reporter's arrest threatens reporting from Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ap-new-york-wall-street-journal-moscow-b2312032.html)

At least two killed after Russian bombardment on anniversary of liberation of Bucha -AP

Russia has used its long-range arsenal to bombard several areas of Ukraine, killing at least two civilians and damaging homes as Ukrainians commemorate the anniversary of the liberation of Bucha.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Bucha, a town near Kyiv, stands as a symbol of the atrocities the Russian military has committed since its full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

“We will never forgive,” he said in a post on his Telegram channel.

“We will punish every perpetrator.”

Mr Zelensky attended an official ceremony in Bucha, where he was joined by the president of the Republic of Moldova and the prime ministers of Croatia, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The Kremlin’s forces occupied Bucha weeks after they invaded Ukraine and stayed for about a month.

Moscow prison for US reporter was used in Stalin's purges

Lefortovo prison, where American journalist Evan Gershkovich has been jailed on espionage charges, dates from the czarist era and has been a terrifying symbol of repression since [*Soviet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet) times.

The inconspicuous, pale yellow complex in eastern [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) was built as a military penitentiary in 1881 and was used for low-ranking convicts sentenced to relatively short terms. But it gained its notoriety after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution, when it became a top detention facility for the Soviet secret police.

Under Soviet leader Josef Stalin’s Great Terror of mass arrests in the 1930s, Lefortovo was one of the main pre-trial detention facilities for “enemies of the people,” equipped with torture chambers to extract confessions. Stalin’s sadistic secret police chief, Lavrentiy Beria, personally took part in some prisoner interrogations and executions in its basement.

Vasily Blyukher, one of the highest-ranking Red Army officers, was among those who died in 1938 after being tortured in Lefortovo.

After Stalin’s death in 1953, the prison continued to serve as the main detention facility for the [*KGB*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kgb) , which used it for espionage suspects and political dissidents.

Read the full story:

[*Moscow prison for US reporter was used in Stalin's purges*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-josef-stalin-soviet-kgb-paul-whelan-b2311973.html)

Estonian diplomat expelled from Moscow in tit for tat move

Russia is expelling an Estonian diplomat from Moscow in a tit for tat move following a similar action by Tallinn, Estonia’s foreign ministry said Friday.

Earlier, the Russian Foreign Ministry had summoned Estonia’s charge d’affaires, who heads the European Union country’s mission in Moscow, to protest the expulsion this month of a Russian diplomat in Estonia and announce that an Estonian diplomat must leave Moscow.

The Russian ministry warned that Moscow will also take other retaliatory action in response to the “persistently provocative anti-Russian actions by the Estonian authorities.

”Estonia’s foreign ministry dismissed that charge as “ludicrous.” It said its diplomat has been given until April 5 to leave Russia, and added that the Estonian embassy in Moscow “will continue to operate and the staff will continue their work.”

On March 24, Tallinn said a Russian diplomat’s activities had violated international law, and gave the person five days to leave Estonia, according to the Baltic News Service.

The diplomat, who Estonian broadcaster ERR said was a consul in Tallinn, had allegedly engaged in activities undermining Estonia’s security and constitutional order, spreading propaganda that justifies Russia’s war in Ukraine and causing divisions in Estonian society, BNS said.

In January, the Estonian Foreign Ministry ordered Russia to reduce the size of its embassy staff in Tallinn by more than half, to achieve parity with the number of people working at the Estonian embassy in Moscow. A total of 13 Russian diplomats and eight technical staff were made to leave Estonia at that time.

Russia responded by telling Tallinn that Estonia’s ambassador to Russia had to leave.

Ukraine war passes 400 days as Russia suffers major losses in Bakhmut

The war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has engulfed the European country for more than 400 days and tested the strength of Ukrainian resilience, president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said on Thursday.

“Four hundred days... Four hundred days of our defence against full-scale aggression. This is a colossal path that we have endured,” the war-time president said in his nightly address.

He added: “All together -everyone who fought and fights for Ukraine. Who took care and takes care about the state and Ukrainians. Who helped and helps our logistics. Who strengthened and strengthens Ukrainian resilience.”

“Ukraine went through the most terrifying days of that February. We survived this winter as well. There is a colossal effort behind these words.

“We passed last spring, which turned the tide of this war in favour of our defence,” he said.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Ukraine war passes 400 days as Russia suffers major losses in Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-400-days-russia-bakhmut-putin-b2311555.html)

Ukraine accuse Wimbledon of ‘immoral’ stance on Russian and Belarusian participation

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s foreign minister says [*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) ’s decision to allow Russian and Belarusian players to compete at this year’s Championships is “immoral”.

Dmytro Kuleba called on the UK Government to deny players from the two countries visas following the invasion of Ukraine last year.

Wimbledon said players from the two countries[*must sign declarations of neutrality*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-russia-belarus-tennis-ban-b2311728.html) and must not express support for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while competitors who receive funding from the Russian or Belarusian states, including sponsorship from state owned or controlled companies, will remain barred.

Jamie Braidwoodreports:

[*Ukraine accuse Wimbledon of ‘immoral’ stance on Russian participation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-russia-ban-ukraine-belarus-b2311867.html)

In pictures: The aftermath of a missile attack in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine

Zaporizhzhia, like other frontline cities of Ukraine, due to the proximity of the front line, has been regularly shelled by Russian troops since the beginning of the full-scale invasion.

Over the past six months, missile attacks on residential buildings and infrastructure facilities have intensified in the city.

TikTok propaganda labels fall flat in 'huge win' for Russia

A year ago, following [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , [*TikTok*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tiktok) started labeling accounts operated by Russian state propaganda agencies as a way to tell users they were being exposed to Kremlin disinformation.

An analysis a year later shows the policy has been applied inconsistently. It ignores dozens of accounts with millions of followers. Even when used, labels have little impact on Russia’s ability to exploit TikTok’s powerful algorithms as part of its effort to shape public opinion about the war.

Researchers at the Alliance for Securing Democracy, a bipartisan, transatlantic nonprofit operated by the German Marshall Fund that studies authoritarian disinformation, identified nearly 80 TikTok accounts operated by Russian state outlets like RT or Sputnik, or by individuals linked to them, including RT’s editor-in-chief.

More than a third of the accounts were unlabeled, despite a labeling policy announced by TikTok a year ago. The labels, which appear in bold immediately below an account’s name, read “Russia state-controlled media.” Clicking on the label brings up more information, including a description that “the government has control over the account’s editorial content.”

David Klepper reports:

[*TikTok propaganda labels fall flat in 'huge win' for Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tiktok-ap-russia-ukraine-washington-b2310820.html)

Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’

[*Orlando Bloom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/orlando-bloom) has praised the strength of the Ukrainian people as he met the country’s president, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , and encouraged him to “go win” the war.

The [*British*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/british) actor, 46, who is a Unicef Goodwill Ambassador, travelled to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) in his first visit back to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) since 2016.

In the meeting, Bloom told Mr Zelensky it is “remarkable to see how you are holding this country” and said it was a “real honour” to meet the Ukrainian president.

He said: “(It is) so encouraging in so many ways to see just the remarkably stoic nature of the people of Ukraine. And of course, your messaging that I think is reflected in their courage, and in their determination and in their perseverance and resilience.

“To see the children, to see in their eyes, it’s palpable the anxiety and yet, the strength of the Ukrainian people is something that is really awe-inspiring in truth and, of course, your messaging is the reason for that.”

Read the full story:

[*Orlando Bloom tells President Zelensky stoicism of Ukraine is ‘awe-inspiring’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/volodymyr-zelensky-orlando-bloom-ukraine-unicef-british-b2308581.html)

Zelensky vows ‘never to forgive’ Russia over Bucha occupation on liberation anniversary

President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has said [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) will never forgive Russian troops responsible for atrocities in [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha) , as the town near Kyiv marked the anniversary of its recapture after more than a month of occupation.

Ukrainian forces took back control of the towns of Bucha and Irpin to the northwest of Kyiv in late March last year as Russian invasion forces abandoned their attempt to seize the capital.

“Russian evil will collapse right here in Ukraine, and will never be able to rise again. Humanity will prevail,” Mr Zelensiy said, leading a ceremony at which the Ukrainian flag was raised in Bucha.

The president handed out medals to soldiers involved in recapturing the town, and relatives received medals on behalf of fallen soldiers who were awarded them posthumously.

Read more:

[*Zelensky vows ‘never to forgive’ Russia over Bucha on liberation anniversary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimes-zelensky-bucha-b2311958.html)

Who is sending tanks to Ukraine?

Tanks from Germany and the UK have arrived in Ukraine – with the country’s president, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) having said such heavy weaponry is crucial to replenish his nation’s military hardware to fight off Russia’s invasion. Kyiv also wants them to try and recapture territory taken by Moscow’s forces.

Why does Ukraine want Germany’s Leopard 2 in particular?

The tank is regarded as one of the West’s best. German defence company Krauss-Maffei Wegmann has built more than 3,500 Leopard 2 tanks since beginning production in 1978.

The tank weighs more than 60 tons, has a 120mm smoothbore gun and can hit targets at a distance of up to five km. It has a laser range finder that can measure distance to an object, meaning that aiming at moving targets while travelling over rough terrain becomes easier. Night vision capability also helps.

Some 20 nations operate the Leopard 2, which also makes it easier for Ukraine to manage maintenance and crew training.

My colleague Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Countries are sending more tanks to Ukraine to fight Putin’s forces – here’s why*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-uk-germany-tanks-nato-b2309396.html)

Russia sends bombs as Ukraine marks grim Bucha anniversary

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) used its long-range arsenal to bombard anew several areas of Ukraine on Friday, killing at least two civilians and damaging homes as Ukrainians commemorated the anniversary of the liberation of [*Bucha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bucha).

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said that Bucha, a town near [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , stands as a symbol of the atrocities the Russian military has committed since its full-scale invasion began in February 2022.

“We will never forgive,” Zelenskyy said in a post on his Telegram channel. “We will punish every perpetrator.”

The Kremlin’s forces occupied Bucha weeks after they invaded Ukraine and stayed for about a month. When Ukrainian troops retook the town, they encountered horrific scenes: bodies of women, young and old men, in civilian clothing, lying in the street where they had fallen or in yards and homes.

Other bodies were found in a mass grave. Over weeks and months, hundreds of bodies were uncovered, including some of children.

[*Hanna Arhirova reports:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/hanna-arhirova)

[*Russia sends bombs as Ukraine marks grim Bucha anniversary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-bucha-russia-kyiv-b2311678.html)

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Battle tanks from the US, Britain and Germany are now being supplied for the first time and Mr Zelensky [*toured London, Paris and Brussels*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ukraine-fighter-jets-russia-war-uk-b2279017.html) in early February 2023 to request fighter jets be sent as well in order to counter the Russian aerial threat, a step the allies appear to have reservations about making, although [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has since visited Kyiv in a gesture of solidarity.

Much of the fighting has been concentrated around the key eastern city of Bakhmut of late, with bombardments and heavy artillery fire taking place as Russian forces ramp up a major new offensive with the one-year anniversary of the war looming.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-does-putin-want-ukraine-b2297891.html)

Putin could place strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus, Lukashenko says

The president of Belarus has said that [*Russian strategic nuclear weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/belarus-ap-alexander-lukashenko-russia-estonia-b2311752.html) might be deployed in his country along with part of [*Russia’s tactical nuclear arsenal.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/rosatom-ap-berlin-french-european-union-b2311030.html)

[*Russian president Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/world/wsj-reporter-arrested-russia-espionage-evan-gershkovich-b2310976.html) said earlier this week his country intends to deploy [*tactical, comparatively short-range and small-yield nuclear weapons in Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/belarus-ap-alexander-lukashenko-russia-estonia-b2311752.html) , its neighbour and ally.

The statement from Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko on Friday about strategic nuclear weapons such as missile-borne warheads will pose an even greater threat if it comes to pass.

Mr Lukashenko spoke during his state-of-the-nation address amid escalating tensions over the conflict in Ukraine.

“Putin and I will decide and introduce here, if necessary, strategic weapons, and they must understand this, the scoundrels abroad, who today are trying to blow us up from inside and outside,” the Belarusian leader said.

“We will stop at nothing to protect our countries, our state and their peoples.”

Read the full story:

[*Putin could place strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus, Lukashenko says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-nuclear-weapons-belarus-ukraine-b2311822.html)

Takeaways from AP's interview with Ukraine's Zelenskyy

In case you missed it...

A team of journalists from The Associated Press spent two days traveling by train with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy as he visited the southeastern city of [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , which still faces regular shelling from Russian forces, and northern towns in the Sumy region that were liberated shortly after the war began a year ago.

The [*AP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ap) is the first news organisation to travel extensively with Zelenskyy since the war began. Here are some takeaways from an interview with Zelenskyy as he returned to [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) late Tuesday:

[*Takeaways from AP's interview with Ukraine's Zelenskyy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-ukraine-vladimir-putin-takeaways-kyiv-b2309879.html)

In pictures: WSJ reporter Evan Gershkovich escorted from Russian court

Why does Russia want tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus?

The announcement by [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) that he intends to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) appears to be another attempt to raise the stakes in the conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

It follows Putin’s warnings that Moscow is ready to use “all available means,” to fend off attacks on Russian territory, a reference to its nuclear arsenal.

A look at Putin’s statement and its implications:

[*Why does Russia want tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-nuclear-weapons-russia-belarus-b2309164.html)

Civilian casualty figure of 8,400 ‘tip of the iceberg’ says UN

Thirteen months since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the toll of civilian casualties in the war-torn country is only “the tip of the iceberg”, says the UN.

On Friday, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights said: “Using the rigorous methodology of my office, our staff have verified more than 8,400 civilian deaths, and over 14,000 civilians wounded, since 24 February 2022.

“These figures are just the tip of the iceberg. Most of the casualties resulted from the Russian forces’ use of wide-impact explosive weaponry in residential neighbourhoods.”

American detained in Russia a 'brave, committed' journalist

In case you missed it...

Working as a journalist in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) seemed a natural fit for Evan Gershkovich, the son of immigrants from the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) who grew up speaking [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) at home in [*Princeton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princeton) , N.J.

After he graduated in 2014 from Bowdoin College, one of the country’s most selective schools, however, “it took me awhile to figure out that journalism was the career for me,” he said in a 2020 interview on the school’s website.

Now Russia’s Federal Security Service says the 31-year-old [*American*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/american) reporter for The Wall Street Journal has been arrested on charges of espionage. The FSB, the country’s top security agency and successor to the KGB, said Gershkovich was collecting information on an enterprise of the military-industrial complex.

The Journal denied the allegations and demanded his release.

Sarah Conly, a retired philosophy professor at Bowdoin, recalled that Gershkovich was unafraid to speak up while other students hung back.

Read more:

[*American detained in Russia a 'brave, committed' journalist*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-american-russia-soviet-union-moscow-b2311341.html)

Finland to join Nato as hold-out Turkey approves membership bid

Finland is set to join Nato “in days” after Turkey’s parliament voted to ratify its membership bid, submitted in the wake of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Turkey was the last among Nato’s members to ratify the bid, after months of negotiations between Ankara and Helsinki. All 276 MPs present voted in favour.

“All 30 Nato allies have now ratified the accession protocol,” the alliance’s secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, said on Friday. “Finland will formally join our alliance in the coming days.”

Finland’s entrance into Nato is a significant moment. It shares an 830-mile border with Russia, and the two nations fought ferociously during the Second World War. Helsinki also possesses one of the most powerful arsenals in Western Europe.

Read the full story:

[*Finland to join Nato as hold-out Turkey approves membership bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-nato-finalnd-turkey-b2310922.html)

IMF approves $15.6bn loan package for Ukraine

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) said its executive board had approved a four-year $15.6bn loan programme for Ukraine.

The loan is a part of a global $115bn package to support the country’s economy as it battles Russia’s 13-month-old invasion.

The IMF-supported programme will help maintain economic and financial stability, catalyse much needed financing from donors and partners and support Ukraine’s recovery in the post-war period, the body said.

The IMF Executive Board approved financing of US$15.6 billion to support economic policies. [*https://t.co/f53LlVQSD5*](https://t.co/f53LlVQSD5) [*pic.twitter.com/zSpyza83nb*](https://t.co/zSpyza83nb) — IMF (@IMFNews) [*March 31, 2023*](https://twitter.com/IMFNews/status/1641866692149010433?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Aerial footage shows Ukrainian forces destroying Russian storage site near Bakhmut 06:00 , Eleanor Noyce Footage published by the [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) Armed Forces on Wednesday 29 March claims to show the destruction of a Russian weapons store in the devastated eastern city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut). A statement from the 30th Mechanised Brigade said that the “[*warehouse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/warehouse) and the occupiers’ military equipment were destroyed with one shot”.The city of Bakhmut has been a major Russian strategic objective since last summer, with waves of troops seeking to take the settlement in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s Donetsk Oblast.[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has likely lost tens of thousands of soldiers in the bitter battle, according to the Institute for the Study of War.Watch:[*Aerial footage shows Ukrainian forces destroying Russian storage site near Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-bakhmut-weapons-b2311654.html) Ukraine unlikely to expel all Russian troops this year, says top US official06:15 , Sravasti Dasgupta Ukraine is unlikely to expel all Russian troops from its territory this year, a top US official has said.In an interview with Defence One on Friday, General Mark Milley, the chairman of the US joint chief of staff, said: “I don’t think it’s likely to be done in the near term for this year.”The general added that while Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky has stated that their objective is to “kick every Russian out”, the task remains “very difficult.”“Zelensky has publicly stated many times that the Ukrainian objective is to kick every Russian out of Russian-occupied Ukraine. And that is a significant military task. Very, very difficult military task. You’re looking at a couple hundred thousand Russians who are still in Russian-occupied Ukraine. I’m not saying it can’t be done. I’m just saying it’s a very difficult task,” he said.Ukraine accuse Wimbledon of ‘immoral’ stance on Russian and Belarusian participation06:30 , Eleanor Noyce[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s foreign minister says [*Wimbledon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wimbledon) ’s decision to allow Russian and Belarusian players to compete at this year’s Championships is “immoral”.Dmytro Kuleba called on the UK Government to deny players from the two countries visas following the invasion of Ukraine last year.Wimbledon said players from the two countries[*must sign declarations of neutrality*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-russia-belarus-tennis-ban-b2311728.html) and must not express support for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while competitors who receive funding from the Russian or Belarusian states, including sponsorship from state owned or controlled companies, will remain barred.Wimbledon moved to decline entries from Russian and Belarusian players to last year’s tournament, citing advice from the UK Government following the invasion of Ukraine, but its decision was criticised by the other three grand slams and both men’s and women’s professional tours.Jamie Braidwood reports:[*Ukraine accuse Wimbledon of ‘immoral’ stance on Russian participation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-russia-ban-ukraine-belarus-b2311867.html) Russia says Ukraine ceasefire would not achieve Moscow's goals06:45 , Sravasti Dasgupta Russia has said that a ceasefire in Ukraine would not enable it to achieve the goals of its “special military operation” at the moment.“In terms of Ukraine, nothing is changing, the special military operation is continuing because today that is the only means in front of us to achieve our goals,” Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Friday.His comments came after Russian ally and Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko called for an immediate ceasefire, without preconditions, and for both Moscow and Kyiv to start negotiations on a lasting peace settlement.Mr Peskov added that Russia had noted his comments and president Vladimir Putin would discuss it with the Belarusian leader next week.Moment Austria’s pro-Russia lawmakers walk out of Zelensky’s speech to parliament07:00 , Eleanor Noyce Lawmakers from the pro-[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , far-right [*Freedom Party*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/freedom-party) (FPO) walked out of the lower house of [*Austria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/austria) ’s [*parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) on Thursday 30 March during a speech by [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky). The president of Ukraine addressed the chamber via video link, thanking Austria for its humanitarian aid and help with projects such as clearing land mines.The FPO, however, had warned days before that it would hold some form of protest against Zelensky’s speech, claiming that it violated Austria’s neutrality.Lawmakers who walked out left small placards on their desks featuring the party logo and either the words “space for neutrality” or “space for peace”.Watch:[*Moment Austria’s pro-Russia lawmakers walk out of Zelensky’s speech to parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/austria-zelensky-russia-ukraine-war-b2311579.html) Russia makes only ‘marginal gains’ in Donbas-Ministry of Defence07:48 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Here is the latest defence intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine:Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -01 April 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/un6OZVrOda*](https://t.co/un6OZVrOda) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/pFl8kpIqs6*](https://t.co/pFl8kpIqs6) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 1, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1642054869447049216?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Germany’s military gaps cannot be fully bridged by 2030, defence minister says

Germany’s military cannot completely fill its existing gaps by 2030, Defence Minister Boris Pistorius was quoted as saying, as Berlin seeks to revamp its armed forces after Russia‘s invasion of Ukraine following decades of neglect.

“We all know that the existing gaps cannot be completely closed by 2030... It will take years. Everyone is aware of that,” Pistorius said in an interview with Welt am Sonntag newspaper published on Saturday.

Already worn down by decades of underinvestment since the end of the Cold War, the Bundeswehr is in even worse shape than a year ago given weapons and munitions donated to Ukraine have mostly not yet been replaced, say experts.

Pistorius rejected further arms deliveries to Ukraine from the Bundeswehr stocks beyond the announced commitments.

“To put it bluntly, like other nations, we have a limited inventory. As federal defence minister, I cannot give everything away,” he said.

The minister, who was appointed earlier this year, said increasing the defence budget to reach the NATO spending target of 2% of national output, from currently around 1.5%, was his highest priority.

“If that is then set in motion at the end of the (legislative) period, then I would be satisfied,” he added.

Germany is also planning a naval mission in the Indo-Pacific region next year and is intensifying its partnerships with key countries in the region, such as Japan, Australia, India, Indonesia, South Korea and Singapore, he said, saying Europe’s freedom of movement in seas there was “too challenged”.

Russia-Ukraine war: Will there be a spring counteroffensive?

Europe’s biggest armed conflict since World War II is poised to enter a new phase in the coming weeks.

With no suggestion of a negotiated end to the 13 months of fighting between [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the Ukrainian defense minister said last week that a spring counteroffensive could begin as soon as April.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) faces a key tactical question: How can the Ukrainian military dislodge Kremlin forces from land they are occupying? Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is working hard to keep his troops, and the general public, motivated for a long fight.

Here’s a look at how the fighting has evolved and how the spring campaign might unfold:

[*Russia-Ukraine war: Will there be a spring counteroffensive?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kyiv-ap-ukraine-russia-vladimir-putin-b2312213.html)

Click [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-weapons-bakhmut-b2311460.html) to read the full blog on The Independent's website

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Three children among seven killed as Russian drone strikes petrol station*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69X2-GKP1-DY4H-K4NP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:967

**Length:** 4294 words

**Byline:** Alexander Butler and Joe Middleton

**Highlight:** Ukrainian troops shot down the Russian aircraft in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka, Kyiv claimed

**Body**

At least seven people, including three children, have been killed overnight after a Russian drone hit a petrol station in the north-eastern city of Kharkiv.

The strike caused a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses, while 50 people were evacuated as emergency workers tackled the blaze.

It comes as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced [*him with Oleksandr Syrsky.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/general-oleksandr-syrskyi-valerii-zaluzhnyi-b2493036.html)

It follows days of speculation that [*Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-when-time-b2492651.html) , who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In other developments, Ukrainian troops have shot down a [*Russian attack helicopter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/republican-senators-ukraine-border-trump-b2492267.html) in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) claimed.

Meanwhile, Russian forces launched the [*second largest combined drone*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html) and missile strike on Ukraine this year with around 64 munitions hitting the country, according to a [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) think tank.

Key Points

Three children killed in Russian drone strike in Kharkiv Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant Explosions rock Kyiv as Russia launches huge wave of strikes against Ukraine

12:12 , Holly Evans We are pausing our coverage for now. Thanks for reading.

Russian drones targeted Odesa and Kharkiv overnight

The Ukrainian air force said air defence systems destroyed 23 out of 31 drones launched by Russia overnight.

The drones primarily targeted the north-eastern Kharkiv region and the southern province of Odesa, the statement said.

Odesa regional governor Oleh Kiper said four people were injured there by the overnight drone attacks.

The attacks came in three waves, he said. The first targeted the regional capital -the port city of Odesa. All nine drones were shot down, but the debris damaged port infrastructure and injured one person.

The second and the third waves targeted port infrastructure in the Danube river area, Mr Kiper said. A total of 12 drones were shot down and three people were injured.

Zelenksy appoints a new commander-in-chief – but will it help the war against Russia?

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine is rapidly approaching its second anniversary – and the war is not going according to plan for either side.

In a major reset that [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) believes can change the trajectory of the conflict, he has [*sacked his commander-in-chief, General Valery Zaluzhny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-ukraine-war-military-valery-zaluzhny-b2493026.html). After a series of disagreements, the president has called for a “united approach across the whole front line and a new vision for the war, mobilisation and recruitment”.

It is a herculean task for his new chief, Colonel General Oleksandr Syrsky, previously commander of ground forces, given the reality of the current phase of the war.

Read the full article from Orysia Lutsevych [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-strategy-zelensky-b2493689.html)

[*Zelenksy appoints a new commander-in-chief – but will it help the war against Russia?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-strategy-zelensky-b2493689.html)

Three children killed in Russian drone strike in Kharkiv

A Russian drone strike on Kharkiv, Ukraine’s second largest city, killed at least seven people overnight, including three children, their region governor Oleh Syniehubov has said.

A Iranian-made Shahed drone hit civilian infrastructure in the Nemyshlyan district on the city, causing a massive fire that burned down 15 private houses.

Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said more than 50 people had been evacuated and that emergency workers had contained the blaze by Saturday morning.

Friday 9 February 2024 13:36 , Chris Stevenson We are pausing our coverage for now. Thanks for reading.For the latest on the reaction to Tucker Carlson’s interview with Russian President Vladimir Putin, please [*click here.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-putin-full-interview-video-news-b2493555.html)

Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership

[*Zelensky says he is preparing reset of senior Ukrainian leadership*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-zelensky-zaluzhny-stalemate-b2490755.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries

[*Turkish war drone factory to open in Ukraine with plans to supply to 30 countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-drones-baykar-kyiv-russia-b2491543.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Patients travelling to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, shadow health minister says

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Army chief Zaluzhny sacked by Zelensky in major military shake-up

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has sacked army chief Valeriy Zaluzhny and replaced him with Oleksandr Syrsky.

It follows days of speculation that Zelensky was considering dismissing Zaluzhnyf, who is seen by many Ukrainians as a national hero for overseeing the war effort since February 2022.

“We discussed what renewal the Armed Forces of Ukraine need. We also discussed who could be in the renewed leadership of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. The time for this renewal is now,” Zelensky’s statement said on Telegram.

In a separate statement, Zaluzhny said he had an “important and serious conversation” with Zelensky and that a decision had been made to change battlefield tactics and strategy.

“The tasks of 2022 are different from the tasks of 2024. Therefore, everyone must change and adapt to new realities as well. To win together too,” his statement said on Telegram messenger.

Colonel-General Oleksandr Syrskyi, who has led Ukraine’s ground forces since 2019, was promoted to commander of the armed forces on Thursday as the war with Russia nears its third year.

Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for another five years

[*Britain extends tariff-free trade with Ukraine for five years*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-britain-free-trade-war-latest-b2492596.html)

Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian presidential challenger banned from running against Putin

[*Who is Boris Nadezhdin? The Russian challenger banned from running against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-nadezhdin-putin-russian-candidate-b2486367.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Belarusian special forces looking for Ukrainian informants

Belarus has been increasingly targeting Ukrainians living in the country over the last month and is actively “looking for informants”, Ukraine’s National Resistance Centre claimed.

The organisation, which is part of Kyiv’s Special Operations Forces, said cases of Ukrainians being summoned for questioning in Belarus had “become more frequent”.

“The Belarusian special services are looking for informants among Ukrainians and plan, on the contrary, to involve them in cooperation,” it said.

Ukrainian troops shoot down Russian attack helicopter, Kyiv claims

Ukrainian troops have shot down a Russian attack helicopter in eastern Ukraine near the city of Avdiivka as soldiers step up street fighting, Kyiv claimed.

Troops used a portable anti-aircraft missile to take down the Ka-52 Alligator aircraft, according to commander Oleksandr Tarnavskyi.

It comes after the UK ministry of defence said Avdiivka remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Ten Ukrainian attacks ‘repelled’ and up to 290 troops killed or wounded, Russia claims

Putin’s troops have repelled 10 Ukrainian attacks over Russian-occupied Donetsk, according to Moscow’s defence ministry.

The ministry said units had also killed or wounded up to 290 members of Ukraine’s military.

It said Russian forces had taken “more advantageous lines and positions” and “hit clusters of manpower and hardware” along defence brigades in the region.

Italy to help repair roof of Ukraine's Odesa cathedral

Italy will help with the rebuilding of a cathedral in the Ukrainian city of Odesa that was badly damaged by a missile strike last year, the Italian foreign ministry said.

Italy and UNESCO signed an agreement in Kyiv to provide 500 million euros ($539 million) towards the restoration of the roof of Odesa’s Spaso-Preobrazhenskyi Cathedral, or Transfiguration Cathedral.

“Italy is very committed, through its institutions and its industrial capacity, to the reconstruction of Ukraine,” ambassador Pier Francesco Zazo said.

Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’

[*Fears for Ukrainian town as Russian soldiers attack ‘from all directions’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/avdiivka-attack-latest-ukraine-russia-b2492747.html)

Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election

[*Russian anti-war Putin critic says he has been banned from presidential election*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-putin-election-boris-nadezhdin-b2492725.html)

Two officers injured in overnight 'mass attack', says Ukraine's national police

Two officers have been injured in an overnight Russian drone attack, Ukraine’s national police has said.

The force said Russia launched a “mass attack” on the city of Odesa overnight, damaging a six-storey building and an “educational institution”, according to a post on Telegram.

It said the two policeman were patrolling and on their way to help residents when they were hit. They have both suffered mine-explosive injuries but they are in a stable condition, it added.

Germany’s Scholz praises Biden for united Russia response ahead of visit

US president Joe Biden’s leadership is critical in ensuring a united response to Russian aggression, German chancellor Olaf Scholz said.

“Our message is clear: We have to do our utmost to prevent Russia from winning” in Ukraine, Mr Scholz wrote in the Wall Street Journal.

“The long-term consequences and costs of failing to stop Mr. Putin’s aggression would dwarf any of the investments that we are making now.”

Huge explosion rocks Russian missile plant

A huge explosion has rocked a Russian missile plant in what state media claimed was a “planned rocket engine test”, footage appears to show.

The blast was recorded near the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant, which manufactures missile engines and strategic ballistic missiles in Izhevsk, Russia.

“We received a notification from the Votkinsk Machine Building Plant. It was a rocket engine test. A planned event, not an emergency,” Zavyalovsky District united dispatch service said.

Russia launches 600 guided munitions at Avdiivka in last month, MoD says

Vladimir Putin’s troops have launched around 600 guided munitions at the besieged town of Avdiivka, Ukraine, over the last month, the UK’s ministry of defence said.

The MoD said the town remained the primary focus of Russian operations with offensive pressure highly likely to continue over the next few weeks.

“Over the past four weeks, approximately 600 guided munitions have been launched against Ukrainian positions in Avdiivka from tactical aircraft,” the MoD said.

“Russian sorties increased guided aerial munitions strikes from 30 to 50 per day on 5 February 2024, an increase of 66 per cent over the last two weeks.”

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 08 February 2024. Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3*](https://t.co/J67zk0ezE3) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/4LnM1CcdGT*](https://t.co/4LnM1CcdGT) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*February 8, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1755513566872895488?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Biden blames trump for sinking US deal to fund Ukraine war effort

President Joe Biden has blamed Donald Trump for sinking a bill set to deliver billions of dollars of aid to Ukraine after Republicans ditched their support over pressure from the former president.

The $118bn deal would also include aid to Israel and Taiwan, as well as securing immigration along the US’s southern border with Mexico.

“He’d rather weaponise this issue than actually solve it. For the last 24 hours, he’s done nothing at all but reach out to Republicans in the House and the Senate and threaten them and try to intimidate them to vote against this proposal. And it looks like they’re caving,” Mr Biden said.

The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin

The sound of Colombian Spanish fills a hospital treating soldiers wounded fighting Russian forces.

Ukraine‘s ranks are depleted by two years of war. As it battles Putin’s war machine, Ukraine is welcoming hardened fighters from one of the world’s longest-running conflicts.

Professional soldiers from Colombia bolster the ranks of volunteers from around the world who have answered Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy’s call for foreign fighters to join his nation’s war with Russia.

[*The soldiers who swapped fighting drug cartels with a bloody war against Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/colombia-soliders-ukraine-putin-russia-b2492677.html)

11 out of 17 Russian drones downed over Ukraine, air force says

Ukrainian air defence and mobile drone hunter groups shot down 11 out of 17 Russia-launched drones over four regions of the country, the air force said.

It said in a statement the Iranian-made Shahed drones were downed over the Odesa and Mykolayiv regions in the south, the Dnipropetrovsk region in the southeast, and the central Vinnytsia region.

Regional officials said the drone attack damaged more than 20 residential houses and commercial buildings in the city of Mykolayiv and hit civilian infrastructure facilities in Odesa on the Black Sea in the south.

There were no casualties reported. Details of damage in other regions were not immediately clear.

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr [*Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has ordered officials to create a separate branch of the army [*dedicated to drones as*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-drone-attack-putin-b2471862.html) they have been instrumental in [*Ukraine’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) [*fight against Russian forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-tucker-carlson-news-b2491210.html).

“I have just signed a decree [*initiating the establishment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-general-baranov-interview-b2438262.html) of a separate branch of our defence forces – the unmanned systems forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Sweden and Finland’s Nato bids, warns defence minister

Norway’s defence minister urged his country to be ready for a possible conflict with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) even after the end of Moscow’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

He said Russia might retaliate in response to [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) and [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s new Nato membership. Other Nato nations have also explicitly warned of Russia’s aggression and plans to disrupt peace in the region in the past few months.

[*Norway must brace for conflict with Russia amid Nato bids, warns defence minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-norway-defence-minister-b2491211.html)

A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail

A [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) court has ordered the arrest of a bestselling novelist living in [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on charges of “justifying terrorism” – the latest incident in a Kremlin [*crackdown on Russians opposing the war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/vladimir-kara-murza-russia-putin-prison-b2487232.html) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Grigory Chkhartishvili, known under the pen name Boris Akunin, was [*charged in absentia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-akunin-foreign-agent-russia-ukraine-b2478254.html) by Moscow’s Basmanny District Court on Tuesday. He is now under an arrest warrant and will be detained if he returns to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

[*A bestselling novelist was duped by pro-Putin prank callers. He now faces jail*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-arrest-ukraine-war-boris-akunin-b2491473.html)

Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) fired cruise and ballistic missiles and Shahed-type drones at targets across Ukraine on Wednesday morning, authorities reported, killing at least three civilians and injuring 10 others, including a pregnant woman.

The attacks targeted at least three major cities, including the capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , where the European Union’s top diplomat, [*Josep Borrell*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/josep-borrell) , was discussing military aid and financial support for Ukraine.

[*Russia attacks targets across Ukraine with missiles and drones as EU’s top diplomat visits Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-josep-borrell-kyiv-b2491968.html)

NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin

U.S. national security adviser [*Jake Sullivan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jake-sullivan) said that he and his NATO counterparts cautioned [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) on Wednesday against further delaying Sweden’s membership in the military alliance, and he warned that patience in Washington has its limits.

Lawmakers from the party of Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) boycotted an emergency session of parliament on Monday where a vote was scheduled to place Sweden’s bid to join NATO on the legislative agenda, adding to 18 months of delays that have angered Hungary’s allies.

[*NATO allies warn Hungary not to hold up Sweden's membership as US patience wears thin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/jake-sullivan-ap-sweden-hungary-nato-b2492325.html)

Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum after police arrest him outside Oslo bar

A former commander of Russia’s [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) mercenary group who fled to Norway last year has been denied [*asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum) but will not be deported as it is too dangerous to send him back, his lawyer has said.

Andrei Medvedev, who escaped Russia in January 2023 across its Arctic border with Norway, has described running as Russian guards shot at him. He has spoken about his time fighting in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) as part of Wagner.

[*Wagner commander who fled from Russia to Norway begs for asylum*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-russia-putin-medvedev-norway-b2492057.html)

Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson’s false claim that no Western journalists tried to interview Putin

The [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) has slapped down a claim by far-right influencer [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) that no Western journalists have [*tried to interview*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/tucker-carlson-putin-interview-russia-b2491724.html) Russian president Vladimir Putin about his invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mr [*Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-donald-trump-fox-news-a9635091.html) accused the Western media of engaging in “fawning pep sessions” with Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , whom he has previously called a “dictator” and likened to a rat, while confidently asserting that “not a single Western journalist has bothered to interview the president of the other country involved in this conflict: Vladimir Putin”.

[*Kremlin corrects Tucker Carlson claim that no Western media tried to interview Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-vladimir-putin-interview-b2492192.html)

Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army

After a brief discussion, the upper house of Russia’s parliament on Wednesday endorsed a bill that would allow authorities to confiscate money, valuables and other assets from people convicted of spreading “deliberately false information” about the country’s military.

The bill, which was approved equally quickly by the lower house last week, is expected to receive Russian President Vladimir Putin’s signature and become law soon.

[*Russian upper house approves bill to confiscate assets of those convicted of discrediting the army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-moscow-vladimir-putin-ukraine-soviet-b2492022.html)

Refugees going back to Ukraine and people pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortages, minister says

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.

[*Patients going to Ukraine and pulling own teeth out amid NHS shortage, minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/nhs-dentist-new-patient-ukraine-b2492147.html)

Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones

Volodymyr Zelensky has ordered his officials to create a separate branch of the army specially dedicated to drones as they have been instrumental in Ukraine’s fight against Russian forces in the continuing invasion.

“I have just signed a decree initiating the establishment of a separate branch of our Defence Forces – the Unmanned Systems Forces. This is not a matter of the future, but something that should yield a very concrete result shortly,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address on Tuesday.

[*Ukraine launches new branch of armed forces dedicated exclusively to drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-drones-armed-forces-zelensky-b2491906.html)

North Korean missiles used in Kharkiv attack, claims local police official

Two of the five missiles fired at Ukraine’s second largest city on Wednesday morning were provided by North Korea, a local official has said.

Serhiy Bolvinov, head of the investigative department of the Kharkiv region police, said they had found the remnants of two North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.

"Metal fragments of ballistic missiles were collected by explosives on the territory of the industrial zone,” he said. “The preliminary conclusions of specialists are that they are North Korean HWASON 11GA (KN-23) missiles.”

The United States, Ukraine and six allies have previously accused Russia of using North Korean ballistic missiles and launchers supplied by Pyongyang in aerial attacks against Ukraine, in violation of United Nations sanctions.

How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war

[*IKEA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ikea) has extended its trademark in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in a bid to stop copycat stores that are opening up across the country amid [*Putin’s war on Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-attack-news-b2491914.html)

The country has officially extended the validity of trademarks for the Swedish furniture giant until August 2033, a move brand owner Inter IKEA said was driven by the need to protect the company’s intellectual property rights.

Like many large Western firms, IKEA halted its Russian operations shortly after Moscow sent troops into Ukraine in 2022 and completed the sale of its factories the following year.

[*How IKEA is trying to stop Russian copycats during Putin’s war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ikea-trademark-russia-ukraine-war-mcdonalds-b2492329.html)

Labour peer claims peace deal with Moscow would be ‘cheaper for all'

Seeking to strike a peace deal with Moscow and end the war in Ukraine would be “cheaper for all”, a Labour peer has told the House of Lords.

Former MP Lord Campbell-Savours made the call as the two-year anniversary of Vladimir Putin’s invasion of Ukraine approaches.

Foreign minister Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon responded to the Labour peer by noting that it was the Kremlin which was the aggressor and that Mr Putin had it in his power to end the war now.

The Labour frontbench also made clear it backed the UK government’s stance.

Russia claims to shoot down seven rockets over Belgorod

Russia’s air defence systems destroyed seven Ukraine-launched rockets and two drones over the southwestern region of Belgorod, the Russian defence ministry has claimed.

The Ukrainian strike was carried out with Czech-made Vampire rockets, the ministry said – the same type which, according to Moscow, was used in deadly strikes on the city of Belgorod in late December.

Belgorod governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said two people had been injured.

‘No plan B’ to getting Ukraine aid package through US Congress, White House says

The White House is focused on getting a Ukraine aid package through the US Congress, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan has said – warning there was no “plan B”.

“We believe we still can and will deliver aid for Ukraine,” Mr Sullivan told reporters during a joint press conference with Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg.

The latter said it was vital the US Congress agreed on continued support for Ukraine in the near future, adding that Nato did not see “any imminent threat against any Nato ally”.

“We must sustain our support and that is a responsibility for all allies,” Mr Stoltenberg said.

Watch: Tucker Carlson reveals he's interviewing Putin in Moscow

**Load-Date:** February 10, 2024

**End of Document**



[*'I hated education - public schools should be banned'; Rap-punk troubadour Jamie T spars with Mark Beaumont on British identity, the war in Ukraine and private education*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:660M-DB51-JCS0-D2PP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** CULTURE; Pg. 46

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**Byline:** MARK BEAUMONT

**Body**

Jamie T is telling me to fuck off. We're discussing his five-year absence from music, and at first he mulls it over in an introverted mumble. "You go quiet for ages, you gamble everything," he says, head lowered over a pub table. "Because if you go quiet for ages, then you release something that's shit or worse, something that just falls between the cracks - that's a lot of pressure. A lot of pressure on a single human being."

In an instant, his eyes widen, full of fight-back fury. Because when Jamie T turns on you, it's like a horror movie jump scare. It's a wolf cornered, Gollum unringed, the devil inside showing its face mid-exorcism. "So when you say do I enjoy the mystique? I'd say fuck off. Yeah? Fuck off."

Ever since "Sheila"'s melodic parade of drunks, dealers and addicts established him as the most renowned rap-punk troubadour of the urban sprawl back in 2006, the now 36-year-old Jamie Treays has developed something of a reputation for being prickly with the press. How much of his sporadic antagonism is an affectation, a defence mechanism or simply toying with interviewers for sport is hard to quantify. A decade since our last beer together, Treays greets me warmly outside a Covent Garden pub, more bearded and bespectacled than when last we met, but his endearing nose-wheeze of a laugh still ever-ready.

Taking a corner table, we small-talk about his ambitions to play in South America and his recent live comeback, warming up at west London's Subterania for 600 fans before headlining the John Peel stage at Glastonbury, opposite Paul McCartney. If Macca was there as the boomers' generational icon, Treays held a similar position for the millennials onsite. His electric, motormouth bursts of rabid street poetry and bare-boned urban ballads, incorporating punk, soul, folk and rap, epitomised the fast-evolving excitement of the early streaming era; in the indie-pop sphere, tracks such as "Calm Down Dearest" and "Sticks and Stones" have become revered modern texts.

"It was only the second gig we've done in five, six years," he says. "The second gig, going to headline the John Peel stage, that's insane, it's a complete whirlwind. It was just a bit of a shock to the system. I was quite worried about how we were gonna pull a crowd at all but the tent was rammed out. I was saying to my friend the other day, theoretically, I've played on the same bill as one of The Beatles." Between the stage fright and the relief, though, he didn't hang around to celebrate. "I went home after that. When I play gigs, especially ones that are high pressure, I'm such a bag of nerves I don't want to hang around beforehand, and afterwards I'm so happy if it goes well that I just want to get out before I make a fool of myself."

But when talk turns to the stresses of returning, six years on from his acclaimed fourth album Trick, particularly for an artist whose 2007 debut Panic Prevention outlined his deep-rooted anxiety issues, he begins to snap back. Over the next hour he'll shift between amenable and combative, leaping by turns for the jocular and the jugular. Trigger topics include politics, British identity, class and the pandemic ("a terrible time, probably the worst time of my life, but I'm not gonna talk about it??? I'm glad it's over"). He'll wind up the tension with a barbed retort to a question he doesn't like: "I'm alternative? How fucking dare you, you fucking bitch!" Or: "What do I make of [Partygate]? I don't fucking give a shit. Don't talk to me about stupid shit like that." Then he'll defuse it with a belly laugh or good-natured about-turn - "I'm only joking, it's an interview!", "I'm just parrying with you, this is my job, man" - and ask for the question again.

On the topic of the mystique that develops during lengthy breaks, for instance, he warms. "I got brought up in a way, with my management company and shit, to not do anything until you think it's really good," he explains. "So don't put anything fucking blasé out just to keep your momentum going, stop and take the time and release something that's good. That does come with a stipulation, a point that I didn't read in the small print: you're gonna spend quite a lot of time with people going, 'What are you doing?' I'd much rather have my life where I was releasing music on a regular basis. The mystique thing is a fallacy. It's actually very hard to deal with not releasing records as often as other people. There's nothing I enjoy about that at all."

If Treays is worried about his fifth album, The Theory of Whatever, falling through the cracks, his fears are misplaced. Just as he returned after a previous five-year hiatus with 2014's inspired and exploratory Carry on the Grudge, this is an auspicious and wide-ranging comeback, taking in hallucinogenic ballroom ballads ("Thank You"), barrelling pop songs that sound like The Smiths going emo ("A Million and One Ways to Die") and gothic synth raps akin to The Cure writing their distorted version of a John Hughes movie theme ("'90s Cars").

Thematically, it bristles with Treays's customary tales of love and youth broken on the grinding wheels of modern life - the heartbreaks, the drink and drugs, the metropolitan dislocation. In framing such tales, though, Treays casts an even broader eye across the span of society in 2022 than masterpieces like Panic Prevention and Kings And Queens did more than 10 years ago. He peeks through the designer window blinds of "St George Wharf Tower" and the "oligarch's houses" of "Keying Lamborghinis" as astutely as he dredges the gutter on "British Hell", an Arctic Monkeys-like surf-rock portrait of the violence and brutality of street life, its chorus borrowed from The Misfits' "London Dungeon" and sung by ex-Gallows frontman Frank Carter.

At the phrase "urban deprivation", though, Treays rankles. "That's not what I've been writing about at all. Just because I'm talking about people getting drunk doesn't mean I'm talking about urban degradation and decay. I'm an upper middle-class boy from fucking Wimbledon, I'm not talking about urban degradation. I'm talking about people going out and getting pissed. If I want to talk about urban deprivation I'd do it in 'British Hell', which I fucking did."

So there are songs about urban deprivation. "Well no," he protests. "What I'm talking about in that song is I'm talking about??? I'm talking about??? all right, you're right. Hahaha! You got me! One-nil."

It's a song that seems to be about the disintegration of British society. Has Brexit divided us to that extent? "No, Brexit made us divided [but] since Covid I think we are more unified now than we were before. Before that there was a lot of heavy shit going on. These people were changing the country and fucking shit up. Do you remember how much everyone was at each other's [throats]? Do you remember how bad it was when that shit was going on? Covid came about and??? I think the country is more solidified now than it was before Brexit, because everyone is in trouble now.

"Brexit brought factions between us all and people fighting, factions between everyone, old things started to rehash. And sadly, some of these things were just so misplaced, so unfortunately misplaced. People got fucked over to fuck. The people who voted for that were not all fucking racists. They were fucking normal people who were struggling in places that were ignored. And they were led by a fucking dude who only wanted a fucking referendum because he couldn't keep his fucking party in fucking line, and then we all got fucked by it."

Treays, by the way, says "fuck" a lot. Particularly when riled. Head lowered, voice simmering with anger, he side-tracks into an impassioned diatribe against "fucking idiot" David Cameron and "fucking lunatic" Tony Blair, punctuated by pint-rattling thumps of the table. "Those two people don't deserve the respect of this country. That is why David Cameron has disappeared, because he knows he doesn't deserve our respect. He gambled the nation on the fact he couldn't keep his party in line. That is what you call a fassyhole."

Treays was a new recruit to the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn ("There was a moment of feeling like it may have happened, there was a flutter there"). Unsurprisingly, then, he's no fan of Boris Johnson either. "I think the fact that he wrote two essays, one against Brexit and one for Brexit, proved the point that the man just wanted power," he argues (we're speaking on the eve of Johnson's resignation). "He used Brexit to get into power and I think he had no intention of making the country better, at all. Next question."

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So, is the cost of living crisis going to exacerbate the class divide, with the rich able to soak it up and the poor slipping further behind? "And then you've got the middle class???" Who are struggling too, I point out. Treays balks at the interruption. "Well, I must be completely out of that. I'm getting a chopper in a minute out of here, you fucking dick. Don't talk to me like I don't fucking know about this shit. Of course, it's everywhere. Don't try and talk to me about what I think about the cost of living crisis. I look after my neighbours, yeah? I look after my fucking neighbours and my neighbours look after me. I'm not gonna talk to you about how that goes, but I've walked into people's houses, my neighbours, and looked after them at bad moments. Don't fucking talk to me like I'm some fucking Rolling Stone and I'm going to Paris."

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Then, with a mischievous twist, the album ends on "50,000 Unmarked Bullets", the imagined romantic turmoil of Kim Jong-un. Seriously. Treays grins broadly. "I wanted to make you feel sorry for Kim Jong-un, yeah? The whole idea of the song was 'my father was a despot so I had to be a despot'. It was like a musical - haha! - trying to make you feel sorry for somebody that's a dictator. I envisioned his life at the Baccalaureate school in Switzerland, which he went to, I looked it all up. And I wrote a song about him falling in love with a girl and then having to be like, 'Oh, I have to go home because my father's dying and I have to kill my uncles'." The song imagines Jong-un being tried in The Hague, but more worried about his girlfriend reading the transcripts from every bugged room he's ever been in. "He's more concerned with what his girlfriend thinks about him, and the transcripts never quite show the love they felt."

Despite having weathered one half-decade break from releasing music before, Treays admits to having no confidence that anybody would be listening after such a long time away trying to write "something that makes me want to stand up for myself - not be shy, not be a wallflower. Something that I believe in." As conversation turns to the struggles faced by alternative acts in the streaming age, he even starts numbering his own days in music.

"I got into this fucking game when I was 19 years old," he says. "I wrote 'Sheila' when I was 17 years old. I'm 36 years old, I'm still on the same fucking record deal. This is my last album for the record label. How many years is that?" Seventeen years, I calculate. "I've been on the same contract for 17 years of my life. I'm an old man. In indie music, you have to imagine what it's like for me."

Look at The National??? "I don't give a fuck, I'm not in The National. I'm old. I'm nearly done, man." You're going to give up? "I'm not giving up. I've done pretty well for myself, man. I'm just being real about where I am at, trying to be understanding of where I am in things. I don't know how long I'm gonna carry on with it because I don't know how long I'm gonna write any music that's gonna be good."

I suggest, then, that Treays is driven by the artistic imperative, that he'll keep going for as long as he believes he's making great records. Again, he balks. "No, it's to do with the charts and shit. It's to do with money, you dickhead, it's to do with money. I want to be able to pay my mortgage, of course it's to do with money, you idiot. Of course it is. Because otherwise I need to get another job, because I have to pay my mortgage, because I don't want to lose my fucking house. Don't treat me any different to anyone who has a fucking job, because I pay a fucking mortgage and it's the same for anyone."

A conversation, we decide, for another pub, another time. He needn't worry though: on the evidence of The Theory of Whatever, the Treays dynasty is secured for at least another half-decade.

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**End of Document**



[*Jamie T: ‘I hated education. I think public schools should be banned’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:660N-SVF1-DY4H-K32T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** FEATURES,MUSIC,CULTURE; Version:2

**Length:** 2879 words

**Byline:** Mark Beaumont

**Highlight:** INTERVIEW: The indie-rock troubadour who soundtracked the urban sprawl of the Noughties has returned with an auspicious comeback album. He spars with Mark Beaumont on British identity, the war in Ukraine, private education, and how this former outlander finally found his tribe

**Body**

Jamie T is telling me to f\*\*\* off. We’re discussing his five-year absence from music, and at first he mulls it over in an introverted mumble. “You go quiet for ages, you gamble everything,” he says, head lowered over a pub table. “Because if you go quiet for ages, then you release something that’s s\*\*\*, or worse, something that just falls between the cracks – that's a lot of pressure. A lot of pressure on a single human being.”

In an instant, his eyes widen, full of fight-back fury. Because when Jamie T turns on you, it’s like a horror movie jump scare. It’s a wolf cornered, Gollum un-ringed, the devil inside showing its face mid-exorcism. “So when you say do I enjoy the mystique? I’d say f\*\*\* off. Yeah? F\*\*\* off.”

Ever since “Sheila”’s melodic parade of drunks, dealers and addicts established him as the most renowned rap-punk troubadour of the urban sprawl back in 2006, the now 36-year-old Jamie Treays has developed something of a reputation for being prickly with the press. How much of his sporadic antagonism is an affectation, a defence mechanism or simply toying with interviewers for sport is hard to quantify. A decade since our last beer together, Treays greets me warmly outside a Covent Garden pub, more bearded and bespectacled than when last we met, but his endearing nose-wheeze of a laugh still ever-ready. Taking a corner table, we small-talk about his ambitions to play in South America and his recent live comeback, warming up at west London’s Subterania for 600 fans before headlining the John Peel stage at Glastonbury, opposite Paul McCartney. If Macca was there as the boomers’ generational icon, Treays held a similar position for the millennials onsite. His electric, motormouth bursts of rabid street poetry and bare-boned urban ballads, incorporating punk, soul, folk and rap, epitomised the fast-evolving excitement of the early streaming era; in the indie-pop sphere, tracks such as “Calm Down Dearest” and “Sticks and Stones” have become revered modern texts.

“It was only the second gig we’ve done in five, six years,” he says. “The second gig, going to headline the John Peel stage, that’s insane, it’s a complete whirlwind. It was just a bit of a shock to the system. I was quite worried about how we were gonna pull a crowd at all but the tent was rammed out. I was saying to my friend the other day, theoretically, I’ve played on the same bill as one of The Beatles.” Between the stage fright and the relief, though, he didn’t hang around to celebrate. “I went home after that. When I play gigs, especially ones that are high pressure, I’m such a bag of nerves I don’t want to hang around beforehand, and afterwards I'm so happy if it goes well that I just want to get out before I make a fool of myself.”

But when talk turns to the stresses of returning, six years on from his acclaimed fourth album Trick, particularly for an artist whose 2007 debut Panic Prevention outlined his deep-rooted anxiety issues, he begins to snap back. Over the next hour he’ll shift between amenable and combative, leaping by turns for the jocular and the jugular. Trigger topics include politics, British identity, class and the pandemic (“a terrible time, probably the worst time of my life, but I'm not gonna talk about it…I’m glad it’s over”). He’ll wind up the tension with a barbed retort to a question he doesn’t like: “I’m alternative? How f\*\*\*ing dare you, you f\*\*\*ing b\*\*\*\*!”. Or: “What do I make of [Partygate]? I don’t f\*\*ing give a s\*\*\*… Don’t talk to me about stupid s\*\*\* like that”. Then he’ll defuse it with a belly laugh or good-natured about-turn – “I’m only joking, it’s an interview!”, “I’m just parrying with you, this is my job man” – and ask for the question again.

On the topic of the mystique that develops during lengthy breaks, for instance, he warms. “I got brought up in a way, with my management company and s\*\*\*, to not do anything until you think it’s really good,” he explains. “So don’t put anything f\*\*\*ing blasé out just to keep your momentum going, stop and take the time and release something that’s good. That does come with a stipulation, a point that I didn't read in the small print: you’re gonna spend quite a lot of time with people going, ‘What are you doing?’… I'd much rather have my life where I was releasing music on a regular basis. The mystique thing is a fallacy. It’s actually very hard to deal with not releasing records as often as other people. There’s nothing I enjoy about that at all.”

If Treays is worried about his fifth album, The Theory of Whatever, falling through the cracks, his fears are misplaced. Just as he returned after a previous five-year hiatus with 2014’s inspired and exploratory Carry on the Grudge, this is an auspicious and wide-ranging comeback, taking in hallucinogenic ballroom ballads (“Thank You”), barrelling pop songs that sound like The Smiths going emo (“A Million and One Ways to Die”) and gothic synth raps akin to The Cure writing their distorted version of a John Hughes movie theme (“’90s Cars”).

Thematically, it bristles with Treays’s customary tales of love and youth broken on the grinding wheels of modern life – the heartbreaks, the drink and drugs, the metropolitan dislocation. In framing such tales, though, Treays casts an even broader eye across the span of society in 2022 than masterpieces like Panic Prevention and Kings And Queens did more than 10 years ago. He peeks through the designer window blinds of “St George Wharf Tower” and the “oligarch’s houses” of “Keying Lamborghinis” as astutely as he dredges the gutter on “British Hell”, an Arctic Monkeys-like surf-rock portrait of the violence and brutality of street life, its chorus borrowed from The Misfits’ “London Dungeon” and sung by ex-Gallows frontman Frank Carter.

At the phrase “urban deprivation”, though, Treays rankles. “That’s not what I’ve been writing about at all. Just because I’m talking about people getting drunk doesn’t mean I’m talking about urban degradation and decay. I’m an upper middle-class boy from f\*\*\*ing Wimbledon, I’m not talking about urban degradation. I’m talking about people going out and getting p\*\*\*ed. If I want to talk about urban deprivation I’d do it in ‘British Hell’, which I f\*\*\*ing did.”

I’m an upper middle-class boy from f\*\*\*ing Wimbledon, I’m not talking about urban degradationJamie TSo there are songs about urban deprivation. “Well no,” he protests. “What I’m talking about in that song is I’m talking about… I’m talking about…alright, you’re right. Hahaha! You got me! One-nil.” It’s a song that seems to be about the disintegration of British society. Has Brexit divided us to that extent? “No, Brexit made us divided [but] since Covid I think we are more unified now than we were before. Before that there was a lot of heavy s\*\*\* going on. These people were changing the country and f\*\*\*ing s\*\*\* up. Do you remember how much everyone was at each other’s [throats]? Do you remember how bad it was when that s\*\*\* was going on? Covid came about and… I think the country is more solidified now than it was before Brexit, because everyone is in trouble now. Brexit brought factions between us all and people fighting, factions between everyone, old things started to rehash. And sadly, some of these things were just so misplaced, so unfortunately misplaced. People got f\*\*\*ed over to f\*\*\*…The people who voted for that were not all f\*\*\*ing racists. They were f\*\*\*ing normal people who were struggling in places that were ignored. And they were led by a f\*\*\*ing dude who only wanted a f\*\*\*ing referendum because he couldn’t keep his f\*\*\*ing party in f\*\*\*ing line, and then we all got f\*\*\*ed by it.”Treays, by the way, says “f\*\*\*” a lot. Particularly when riled. Head lowered, voice simmering with anger, he side-tracks into an impassioned diatribe against “f\*\*\*ing idiot” David Cameron and “f\*\*\*ing lunatic” Tony Blair, punctuated by pint-rattling thumps of the table. “Those two people don't deserve the respect of this country…That is why David Cameron has disappeared, because he knows he doesn’t deserve our respect. He gambled the nation on the fact he couldn’t keep his party in line. That is what you call a fassyhole.” Treays was a new recruit to the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn (“There was a moment of feeling like it may have happened, there was a flutter there”). Unsurprisingly, then, he's no fan of Boris Johnson either. “I think the fact that he wrote two essays, one against Brexit and one for Brexit, proved the point that the man just wanted power,” he argues (we’re speaking on the eve of Johnson’s resignation). “He used Brexit to get into power and I think he had no intention of making the country better, at all. Next question.” Is there a British identity now? Treays thinks not, unless Gogglebox or Love Island is on. “There’s an identity in solidarity…Those are the very rare occasions when we all feel we identify together. That is important, that’s what we’ve lost a bit. Everyone feeling solidarity together. The Ukraine conflict has somehow galvanised a lot of people. My mother and father are taking ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in. It galvanised a lot of love in the country, a lot of hope in the country. I think we miss each other as a nation. We miss each other as classes, we miss each other as southerners and northerners and Midlanders. Everyone is yearning to connect and the only thing we have are these small little moments on the telly or the internet. There’s a disconnect and any moment – the Jubilee and stuff like that – is so important.” So, is the cost of living crisis going to exacerbate the class divide, with the rich able to soak it up and the poor slipping further behind? “And then you’ve got the middle class…” Who are struggling too, I point out. Treays balks at the interruption. “Well, I must be completely out of that. I’m getting a chopper in a minute out of here, you f\*\*\*ing d\*\*\*. Don’t talk to me like I don’t f\*\*\*ing know about this s\*\*\*. Of course, it’s everywhere. Don’t try and talk to me about what I think about the cost of living crisis. I look after my neighbours, yeah? I look after my f\*\*\*ing neighbours and my neighbours look after me. I’m not gonna talk to you about how that goes, but I’ve walked into people’s houses, my neighbours, and looked after them at bad moments. Don’t f\*\*\*ing talk to me like I’m some f\*\*\*ing Rolling Stone and I’m going to Paris.” A sore point, perhaps, class. In his earliest years in music, Treays existed in a strange societal hinterland. He was attending public school by day and hanging around in car park boozers with teen punk tearaways by night, or singing songs about them in pubs and clubs.My mother and father are f\*\*\*ing great human beings who worked their a\*\*\*s off to send me where I [went] and I will f\*\*\*ing fight anyone on the f\*\*\*ing street who wants to have a problem with that. I will fight you on the street

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**End of Document**



[*The asylum seekers stuck in hotel rooms for months on end*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65S2-J4V1-DY4H-K0M0-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** HOME NEWS,UK; Version:8

**Length:** 3038 words

**Byline:** May Bulman

**Highlight:** Investigation: It was supposed to be a temporary measure. Now figures reveal that more than 28,000 asylum seekers are forced to live in rooms designed for short stays – with hundreds stuck there for more than a year. May Bulman speaks to the families enduring mould, bed bugs and vermin in the government-funded accommodation as they wait for a way out

**Body**

In a small darkened room where the scent of damp lingers, two toddlers sit quietly on a double bed. The sisters, Elva and Gabriela, stare vacantly at the blotched ceiling and mould-speckled walls. Their father, Carlos, stands by despairingly. This cramped space is all his daughters know.

The El Salvadorian national arrived in the UK last September with his wife, Aline, and their two girls – aged one and two – after being “caught in the crossfire” of gang violence. They had hoped to find a place for their children to grow up in relative safety and comfort. Instead, they have been stuck in a hotel room perched on a busy A-road in west London for eight months, banned from working and with only £32 a week for the family to live on.

Two double beds pushed together take up most of the room. The small amount of space that remains is filled with household items – an ironing board, a small fridge, a high chair, toys. Wedged in a corner is a desk cluttered with baby wipes, formula and bottles, along with an electric hob and kitchen utensils.

“My babies are coughing because of the fungus,” says Carlos, 35, a man of slender build with weary eyes indicating regular sleepless nights. “A month ago we got bed bugs. They got pest control in only last week. We were waiting a long time. My babies were uncomfortable. They couldn’t sleep.”

A tiny bathroom en suite is filled with drying clothes and a pile of items – bags, children’s books, shoes – that do not fit in the main room. In the sink is a wooden spoon and a bottle of washing-up liquid beside the tap along with the family’s toothbrushes.

“I can’t provide for them; I feel useless,” says Carlos, close to tears. “As a father, I feel useless.”

While Boris Johnson and home secretary [*Priti Patel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/priti-patel) focus on immigration plans such as the controversial Rwanda deportation policy or finding homes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the issues faced by Carlos and his family are the reality for an increasing number of [*asylum seekers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/asylum-seekers-0) , forced to live in government-funded hotels while they await decisions on their claims to stay in the UK. This form of housing used to be rare, but surged during the pandemic as Covid restrictions meant housing was not available. At the time, ministers described it as a “temporary measure”.

By last month, despite the end of Covid rules, some 28,621 asylum seekers were living in 220 hotels across the country, up from 10,319 in February 2021 – when the Home Office [*pledged to “accelerate”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/asylum-seeker-hotel-accommodation-home-office-b1806087.html) the movement of asylum seekers out of hotels and into housing – according to figures seen by The Independent. The hotels are run by three companies: Serco, Clearsprings Ready Homes and Mears Group.

The government has historically aimed to move asylum seekerson from this “contingency accommodation” within 35 days, but figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that, as of the end of September 2021, two thirds of all asylum seekers in hotels – including 1,079 children – had passed that limit. Nearly 1,000 had spent more than six months in hotel rooms, with 356 longer than a year. The Home Office declined to provide more recent data, claiming it needed to consider whether the disclosure would “prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs”.

As the numbers rise, so too do the fears for asylum seekers. A welfare concern about asylum seekers in hotels is reported to the Home Office every 30 minutes, on average, according to the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration (ICIBI).

In London, a severely disabled teenage girl from Kuwait is spending her ninth month in a London hotel room, forced to lie on the floor, without a bathroom in which she can wash properly. In Skegness, a young man from Kurdistan is forced to wait days before receiving any medical attention for intense stomach pains, ultimately being taken to hospital by ambulance. Two small children are left without anywhere to play except a car park or exposed hotel corridor.

Their cases are far from isolated. The problem is growing and, experts warn, cannot continue without a human cost.

In pain for days – but ignored

When Ahmed arrived in Britain last November, he was already traumatised. The Iraqi Kurdish national had fled from his home due to threats made because of his political beliefs, and made his way to France. From there, he paid smugglers to travel by small boat to the UK, arriving just hours before [*27 people died attempting the dangerous crossing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/children-gerald-darmanin-english-channel-france-calais-b1964068.html).

The 20-year-old has been in a hotel in a rural part of Skegness, Lincolnshire, for seven months. He says that several weeks after being placed there he began having stomach pains. He says he tried to ask for help, but to no avail.

“Every time I went down to tell the hotel staff they would tell me I could go to the GP myself, but I was in too much pain and I didn’t have money for a taxi so I couldn’t go,” he says. “They said they would call a GP for me. I did that a couple of times, but they never came. The hotel staff didn’t say why. They kept saying: ‘Go up to your room; the GP will come.’ I was begging them to let me see a GP for three days. I was in so much pain. It was constant.”

Several days later, the pain became so excruciating during the night that Ahmed cried out for help. An ambulance was called and arrived an hour later. He was taken to hospital, where he stayed overnight. He says there was no interpreter there so his diagnosis wasn’t properly communicated to him, but he was given an injection and medication.

Figures obtained by The Independent reveal that many asylum seekers such as Ahmed have needed ambulances called out to hotels. The data, disclosed through Freedom of Information requests, shows that just 27 of the 226 hotels were responsible for 1,495 callouts in the year to last October – more than one a week. Of these, more than half led to a patient being taken to hospital.

Experts say this is a symptom of a lack of access to healthcare. The contractors running the hotels on behalf of the Home Office are required to support people with registering with GPs, but those working with asylum seekers warn that this does not always happen.

Dr Durga Sivasathiaseelan, mobile clinic coordinator at the charity Doctors of the World, said that although the charity was initially able to support asylum seekers in hotels with registering with GPs and accessing health services, a change in the way the Home Office shares data in January had prevented them from helping.

She said: “This has made it very difficult to support people. We don’t know who is there. Things have got significantly worse in terms of access to healthcare for people in hotels – I’m very worried for those who now won’t be able to access healthcare.”

A Home Office spokesperson said it worked closely with the NHS, local councils and NGOs to ensure access to healthcare. They also pointed to the ICIBI finding that 92 per cent of service providers were helping asylum seekers find healthcare, and said there were “robust processes” to ensure someone at risk was referred to appropriate agencies.

Serco said that all of the asylum seekers in its care were registered with local GPs. Mears said it had “worked closely with relevant local health teams in all areas”.

Handa Majed, founder of the charity Kurdish Umbrella, which supports people in hotels, said: “New arrivals scarcely receive the essential services and support they require while in Home Office hotel accommodation. Staff do not speak their language, their mental health needs are not understood or catered for, and healthcare and education are absent.”

Their living conditions are intolerableEmma Dawson, Duncan Lewis SolicitorsAhmed is still struggling to cope psychologically. Remembering the days before the ambulance was called, he says: “It felt horrible, terrible, lonely. I felt very alone. I started to feel ashamed of going down and asking for help. I didn’t know the language. I felt very isolated. The staff barely noticed me, even though they knew I was in pain.“I feel very depressed and I have spoken to the staff about seeing a therapist. They either say ‘we will get back to you’ or that I can go and see one myself, or reach out to organisations – but I don’t know how to find these organisations.“I’m very traumatised from the journey. The hotels are in a really bad shape here. We’re all depressed and we have nothing to do. We don’t know what’s going to happen to us.”‘Intolerable’ conditions for a disabled childLying on a thinly carpeted hotel room floor, 13-year-old Sara groans and writhes on her back. The disabled Kuwaiti national, wearing a pink-patterned set of pyjamas, is in visible discomfort. Her mother and elder brother feel powerless to help her.“She gets suffocated in this space. It’s not appropriate for her needs,” says Ayman, her 20-year-old brother. “She needs her own space, but the room is very small. The bathroom is not adequate. We have to put her on the floor and she slides around. It’s really hard.”The family – Ayman, Sara, their mother and two younger children – arrived in the UK last August. As members of the stateless minority group known as Bidoons, in Kuwait they had for years been denied access to basic services and rights such as education and healthcare.The children’s father was imprisoned after protesting for equal rights, and they do not know where he is.“It was a journey with many difficulties,” says Ayman, describing crossing the English Channel in a small boat. “It was a good job we had other people to help with carrying Sara, putting her in a blanket.” Several hours later, they arrived on the Kent coast and were taken to the east London hotel.The family has been given a wheelchair and their room is on the ground floor, but the hotel is on a busy road and there are few places they can take her. Ayman is keen to make it clear the family is “grateful” for accommodation, but he is angry that Sara is not receiving the care she needs.“They say we need proof of her disability, but we don’t have medical documents. You can just look at her and see what needs she has, but no one from the Home Office has come to see her,” he says.To make the situation worse, the family was recently diagnosed with scabies and, despite requests from their GP that bedding and towels be boil-washed immediately, the hotel refused to change its nominated laundry day and they were left to sleep in the used bedding for a further six nights.Lawyers have been trying to get the family moved into more appropriate housing for months. Despite the Home Office confirming in legal correspondence in January that Sara required wheelchair-accessible accommodation, the family remains in the same place nearly six months on. Emma Dawson of Duncan Lewis Solicitors, who is representing the family, says legal obligations are not being met.“Their living conditions are intolerable,” she says. “The impact of the living situation and the unexplained delay in moving the family out of the hotel has reached an unacceptable level.”Nowhere for children to playWahid and Fatima sit on the edge of a single bed, with three-year-old Jahmal perched on Fatima’s lap, staring blankly out of the small window. They live and sleep within these four walls. The parents have tried to keep the space tidy, but with the clothes hanging up to dry and kitchen appliances and other items together in the single bedroom, it cannot help but feel cluttered and claustrophobic.The Syrian couple have four other children, aged between nine and 14, who are in school. They sleep in a similar room next door. It has been this way since the family arrived in the UK in June 2021 and were placed in this west London hotel.There is nowhere outside the bedrooms for the children to play – only a draughty corridor, which leads to a concrete car park. The Home Office claims security officers are on site 24 hours a day, but when The Independent visits there is no security presence; anyone could walk in.“The children can only play in the rooms. The car park isn’t safe for them. Drunks come out of the pub opposite,” says Wahid, 49. “This place is not for families. It is very dirty. There are mice everywhere. Every time our youngest kid sees a mouse he gets a panic attack.” He says: “We get £56 a week for all of us – we use this money to buy food for the kids. With £22 of this allowance going on transport for the children to get to school, the money doesn’t stretch very far.“I was a truck driver and a farmer in Syria. It would mean a lot for me to have a proper job here. I would like to be able to afford basic things for my family.”The family left Syria in 2014 and travelled to Austria, where they lived for six years – for a while they were happy there. But Wahid says they faced growing racism. He says: “Our kids used to go to school, but they couldn’t make a relationship with the other kids because they were refugees. People told us we had to go back to Syria. Sometimes, Austrians would drop whisky over Fatima’s head because of her headscarf.”Fatima, a petite woman wearing a black headscarf, says: “We didn’t feel safe. We thought about going back to Syria, but anyone who left after 2011 is seen as being against the regime and we could be subject to detention. So we took a risk.”People who have been forced to flee their homes need stability, security and to feel safe

Jon Featonby, British Red Cross

Embarking on what Fatima describes as the “death journey”, the family travelled to northern France and paid €4,000 (£3,400) to cross the Channel. Setting off at 2am, they were told by the smugglers that it would take around two hours – but, along with about 43 other people, they spent nine hours in the dinghy and a further two in a rescue boat.

On arriving in the UK, the children didn’t start school for four months, which Fatima says was a “disaster”. They are all now enjoying school, which is a relief for their parents, but the youngsters still struggle.

“We’ve been here for so long,” says the couple’s eldest daughter, Hana, aged 12, who speaks in near-perfect English. She is standing in the hotel’s car park with her younger brother. “It’s horrible because there’s no space for us here. I like school, but being in this place is not good.”

The children are lucky that they have started school – not all asylum-seeking children in hotels have. The ICIBI report, released earlier this month, found those in hotels on the outskirts of towns or residential areas were less likely to secure school places.

In one case, inspectors met a single mother with three young children, all living in one small room. The eldest child, who was around eight years old, was waiting for a school place. “He had nothing to do other than play games on a mobile phone,” inspectors said.

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The backdrop to these issues is huge amounts of taxpayers’ money being handed to the three contractors employed by the Home Office to maintain hotels – Serco, Mears and Clearsprings Ready Homes. Their deal with the Home Office, which began in 2019, is worth £4.5bn over 10 years.

The cost to the taxpayer for the hotels alone is now £3.6m a day – or £1.3bn a year – above and beyond what was agreed due to the numbers involved, for housing condemned by campaigners as unsuitable to be lived in for long periods by people who have often fled horrendous conditions. A further £1.2m a day is spent on refugees who fled Afghanistan, 12,000 of whom are in hotels, according to data released in February.

Clearsprings Ready Homes, which manages the London hotels where Wahid and Fatima, Carlos and his family and Sara and her family live, says: “Whenever issues are raised or defects are identified, Ready Homes will undertake a full investigation and ensure that those issues are addressed as soon as possible.” The company did not comment on concerns about GP access.

Meanwhile, government figures published last month reveal that the pace of Home Office processing of asylum claims has slowed considerably, with a record 109,735 people waiting for a decision, 300 per cent more than four years ago. Some 73,207 men, women and children have been waiting for decisions for more than the service standard of six months.

Shadow immigration minister Stephen Kinnock says: “The disastrous situation with asylum hotels is emblematic of the incompetence and indifference of Priti Patel’s Home Office, which is not fit for purpose. Priti Patel needs to get her house in order, and fast.”

Maddie Harris, founder and director of the Humans for Rights Network, says the organisation has helped more than 150 unaccompanied children, as well as adults who had lost limbs to conflict and families with small children who had been unable to get help from contractors in hotels.

She says: “Despite the government’s claim that accommodating people seeking safety in hotels is a temporary emergency policy, it continues to open them and has learnt no lessons regarding the harm that these settings do to people’s physical and mental health.”

When approached for comment, the Home Office says the Nationality and Borders Act will “fix the broken asylum system” and that asylum seekers are provided with “safe and secure accommodation, ensuring no one is destitute”.

But the British Red Cross has also warns that more action is needed to help asylum seekers become part of local communities. Jon Featonby, policy and advocacy manager for refugee and asylum, says: “We know from our work supporting men, women and children who have been living in hotels just how unsuitable they are for people to spend several weeks in, yet alone more than a year. People who have been forced to flee their homes need stability, security and to feel safe.”

After 11 months in their hotel, Wahid, Fatima and their five children are finally moved into more suitable accommodation. But for Carlos and Aline, Ahmed, Sara and their families, the wait goes on to see if they can make it out of a broken system before it breaks them.

Names have been changed to protect identities

Additional reporting by [*Furvah Shah*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/furvah-shah) and [*Aisha Rimi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/aisha-rimi)

**Load-Date:** June 28, 2022

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[*Families fleeing violence being warehoused in filthy rooms overrun by vermin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:65S8-KJ41-JCS0-D226-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** NEWS; Pg. 4

**Length:** 2969 words

**Byline:** MAY BULMAN SOCIAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT FURVAH SHAH AISHA RIMI

**Body**

In a small darkened room where the scent of damp lingers, two toddlers sit quietly on a double bed. The sisters, Elva and Gabriela, stare vacantly at the blotched ceiling and mould-speckled walls. Their father, Carlos, stands by despairingly. This cramped space is all his daughters know.

The El Salvadorian national arrived in the UK last September with his wife, Aline, and their two girls - aged one and two - after being "caught in the crossfire" of gang violence. They had hoped to find a place for their children to grow up in relative safety and comfort. Instead, they have been stuck in a hotel room perched on a busy A-road in west London for eight months, banned from working and with only £32 a week for the family to live on.

Two double beds pushed together take up most of the room. The small amount of space that remains is filled with household items - an ironing board, a small fridge, a high chair, toys. Wedged in a corner is a desk cluttered with baby wipes, formula and bottles, along with an electric hob and kitchen utensils.

"My babies are coughing because of the fungus," says Carlos, 35, a man of slender build with weary eyes indicating regular sleepless nights. "A month ago we got bed bugs. They got pest control in only last week. We were waiting a long time. My babies were uncomfortable. They couldn't sleep."

A tiny bathroom en suite is filled with drying clothes and a pile of items - bags, children's books, shoes - that do not fit in the main room. In the sink is a wooden spoon and a bottle of washing-up liquid beside the tap along with the family's toothbrushes.

"I can't provide for them; I feel useless," says Carlos, close to tears. "As a father, I feel useless."

While Boris Johnson and home secretary Priti Patel focus on immigration plans such as the controversial Rwanda deportation policy or finding homes for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***, the issues faced by Carlos and his family are the reality for an increasing number of asylum seekers, forced to live in government-funded hotels while they await decisions on their claims to stay in the UK. This form of housing used to be rare, but surged during the pandemic as Covid restrictions meant housing was not available. At the time, ministers described it as a "temporary measure".

By last month, despite the end of Covid rules, some 28,621 asylum seekers were living in 220 hotels across the country, up from 10,319 in February 2021 - when the Home Office pledged to "accelerate" the movement of asylum seekers out of hotels and into housing - according to figures seen by The Independent. The hotels are run by three companies: Serco, Clearsprings Ready Homes and Mears Group.

Government guidance states that asylum seekers should not be held in this "contingency accommodation" for more than 35 days, but figures obtained under the Freedom of Information Act reveal that, as of the end of September 2021, two-thirds of all asylum seekers in hotels - including 1,079 children - had passed that limit. Nearly 1,000 had spent more than six months in hotel rooms, with 356 longer than a year. The Home Office declined to provide more recent data, claiming it needed to consider whether the disclosure would "prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs".

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When Ahmed arrived in Britain last November, he was already traumatised. The Iraqi Kurdish national had fled from his home due to threats made because of his political beliefs, and made his way to France. From there, he paid smugglers to travel by small boat to the UK, arriving just hours before 27 people died attempting the dangerous crossing.

The 20-year-old has been in a hotel in a rural part of Skegness, Lincolnshire, for seven months. He says that several weeks after being placed there he began having stomach pains. He says he tried to ask for help, but to no avail.

"Every time I went down to tell the hotel staff they would tell me I could go to the GP myself, but I was in too much pain and I didn't have money for a taxi so I couldn't go," he says. "They said they would call a GP for me. I did that a couple of times, but they never came. The hotel staff didn't say why. They kept saying: 'Go up to your room; the GP will come.' I was begging them to let me see a GP for three days. I was in so much pain. It was constant."

Several days later, the pain became so excruciating during the night that Ahmed cried out for help. An ambulance was called and arrived an hour later. He was taken to hospital, where he stayed overnight. He says there was no interpreter there so his diagnosis wasn't properly communicated to him, but he was given an injection and medication.

Figures obtained by The Independent reveal that many asylum seekers such as Ahmed have needed ambulances called out to hotels. The data, disclosed through Freedom of Information requests, shows that just 27 of the 226 hotels were responsible for 1,495 callouts in the year to last October - more than one a week. Of these, more than half led to a patient being taken to hospital.

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Ahmed is still struggling to cope psychologically. Remembering the days before the ambulance was called, he says: "It felt horrible, terrible, lonely. I felt very alone. I started to feel ashamed of going down and asking for help. I didn't know the language. I felt very isolated. The staff barely noticed me, even though they knew I was in pain.

"I feel very depressed and I have spoken to the staff about seeing a therapist. They either say 'we will get back to you' or that I can go and see one myself, or reach out to organisations - but I don't know how to find these organisations.

"I'm very traumatised from the journey. The hotels are in a really bad shape here. We're all depressed and we have nothing to do. We don't know what's going to happen to us."

'Intolerable' conditions for a disabled child

Lying on a thinly carpeted hotel room floor, 13-year-old Sara groans and writhes on her back. The disabled Kuwaiti national, wearing a pink-patterned set of pyjamas, is in visible discomfort. Her mother and elder brother feel powerless to help her.

"She gets suffocated in this space. It's not appropriate for her needs," says Ayman, her 20-year-old brother. "She needs her own space, but the room is very small. The bathroom is not adequate. We have to put her on the floor and she slides around. It's really hard."

The family - Ayman, Sara, their mother and two younger children - arrived in the UK last August. As members of the stateless minority group known as Bidoons, in Kuwait they had for years been denied access to basic services and rights such as education and healthcare. The children's father was imprisoned after protesting for equal rights, and they do not know where he is.

"It was a journey with many difficulties," says Ayman, describing crossing the English Channel in a small boat. "It was a good job we had other people to help with carrying Sara, putting her in a blanket." Several hours later, they arrived on the Kent coast and were taken to the east London hotel.

The family has been given a wheelchair and their room is on the ground floor, but the hotel is on a busy road and there are few places they can take her. Ayman is keen to make it clear the family is "grateful" for accommodation, but he is angry that Sara is not receiving the care she needs.

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To make the situation worse, the family was recently diagnosed with scabies and, despite requests from their GP that bedding and towels be boil-washed immediately, the hotel refused to change its nominated laundry day and they were left to sleep in the used bedding for a further six nights.

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Nowhere for children to play

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The Syrian couple have four other children, aged between nine and 14, who are in school. They sleep in a similar room next door. It has been this way since the family arrived in the UK in June 2021 and were placed in this west London hotel.

There is nowhere outside the bedrooms for the children to play - only a draughty corridor, which leads to a concrete car park. The Home Office claims security officers are on site 24 hours a day, but when The Independent visits there is no security presence; anyone could walk in.

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The family left Syria in 2014 and travelled to Austria, where they lived for six years - for a while they were happy there. But Wahid says they faced growing racism. He says: "Our kids used to go to school, but they couldn't make a relationship with the other kids because they were refugees. People told us we had to go back to Syria. Sometimes, Austrians would drop whisky over Fatima's head because of her headscarf."

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Additional reporting by Furvah Shah and Aisha Rimi

**Load-Date:** June 24, 2022

**End of Document**



[*Coronation – live: Street parties and concert after King Charles III crowned in historic event*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-MCP1-DY4H-K382-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:12

**Length:** 7657 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Jane Dalton,Shweta Sharma and Tara Cobham

**Highlight:** King and Queen join 20,000 members of public at coronation concert in Windsor on Sunday evening

**Body**

Britons are gearing up for big lunches attended by [*royals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royals) and a star-studded concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday, after [*Britain crowned its first new monarch of the 21st century*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-day-ceremony-b2334160.html).

As the [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) celebrations continue, [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) will be joining around 20,000 members of the public at the concert where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

The show in Windsor, hosted by Paddington and Downton Abbey actor Hugh Bonneville, will see Hollywood star Tom Cruise, Dynasty actress Dame Joan Collins, adventurer Bear Grylls and singer Sir Tom Jones appear via video message.

Ahead of the show on Sunday evening, thousands of street parties are expected to be held with people encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

[*The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-day-ceremony-b2334160.html) will attend a big lunch in Cranleigh, [*the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-princess-anne-coronation-hat-b2334121.html) will attend a community street party in Swindon, and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie will attend a big lunch in Windsor.

[*Prince Harry though*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-return-coronation-balcony-meghan-b2334253.html) began making his way back to the US just minutes after the ceremony on Saturday and did not join his family at the palace, it was reported.

This comes as chief executive Graham Smith of an anti-monarchy group, who was [*among 52 people arrested on the day of the King’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronation-protest-arrests-prince-andrew-b2333842.html) , has been released after nearly 16 hours in police custody -but the majority of his Republic colleagues continued to be held, amid heavy criticism of the Metropolitan Police.

Coronation news – latest updates

Coronation celebrations continue with royals at lunches and glittering concert Britain enters new era Charles is crowned Dozens of arrests ‘set dangerous precedent' King and Queen appear on balcony during flypast Prince Harry arrives alone at Westminster Abbey Prince Andrew booed as he arrives at The Mall

Peak TV audience of over 20 million watched coronation

The King’s coronation service at Westminster Abbey was watched by more than 18 million viewers in the UK, provisional figures have shown.

The lavish ceremony on Saturday which saw Charles and Camilla crowned was broadcast simultaneously on a range of channels between about 11am and 1pm, including BBC One and Two, ITV and Sky News.

An average of 18.8 million people watched across 11 channels and services, with audience figures peaking at 20.4 million when the King was crowned just after midday, according to overnight ratings released by the research organisation Barb.

The bad weather in much of the UK could have boosted the viewing figures for the coronation by forcing people to stay indoors.

Although the figure is not quite as high as the ratings for the funeral service of the late Queen last September which was seen by 26.5 million people across more than 50 TV channels.

Coronation celebrations continue with royals at lunches and glittering concert

The coronation celebrations will continue on Sunday with big lunches attended by royals and a star-studded concert at Windsor Castle.

The King and Queen will join around 20,000 members of the public at the coronation concert where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Singers Perry and Richie were among the stars at Saturday’s coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey.

The show in Windsor, hosted by Paddington and Downton Abbey actor Hugh Bonneville, will see Hollywood star Tom Cruise, Dynasty actress Dame 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 figure 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 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.

Ahead of the show on Sunday evening, thousands of street parties are expected to be held with people encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh will attend a big lunch in Cranleigh, the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence will attend a community street party in Swindon, and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie will attend a big lunch in Windsor.

Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath

Buckingham Palace Mall could be seen littered with rubbish including tents and flags in the aftermath of King Charles III’s coronation.

Some royalists had been out there for as long as a week, and had left their soggy belongings behind after a day of bad weather.

ITV’s Chris Ship, who filmed the clip, described the scene as ‘an abandoned campsite after a wet weekend at Glastonbury’.

Today’s coronation celebrations (7 May), will take place at Windsor Castle, with the coronation concert happening this evening.

Watch here:

[*Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/coronation-mall-aftermath-litter-tents-b2334318.html)

Royal fans spot Queen Camilla had names discreetly embroidered on coronation dress

Queen Camilla had the names of her children and grandchildren discreetly embroidered onto the bottom of her coronation dress, alongside a tribute to her rescue dogs.

The 75-year-old wore an elegant Bruce Oldfield couture gown to the coronation ceremony on Saturday.

Eagle-eyed royal fans spotted the dress appeared to feature the names of her two children, Tom and Laura, along with those of her grandchildren, Gus, Freddy, Louis, Eliza and Lola. They also noticed two puppies embroidered onto the grown, thought to represent Charles and Camilla's Jack Russell Terrier rescue dogs, Beth and Bluebell.

Follow The Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here

A day after King Charles III’s coronation, much of the UK is turning its attention to Windsor Castle, where an extravagent concert is being held in the new monarch’s honour.

The line-up of performers for the event includes Take That, Lionel Richie, and Katy Perry.

Festivities begin at 8pm. Those not in attendance who wish to do so will be able to watch the concert live on the BBC.

The concert will be staged on the East Lawn of the castle’s grounds, marking the first time an event like this has taken place on the property.

As well as the acts mentioned above, the night also sees acts such as Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli, Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel, and classical-soul composer Alexis Ffrench perform.

Follow The Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here.

[*Coronation concert – live: Katy Perry and Take That prepare to perform as Zoe Ball drops out at last minute*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-latest-live-katy-perry-b2334290.html)

Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery

Lionel Richie has revealed he has a joke with King Charles III about getting a ‘Hollywood’-style makeover to remain youthful.

The pair are 73 and 74-years-old respectively, and became friends after Richie did some work with the Prince’s Trust.

“We have a little joke between us”, the singer began.

“He says, ‘How do you look the way I look and I look the way I look?’, I said, ‘You come to Hollywood and I can help you’.”

Richie is performing at tonight’s coronation concert (7 May).

Watch here:

[*Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-botox-lionel-richie-b2334296.html)

How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of the coronation

Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce outfit and stoney-faced sword-bearing.

Mordaunt on Saturday 6 May became the first woman to carry the sword of state – a symbol of the new king’s authority – during the procession at Westminster Abbey.

Her part in the ceremony included carrying the heavy sword for a full 51 minutes, which weighs eight pounds (3.6kg), before exchanging it for the jewelled sword of offering and presenting that to Charles. Mordaunt kept a serious face and did not break a sweat while she was watched by thousands of people.

As part of an ancient custom, Mordaunt then “bought back” the glittering sword – part of the new King’s regalia or collection of objects which symbolise his responsibilities as monarch – from the Archbishop of Canterbury in exchange for 100 newly-minted 50p pieces bearing an effigy of Charles.

[*Her appearance at the crowning ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/best-dressed-coronation-king-charles-b2333740.html) impressed royal fans on Twitter, with one person wondering: “Who had ‘Penny Mordaunt overshadowing everything’ on their bingo card?”

Read more here:

[*How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/penny-mordaunt-conservative-mp-outfit-designer-b2334257.html)

Everything you need to know about coronation concert

King Charles III’s coronation is well and truly upon us, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations in full swing.

The official coronation took place yesterday, on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place this evening (Sunday 7 May).

Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Last summer, a royal concert was staged at Buckingham Palace for the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, titled the Party at the Palace concert. Rod Stewart, Diana Ross and Queen were among those to perform.

Here’s everything you need to know:

[*Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-line-up-what-time-performers-b2334286.html)

Zoe Ball ‘absolutely gutted’ as sickness forces her to pull out of coronation concert

Zoe Ball has said she is “absolutely gutted” as she has been forced to pull out of King Charles III's coronation concert due to sickness.

The BBC Radio 2 presenter announced on social media on Sunday morning that she is “heading back to bed” instead of covering the concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday evening.

The 52-year-old tweeted: “Absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me. Was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the coronation concert on BBC Radio 2 later.”

She added Dermot O'Leary and Scott Mills would be covering for her as she recovers from her illness.

absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the [*#coronationconcert*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/coronationconcert?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on [*@BBCRadio2*](https://twitter.com/BBCRadio2?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) later [*@radioleary*](https://twitter.com/radioleary?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@scott\_mills*](https://twitter.com/scott_mills?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) have got you covered i’m heading back to bed ️— Zoe Ball (@ZoeTheBall) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall/status/1655106691157876741?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Culture Secretary denies police went too far in policing the coronation

The Culture Secretary has denied that police went too far in policing the coronation, saying they got the “balance right” and she has “huge confidence” in them.

Lucy Frazer also said police should take into account the context of events in determining their response.

She told Sky News: “What they have to do is balance the right to protest, which is important in a democracy. At the same time there’s the right of all those other people to enjoy what was a fabulous day. I think, overall, they managed to get that balance right.”

Asked whether she trusted the police to use new laws to prevent disruptive protests, she said: “Yes, I do trust them to use those new powers. I have huge confidence in the police.

“I think it’s absolutely right that they have the powers that they need in order to ensure that people can go to go on their day-to-day lives at the same time as respecting people’s rights to protest.”

She added: “I think it is really important that they take into account the context of the event because this was an event that would have raised questions about national security. This was an event on the world stage.”

Prince Harry shuns British brands to wear Dior to coronation

The Duke of Sussex eschewed British fashion brands to wear a suit by French label Dior to his father’s coronation, fuelling speculation he may be about to sign an endorsement deal with the company.

Prince Harry was photographed in a suit with a waistcoat for the ceremony, at which he sat in the third row.

Harry, who left swiftly after the coronation to catch a flight from Heathrow, wore his dark morning suit and tie with his Afghanistan and Jubilee medals pinned to his suit jacket.

He also wore a Royal Victorian Order star and neck decoration.

Luxury fashion house Dior tweeted that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born Kim Jones, saying to do so was an “honour”.

The brand has often been a go-to choice for Harry’s wife, Meghan, who wore a Dior outfit to the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations last summer.

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports women’s safety volunteers arrested at coronation

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The Metropolitan Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the Soho area of central London on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s nightlife safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

The three people – a 37-year-old woman, a 59-year-old woman and a 47-year-old man – were taken to a south London police station, where they were questioned.

The 47-year-old man was also further arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods, police said.

All three have since been released on bail pending further inquiries.

Avid bakers across the country create bespoke cakes for coronation

Avid bakers and cake business owners across the country have put their skills to the test creating bespoke cakes to celebrate the King’s coronation.

On Saturday, Charles was crowned King and while the UK witnessed its first coronation in more than 70 years, skilled bakers were hard at work to create intricately designed bakes.

From crown-shaped cakes to bakes imprinted with the King’s insignia, the sweet treats have garnered interest on social media for their complex designs.

Lee McAuliffe, from Shave in Blackburn – who has been baking for 10 years, said his coronation cake took 15 hours to make.

The two-tiered cake is compromised of a chocolate fudge crown with chocolate fudge buttercream and a gluten-free lemon sponge with lemon curd buttercream for the lower tier.

The 46-year-old used his “trademark” look whilst incorporating Union flag bunting to accompany the crown-shaped cake.

“I knew I wanted a crown to be the main part of the design and obviously, Union flag bunting had to make an appearance,” he said.

Catherine Davies, who turns 52 on Sunday, owns her own cake business but is also a teaching assistant in Tunbridge Wells, and created a triple-layered vanilla cake with lemon and elderflower buttercream ahead of the coronation.

The cake, which took around two hours to make, was part of a raffle with the winner feeling “delighted” after receiving the “beautiful” sweet treat.

“The drip cake is one of my most popular cakes. The lady who won it wanted a nod to the coronation on it,” said Ms Davies, from Crowborough in East Sussex. “I thought the insignia on the top was elegant and looked good in gold, matching the drip down the sides.”

The business owner, who has been baking professionally for five years, celebrated the coronation with her son, who is home from university dining on scones with cream and jam.

King Charles to attend a music concert as celebrations continue

King Charles will attend a music concert featuring the likes of singers Lionel Richie, Katy Perry and Andrea Bocelli at Windsor Castle on Sunday after street parties are held across Britain as part of celebrations to mark his coronation.

Amid scenes of pomp and pageantry, King Charles and his wife Queen Camilla were crowned at London’s Westminster Abbey on Saturday in Britain’s biggest ceremonial event for 70 years, embracing ancient tradition and elements of modernity.

The royals have not been seen since an appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace following the coronation, but senior members will be out in force on Sunday.

The king’s younger brother Prince Edward, his sister Princess Anne and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, the daughter of Charles’ other brother Prince Andrew, will attend ‘Big Lunch’ events, joining some of the estimated 50,000 thousand street parties being held around the country.

Prime minister Rishi Sunak will also be among those hosting a coronation lunch with the guests including Ukrainian families and youth groups.

Duke of Sussex returns to California on British Airways flight

The Duke of Sussex has returned to California after catching a British Airways flight within hours of his father’s coronation.

Harry arrived at Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) at around 7.30pm local time (3.30am UK) to reunite with his son on his birthday.

Prince Archie turned four on Saturday and spent the day with his mother, the Duchess of Sussex, at their US home.

British Airways flight attendants confirmed Harry had been on the flight but said they were not permitted to discuss the details of his trip.

The duke’s appearance at the coronation marked his first public appearance alongside the royals since he lambasted his family in his controversial memoir Spare.

He was seated in the third row for the crowning of Charles and the duke’s stepmother the Queen in Westminster Abbey, and was placed two rows behind his brother the Prince of Wales.

His abrupt return to the US meant he did not appear on the Buckingham Palace balcony for the finale of the day, with the Palace confirming earlier that he had no formal role at the event.

Princess Anne obstructs Prince Harry’s view of coronation with feather-adorned military uniform

Prince Harry’s view of the historic coronation ceremony for his father King Charles III was blocked by his aunt Princess Anne’s red-feathered hat.

On Saturday 6 May, the [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) [*arrived at Westminster Abbey solo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/where-prince-harry-today-coronation-b2334006.html) for the coronation of King Charles and Queen Camilla. Once inside the abbey, Harry, who wore a morning suit for the occasion, sat in the third row alongside members of his family, including cousins Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie and their husbands.

The Princess Royal, 72, meanwhile, played a special role in the coronation procession following the ceremony, which meant that she wore her military uniform to the historic ceremony, during which she was seated in the second row, directly in front of her nephew Harry.

[*Princess Anne obstructs Prince Harry’s view of coronation with feather-adorned hat*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-princess-anne-coronation-hat-b2334121.html)

Rishi Sunak to host coronation lunch for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and volunteers

The British prime minister and his wife will welcome volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in the UK, and youth groups to Downing Street for a lunch to mark the coronation.

Rishi Sunak and Akshata Murty will host the event on Sunday as part of the Big Lunch celebrations taking place across the country over the coronation weekend.

They will dine on food sourced from across the UK, including beef from Gloucestershire, Scottish Loch Duart salmon, Northern Irish soda bread, and ice cream from Wales, according to No 10.

Crockery will be donated by Emma Bridgewater, a pottery with strong royal connections, including a limited edition King Charles III teapot.

Recipients of the Points of Light Award, given to ordinary people doing extraordinary things for their community, have been invited.

They include a couple who founded a charity supporting people who have gone through baby loss, Zoe and Andy Clark-Coates, breast cancer campaigner Laura Ashurst, and Navjot Sawhney, who designed a hand-cranked washing machine used by thousands of people with no access to electric ones.

Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme after Russia invaded their country, as well as their UK sponsors, will also attend.

Mr Sunak said: “Come rain or shine, thousands of friends and neighbours are coming together this weekend to put up the bunting, pour the tea and cut the cake at street parties and community events across the UK.

“I am proud to welcome Ukrainians forced to flee their homes and some incredible community heroes to Downing Street for our very own coronation lunch to celebrate this historic moment.

“In England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland -and across our Overseas Territories and the wider Commonwealth -people are marking this momentous occasion in the spirit of unity and hope for the future”.

Leader of anti-monarchy protest released

The chief executive of an anti-monarchy group who was among 52 people arrested on the day of the King’s coronation has been released after nearly 16 hours in police custody.

Graham Smith was released by the Met Police around 11pm on Saturday, while the majority of his Republic colleagues continued to be held.

Posting to Twitter, Mr Smith said there was “no longer a right to peaceful protest in the UK”.

“I have been told many times the monarch is there to defend our freedoms. Now our freedoms are under attack in his name.”

The Metropolitan Police has been heavily criticised over the detentions, with some campaign groups likening the “incredibly alarming” arrests to “something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London”.

Celebrations continue in Scotland with parade to Glasgow Cathedral

Following the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, one of the main events north of the border on Sunday is a ceremony and parade in Glasgow.

Scores of community celebrations are also being held across the country.

In Glasgow, the city’s Lord Lieutenant Jacqueline McLaren will officially mark the coronation with a ceremony in George Square followed by a parade to Glasgow Cathedral.

The ceremony includes inspection of a guard of honour, speeches and three cheers for the King and Queen, followed by the national anthem.

The Lord Lieutenant will then take the salute as a parade of military servicemen and women, cadets and veterans marches past the City Chambers.

The parade will then head through the city to the cathedral for a thanksgiving service at 11am.

The cathedral was one of the locations in Scotland where the coronation was broadcast to the public.

Scores of people attended the historic building to witness the event, while in Edinburgh the public watched on a big screen in West Princes Street Gardens.

Across Scotland, more than 200 Coronation Big Lunch celebrations have been registered across the weekend of the coronation.

People across the UK ‘excited’ for the coronation Big Lunch

Thousands of people across the country will celebrate the Coronation Big Lunch on Sunday to celebrate the crowning of the King, causing a buzz of excitement for organisers.

A palace spokeswoman said big lunches will take place from Saturday to Monday “in a nationwide act of celebration and friendship”.

Alongside the thousands of street parties expected to be held at the weekend, people are encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

Members of the public and organisers from a number of charities have expressed their enthusiasm ahead of the event.

Lucinda Spelman-Ives, from Wilstock, who raised over £1m to fund a community hub, hopes the Big Lunch will “unify and bring everyone together being part of history, making amazing memories, laughing and meeting lots of people who have never met before”.

Royal fans praise Pippa Middleton’s ‘stunning’ coronation look: ‘Stealing the show again’

The [*Princess of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princess-of-wales) wasn’t the only member of her family to [*earn praise*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/kate-middleton-tiara-headpiece-diamonds-coronation-b2333802.html) during the King and Queen’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) , as royal fans were also excited to see Kate’s siblings and parents in attendance.

On Saturday 6 May, [*Kate Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kate-middleton) ’s sister [*Pippa Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pippa-middleton) , 39, arrived at Westminster Abbey[*ahead of the crowning of King Charles III and Queen Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html) alongside their brother [*James Middleton*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/james-middleton) , 36, and their parents Michael and Carole Middleton.

For the occasion, Pippa, the younger sister of the Princess of Wales, wore a pale yellow suit dress with a matching fascinator, while her brother James wore a morning suit consisting of a black blazer, grey trousers, and a yellow waistcoat in the same shade as his sister’s dress.

Read more here:

[*Royal fans praise Pippa Middleton’s ‘stunning’ coronation look*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/pippa-middleton-coronation-james-kate-b2334172.html)

US First Lady Jill Biden says coronation ‘amazing'

First Lady Jill Biden, who attended the lavish ceremony along with granddaughter Finnegan Biden, spoke of her delight:

[*US First Lady Jill Biden says King Charles’ coronation ‘was just amazing’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jill-biden-king-charles-coronation-b2334142.html)

Behind the scenes of the coronation with William and Kate

[*William and Kate share behind the scenes video of King Charles coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-william-kate-children-b2334158.html)

Feeling is believing: Inside the abbey

Reporter Danica Kirka was at the actual ceremony:

[*Feeling is believing: Inside the abbey for king's coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-elizabeth-ii-london-westminster-abbey-b2334137.html)

Stella McCartney to appear at coronation concert

Stella McCartney will deliver a spoken word performance with a conservation theme at the Coronation Concert to celebrate the crowning of the King and Queen.

The speech by the fashion designer, who has championed a vegan lifestyle and sustainable design throughout her career, will reflect her and the King’s “shared passion for environmental sustainability”, the BBC has said.

McCartney, who is the daughter of former Beatle Sir Paul McCartney and his late wife photographer Linda, was made a CBE earlier this year for her services to fashion and sustainability.

Her performance will be part of a broader nature-themed section of the concert, which is being held in the grounds of Windsor Castle on Sunday.

Classical-soul composer Alexis Ffrench and London-based singer-songwriter Zak Abel will also be part of the segment as they perform a rendition of a 1980s hit alongside a house orchestra, band and choir.

A visual display will accompany the performance, with images spanning across the large screen at the top of the stage as well as being projected onto the facade of the castle.

The performance will also be interspersed with footage of drone displays taking place above the Eden Project in Cornwall, an eco visitor attraction, and the Wales Millennium Centre in Cardiff.

The section is due to end with a ‘Did You Know?’ video, which will reveal “little-known information” about Charles’ relationship with the natural world, the BBC has said.

The broadcaster added that the stage has also been designed and built almost entirely of rental stock to make it as sustainable as possible, with the majority of the lighting being LED to improve energy saving.

Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie are also among the star-studded line-up as well as Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli and Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel.

The concert, produced by BBC Studios Productions, will be broadcast live on BBC One, BBC iPlayer, BBC Radio 2 and BBC Sounds from 8pm on Sunday.

Liverpool fans boo national anthem

Liverpool fans have booed the national anthem on the day of the coronation:

[*Why do Liverpool fans boo the national anthem?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/liverpool-fans-boo-national-anthem-why-b2333876.html)

Nothing is weirder than the Coronation Concert line up – Brian May, Kermit the Frog and Atomic Kitten…

As Katy Perry and Take That prepare to perform during Charles’s coronation weekend, [*Katie Rosseinsky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/katie-rosseinsky) salutes the chaotic and confusing tradition of incredibly divergent celebrities coming together to sing for royalty.

Brian May on the roof of [*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) , guitar aloft. Tom Jones and Blue duetting to “You Can Leave Your Hat On”. A guest appearance from Kermit the Frog. A finale that saw Paul McCartney, Ozzy Osbourne and… Atomic Kitten, all together on stage. This was the miscellany of acts that, on 3 June, 2002, were gathered at Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) ’s official London residence for Party at the Palace. The televised extravaganza marked 50 years since her accession to the throne – and provided the blueprint for royal pop concerts going forward.

The formula? Throw in some golden oldies (McCartney doing a Beatles medley and Shirley Bassey blasting out a Bond theme) alongside some solid, family-friendly pop fixtures and the odd wildcard. Since then, these showcases have only become more head-spinningly eclectic. In The Independent’s four-star review of 2022’s Platinum Party at the Palace (where Rod Stewart covered “Sweet Caroline” and Diversity danced their way through the history of British music), Mark Beaumont hailed the event as “one of the most bizarre and unrelenting barrages of random entertainment ever staged”. During King Charles’ [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) weekend, [*one of the biggest events will be a concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/who-is-playing-at-the-coronation-concert-b2323293.html) featuring the likes of Katy Perry, Lionel Richie and Take That, plus the Royal Shakespeare Company and incoming Doctor Who, Ncuti Gatwa, performing excerpts from the Bard.

Read the full story here:

[*‘The Queen wore earplugs’: Royal pop concerts have always been weird*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/features/coronation-concert-performers-lineup-history-b2334081.html)

How the world celebrated King Charles’s coronation

The world tuned in to watch the crowning of His Majesty [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/coronation-king-charles-camilla-queen-b2334107.html) during his coronation on 6 May 2023. But how has each nation and culture celebrated the occasion in their own way?

As part of the global celebrations, countries and world leaders from across the Commonwealth and beyond have given their support in shows of symbolism and pageantry. As thousands line the streets of London and across the United Kingdom, we explore from North America to Gibraltar just how the world has greeted the new king.

Watch here:

[*How the world celebrated King Charles’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-celebrations-international-b2334108.html)

Anti monarchy protesters start to be released from police custody

Members of the anti-monarchy group who were arrested on Saturday have started to be released from police custody.

Shortly before 11pm on Saturday, Republic released a short statement that the first of its members who were arrested just before the coronation had been released.

The group posted to Twitter: “Update: first member of the team out (nearly 16 hours in). Phone confiscated.”

In a follow-up post, Republic said its chief executive Graham Smith had also just been released, adding that his phone had also been confiscated.

The Met Police have been heavily criticised over the arrests, with some campaign groups likening them to “something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London”.

Mr Smith confirmed his release from police custody, adding that Republic’s other members were still being held.

He posted to Twitter: “I’m now out of the police station. Still waiting for my colleagues.

“Make no mistake. There is no longer a right to peaceful protest in the UK.

“I have been told many times the monarch is there to defend our freedoms. Now our freedoms are under attack in his name.”

Diverse coronation reflected King’s bid to modernise monarchy

The coronation was the most diverse in the 1,000-year history of the ceremony, with a guest list that embodied the King’s determination to modernise the monarchy and reflect a multi-cultural Britain:

[*How diverse coronation reflected King’s bid to modernise monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-king-diversity-black-monarchy-b2334053.html)

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports of volunteers arrested on coronation day

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The [*Metropolitan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/met) Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the [*Soho*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soho) area of central [*London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/london) on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s night life safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

Read the full story here:

[*Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports of volunteers arrested on coronation day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/metropolitan-police-westminster-city-council-arrest-coronation-b2334184.html)

Princess Anne receives praise as King Charles’ personal bodyguard at coronation: ‘Totally boss’

[*Princess Anne*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/princess-anne) has been praised for the special role she played at her brother’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation).

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Camilla were [*crowned during a coronation service at Westminster Abbey in London on Saturday 6 May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html). As part of the ceremony, the King gave his younger sister an important role during the historic day in recognition of her service.

The Princess Royal, 72, served as the Gold Stick during the Coronation Procession from Westminster Abbey to Buckingham Palace. As King Charles and Queen Camilla made their way to the Palace in the Gold State Coach after the ceremony, Princess Anne led 6,000 armed services personnel through the streets of London.

Read more here:

[*Princess Anne receives praise as King Charles’ personal bodyguard at coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-princess-anne-horse-b2334132.html)

From the Grim Reaper to Prince Louis: The breakout stars

Some unexpected stars at the coronation stole the limelight:

[*From the Grim Reaper to Prince Louis: The breakout stars of the coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/stars-coronation-king-charles-b2333981.html)

Expat remembers 1953 coronation

A British expat who participated in preparations for the late Queen’s coronation in 1953 says worldwide interest in royal events shows that “human beings love ceremony”.

Michael Vincent had been one of the “test groups” and had marched in a practice procession almost exactly 70 years ago -when he was 18 years old.

Mr Vincent, now 88, watched replays of the King’s coronation on Saturday morning from Ye Olde King’s Head pub in Santa Monica, California, alongside fellow expats and US anglophiles.

Recalling the build-up to the previous coronation, he said: “My aunt came down to see me march past.

“I was playing the tenor drum because I couldn’t carry a tune so I had the easy job, just twirling the sticks.

“You just did what you were told in those days. It was historic but we didn’t really think of it that way.”

Asked his opinions on the coronation events going on back in the UK, he added: “Human beings love ceremony”.

“Everywhere you go, whether you go to Cairo and look at the Pyramids, there is always ceremonies,” he said.

“The weakness of human beings is that they’re always showing off, that’s why they go dancing on Saturday night.”

Prince and Princess's ‘precious’ sibling moment

Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis stole the show, writes Meredith Clark:

[*Prince Louis and Princess Charlotte’s ‘precious’ sibling moment praised by fans*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-charlotte-louis-holding-hands-b2334029.html)

Police say they ‘understand public concern’ around arrests

Police have said they “understand public concern” after officers made 52 arrests throughout the King’s coronation day -including alleged affray, public nuisance and breach-of-the-peace offences.

The Metropolitan Police came under heavy criticism on Saturday after what campaign groups described as “incredibly alarming” detentions during republican protests.

Protesters from the anti-monarchy group, including its chief executive Graham Smith, were apprehended during the day -as well as demonstrators from Just Stop Oil and Animal Rising.

The Met said it received information that protesters were “determined to disrupt” the coronation -including defacing public monuments with paint, breaching barriers and disrupting official movements.

But campaigners said the protests were “peaceful”, describing the arrests as “a dangerous precedent for us as a democratic nation”.

The force confirmed reports from Just Stop Oil that 13 demonstrators were detained on the Mall and six public nuisance arrests on St Martin’s Lane following protests from Republic.

Three people were also apprehended in Soho, three at Wellington Arch and five on Whitehall on conspiracy to cause public nuisance, with another in Whitehall arrested for religiously aggravated behaviour likely to cause harassment.

The Met said a further 14 people were detained in east London on suspicion of conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

All suspects remain in custody, the force said.

Over 100 King Charles Spaniels join dog parade

Over 100 dogs that share the King’s name participated in a pup parade after the coronation:

[*Over 100 King Charles Spaniels join dog parade on Coronation Day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/king-charles-spaniels-dog-parade-b2334011.html)

King Charles to attend a music concert as celebrations continue

King Charles will attend a music concert featuring the likes of singers Lionel Richie, Katy Perry and Andrea Bocelli at Windsor Castle on Sunday after street parties are held across Britain as part of celebrations to mark his coronation.

Amid scenes of pomp and pageantry, King Charles and his wife Queen Camilla were crowned at London’s Westminster Abbey on Saturday in Britain’s biggest ceremonial event for 70 years, embracing ancient tradition and elements of modernity.

The royals have not been seen since an appearance on the balcony of Buckingham Palace following the coronation, but senior members will be out in force on Sunday.

The king’s younger brother Prince Edward, his sister Princess Anne and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie, the daughter of Charles’ other brother Prince Andrew, will attend ‘Big Lunch’ events, joining some of the estimated 50,000 thousand street parties being held around the country.

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will also be among those hosting a coronation lunch with the guests including Ukrainian families and youth groups.

Watch: Royal fans sing Katy Perry songs on packed Tube

Commentary battle for BBC, ITV and Sky

Television critic Nick Hilton compares how the broadcasters did:

[*How the battle of coronation commentary played out for BBC, ITV and Sky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/tv/features/coronation-tv-coverage-bbc-itv-sky-b2334009.html)

The day that belonged to Charles and Camilla

Britain crowned its first new monarch of the 21st century on Saturday as King Charles III swore an oath of duty – “not to be served, but to serve” – seven months after the death of his mother. Report by Alastair Jamieson:

[*Britain enters new era as King Charles and Queen Camilla are crowned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-queen-camilla-coronation-new-monarch-b2334013.html)

New King and Queen: official photos

Images released by Buckingham Palace show the King and Queen watch the flypast from the balcony of Buckingham Palace:

Braverman thanks police

Home Secretary Suella Braverman thanked the police for their “hard work” amid criticism of the arrest of protesters.

She said: “I’d like to thank the police for all their hard work at today’s celebration to ensure it was safe and passed without incident.

“It was a magnificent procession and ceremony enjoyed by tens of thousands of people in London. It was a great tribute to our country and monarchy.”

Watch: Six blink-and-you’ll-miss-it moments

Police ‘understand concern’ over arrests

Police have said they “understand public concern” after officers made 52 arrests.

Commander Karen Findlay, who led the policing operation, said: “Protest is lawful and it can be disruptive.

“We have a duty to intervene when protest becomes criminal and may cause serious disruption.”

Commander Findlay added: “This depends on the context.

“The coronation is a once-in-a-generation event and that is a key consideration in our assessment.

“A protest involving large numbers has gone ahead today with police knowledge and no intervention.”

Human Rights Watch labelled the arrests “incredibly alarming”, adding: “This is something you would expect to see in Moscow, not London.”

Outside London, hundreds of people joined a march through Cardiff city centre in protest against the monarchy as the King was crowned.

Demonstrators shouted “Down with the Crown, not my King” and “God save the poor”.

Nick Wall, member of campaign group Republic and chairman of the Labour For Republic organisation, addressed crowds at a Not My King rally in Cardiff, where he called the arrests of protesters in London “disgraceful”.

On Wednesday, the Met said it would have an “extremely low threshold” for protests during the celebrations, and that demonstrators could expect “swift action”.

Dozens of arrests ‘alarming'

The Metropolitan Police came in for heavy criticism after officers made 52 arrests on coronation day, including for alleged affray, public nuisance and breach-of-the-peace offences.

Campaign groups described detentions during republican protests as “incredibly alarming”.

Protesters from the anti-monarchy group, including its chief executive Graham Smith, were apprehended during the day -as well as demonstrators from Just Stop Oil and Animal Rising.

The Met said it received information that protesters were “determined to disrupt” the coronation, including defacing public monuments with paint, breaching barriers and disrupting official movements.

But campaigners said the protests were peaceful, describing the arrests as “a dangerous precedent for us as a democratic nation”.

The force confirmed reports from Just Stop Oil that 13 demonstrators were detained on the Mall and six public nuisance arrests on St Martin’s Lane following protests from Republic.

Footage from the Mall showed the Just Stop Oil protesters being handcuffed and taken away by a heavy police presence.

Animal Rising said a number of supporters were apprehended while at a training session “miles away from the coronation“.

Spokesman Nathan McGovern described the arrests as “nothing short of a totalitarian crackdown on free speech and all forms of dissent”.

Spooked horse crashes into barrier behind King's carriage

Sand patches mystery solved

Westminster Council cleared up the mystery surrounding patches of sand that lined the procession route.

A spokesman said they were covering drain and inspection covers to help the horses.

The council said it does this for other road surfaces too, such as inclines or sharp turns.

Theories abounded about the mysterious yellow sand patches -including that it could have been an effort to smooth out potholes for the King’s carriage.

Anti-monarchists protest in Scotland

Hundreds of people gathered on Calton Hill in Edinburgh for an anti-monarchy rally organised by Our Republic.

Some waved Saltire flags, while others wore them as cloaks, and held signs with slogans such as “Not our King” and “down with the crown”.

Speakers included Scottish Greens co-leader Lorna Slater, who is a Scottish Government minister.

She said: “When it comes to the monarchy, Scotland says no.

“Let’s do better, let’s build a better, brighter democratic future in an independent Scottish republic.”

Onlooker recalls Queen’s funeral

Linda Old went to see Buckingham Palace after watching the coronation in Hyde Park.

She told the PA news agency that the ceremony brought back memories of other royal events, most recently the Queen’s funeral when she camped overnight to see the late Queen lying in state.

Ms Old, from Islington, north London, said: “It has been very well organised. I was emotional watching it.

“I’ve come with my family. Just being here with everybody is special. We all stood up for ‘God Save the King’. It’s special, there’s a lot of memories.”

Royal fans from as far as Australia among crowds

Huge crowds flocked to London and braved the rain to celebrate the coronation -with some royal fans travelling from as far as [*Australia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/australia) :

[*Royal fans from as far as Australia among huge crowds to celebrate King’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-charles-camilla-crowds-travel-b2333885.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war live: Press Putin to end war, Germany urges China’s Xi Jinping*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BMB-6NM1-DY4H-K00R-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Arpan Rai and Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** German chancellor says he told president Xi that China’s word carries ‘weight’ in Russia

**Body**

German chancellor Olaf Scholz said he urged Chinese president Xi Jinping to [*press Russia to end its war in Ukraine.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-ukraine-xi-jinping-b2529411.html%22%20title=%22https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-ukraine-xi-jinping-b2529411.html)

Mr Scholz told Mr Xi [*in a meeting in Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-germany-beijing-b2528443.html%22%20title=%22https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-germany-beijing-b2528443.html) on Tuesday that China’s word carries “weight in Russia.”

“I have therefore asked president Xi to influence Russia so that Putin finally calls off his senseless campaign, withdraw his troops and ends this terrible war,” he wrote on social media platform X.

Earlier, a Russian source said Moscow was ready to redeploy [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) troops [*working in Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-weapons-us-putin-b2529629.html) to bolster its offensive in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The source claimed Russian authorities are preparing to redeploy unspecified detachments of the Africa Corps [*from Africa to Belgorod, Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/homes-ukraine-scheme-organised-crime-gove-b2528263.html) , according to US think tank Institute for the Study of War.

Key Points

Scholz urges China to help end war in Ukraine Zelensky: Major power plant destroyed as Kyiv had zero missiles to protect it Attacks on Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant put the world at risk, says IAEA Vital US aid impacting Ukraine’s defence against Putin’s troops, think tank warns Zelensky and his Ukrainian commanders discuss war strategy Ukraine uses UK-made Strom Shadow missiles to strike target deep in occupied territory

09:38 , Matt Mathers We’re pausing our live coverage of Russia’s war in Ukraine for today.

Join us again soon for all the latest updates on the conflict.

You can visit our [*homepage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/%22%20title=%22https://www.independent.co.uk/) to read other stories from home and abroad.

Thanks for reading.

Airports in three Russian cities impose temporary restrictions for security reasons

Airports in the Russian cities of Kazan, Nizhnekamsk and Nizhny Novgorod, located to the east of Moscow, imposed temporary restrictions on flights for security reasons, Russia’s aviation watchdog said on Wednesday.

By 10 am Moscow time flight operations resumed in Nizhny Novgorod, Rosaviatsia said.

50,000 Russian soldiers confirmed dead in Ukraine

More than 50,000 Russian soldiers have been killed in Ukraine since the Kremlin invaded its neighbour more than two years ago.

The number of deaths was nearly 25 per cent higher last year than in the first 12 months of the war, according to analysis by the BBC.

The corporation used graves, open-source information from official reports, newspapers and social media to confirm the deaths.

Scholz: I urged Xi Jinping to press Putin on ending war

German chancellor Olaf Scholz said he urged Chinese president Xi Jinping to press Russia to end its war in Ukraine.

Mr Scholz told Mr Xi in a meeting in Beijing on Tuesday that China’s word carries “weight in Russia.”

“I have therefore asked president Xi to influence Russia so that Putin finally calls off his senseless campaign, withdraw his troops and ends this terrible war,” he wrote on social media platform X.

Italy seeks G7 message to end war in Ukraine

Group of Seven foreign ministers are meeting on the Italian resort island of Capri, with soaring tensions in the Mideast and Russia’s continuing war in Ukraine topping the agenda.

Under Italy’s rotating stewardship, the G7 leaders are expected to issue a united call for Israel to exercise restraint after Iran’s unprecedented weekend attack involving hundreds of drones, ballistic missiles and cruise missiles fired toward the Jewish state.

Italian foreign minister Antonio Tajani said he had spoken to his Israeli counterpart, Israel Katz, on Tuesday and urged Israel to not only de-escalate any reaction to Iran’s attack but to stave off a planned offensive into the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

"I reiterated this message and I believe that on the occasion of the G7 foreign ministers in Capri, tomorrow and Friday morning, a similar message will be sent," Tajani told state-run RAI.

With Israel’s war in Gaza in its sixth month, Tehran’s attack added a new element of urgency to the three-day meeting, with German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock making a last-minute visit to Israel before arriving on Capri on Wednesday evening.

"We will discuss how a further escalation with more and more violence can be prevented," she said.

"Because what matters now is to put a stop to Iran without encouraging further escalation," Baerbock said, in calling for new sanctions against Tehran.

Russian attack kills people in Ukraine’s Chernihiv, hits infrastructure, governor says

A Russian missile attack killed and injured residents and damaged social infrastructure in the northern Ukrainian city of Chernihiv on Wednesday, regional governor Vyacheslav Chaus said.

"The enemy hit with three missiles almost in the city centre. There are victims among civilians and many injured," Chaus said in a video as sirens blared in the background.

He said on the Telegram messaging app that emergency services and medics were working on the site of the strike in the historic city, about 150 km (93 miles) from the capital Kyiv.

No further details were immediately available. Andriy Yermak, head of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy’s office, on Wednesday reiterated Kyiv’s plea for more air defence.

In recent weeks Russia has intensified its drone and missile attacks on Ukrainian cities, targeting the country’s power sector and other critical infrastructure.

ICYMI: Zelensky signs new army mobilization law

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky signed into law a bill overhauling army mobilization rules, according to the parliamentary website.

The law will come into force a month after it is officially published.

It obliges men to update their draft data with the authorities, boosts payments to those who volunteer, and adds new punishment for draft dodging.

Conflict in Middle East risks another food and energy price surge, says IMF

Escalation of [*conflict in the Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-iran-attack-drones-missiles-b2528658.html) risks pushing up food and energy prices across the world, according to the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The UN body also warned that the UK will eke out slower growth this year than previously thought and remain the second-worst performer in the G7 group of advanced economies.

The [*IMF*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/imf) said the global economy has had an “eventful” journey in the years since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) triggered a global energy and food crisis, and a surge in inflation, followed by central banks around the world hiking interest rates.

Read more here:

[*Conflict in Middle East ‘risks another food and energy price surge’ says IMF*](https://www.independent.co.uk/business/cost-of-living-energy-food-prices-b2529713.html)

ICYMI: Germany’s Scholz -I asked China’s Xi to pressure Russia to stop war

German chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday said he had asked Chinese president Xi Jinping to exert influence over Russia to end the war in Ukraine, adding that both leaders rejected attacks on nuclear facilities.

Speaking on the final day of his trip to China, Scholz also said China had agreed to open up beef and apple imports from Germany and facilitate pork imports.

Speaking on economic issues, Scholz said Europe wanted to reduce risks, intensify existing contacts and build new ones.

Zelensky again compares Ukraine and Israel-Iran conflict: ‘Same ballistic missiles'

Volodymyr Zelensky repeated his call for increased protection of airspace, comparing the two biggest armed conflicts in Europe and the Middle East.

“In the last two days we have heard all kinds of things. About different conflicts – here in Europe and in the Middle East – different levels of threats, different airspace. Although the ‘Shahed’ drones and ballistics are the same… Different threats of escalation. But are human lives different, are people’s values different? No, they are not,” he said in his nightly address.

He added: “We value every life equally. We must do so. We must protect them from terror on the same level. Ukraine will request a meeting of the Ukraine – Nato Council to discuss the protection of the skies, the supply of anti-aircraft warfare, relevant systems and missiles. We are actively working now to ensure a productive first Global Peace Summit in June.”

Russian attack risk against Nato if US allows Ukraine defeat in war, says think-tank

The risks of a Russian attack against Nato in the near future would rise dramatically if the US allows Russia to defeat Ukraine now, the US-based think-tank The Institute for the Study of War said in its latest analysis on the cost of letting Russia win in its invasion of Ukraine.

“The United States thus has only two real choices today. It can quickly resume providing military aid to let Ukraine stabilize the front lines near the current locations. Or it can let the Russians defeat the Ukrainian military and drive toward the NATO borders from the Black Sea to central Poland. There is no third option,” the ISW said.

It added: “The risks of a Russian attack against NATO in the near future would rise dramatically if the US allows Russia to defeat Ukraine now, and the challenge of defending the Baltic States in particular could become almost insurmountable. These long-term risks and costs far outweigh the short-term price of resuming assistance to Ukraine.”

The ISW added that the US lawmakers are debating about providing additional military assistance to Ukraine based in part on the assumption that the war will remain stalemated regardless of US actions.

“That assumption is false. The Russians are breaking out of positional warfare and beginning to restore maneuver to the battlefield because of the delays in the provision of US military assistance to Ukraine. Ukraine cannot hold the present lines now without the rapid resumption of US assistance, particularly air defense and artillery that only the US can provide rapidly and at scale,” the ISW said.

ICYMI: Russian blogger Ivleeva accused of ‘discrediting’ Russian army -court

Russian blogger Anastasia Ivleeva, the organiser of a “Nearly Naked” party that caused a major scandal, has been charged with discrediting the Russian army, according to the Moscow court service.

Ivleeva has been charged with an administrative offence, which could lead to a fine, and the hearing has been set for 25 April, the court service said.

Zelensky signs new mobilisation bill to boost conscription in Ukraine

Volodymyr Zelensky has signed into law a bill to overhaul Ukraine’s army mobilisation rules as Kyiv tries to generate fresh manpower to rotate its exhausted troops fighting Russian invaders.

The law obliges Ukrainian men between 18 and 60 years of age to update their personal data with the military authorities, allowing draft offices to see more easily who can be called up in any given region.

Military-age men will be legally required at all times to carry the registration document they are given by the draft office. Draft officers will be allowed to ask to see the document in the street.

The legislation also abolishes mandatory conscription for Ukrainian men aged 18 or older, and replaces it with basic military training for all men starting from September 2025.

One new provision allows people who have been convicted and given a suspended sentence to serve in the army. Convicts are currently banned from any type of military service.

After being mobilised, all men must undergo compulsory training before being sent to a combat area.

The legislation bans people from driving vehicles if they do not abide by the mobilisation rules. An earlier draft had proposed tough punishments such as asset freezes for such people, but that was cut after a public outcry. A separate bill proposing fines for draft dodgers passed its first reading today.

Zelensky thanks German chancellor for diplomacy in China

Volodymyr Zelensky thanked German chancellor Olaf Scholz for his diplomatic efforts in Beijing to resolve Kyiv’s 25-month-old war with Russia and said China could play a role in securing peace.

Ukraine has deployed considerable effort to secure the backing of China, which has close ties with Russia, for a peace summit due to take place in Switzerland in June. Russia is not invited to the gathering and has dismissed any such meeting as meaningless without Moscow’s participation.

Mr Scholz spent more than three hours yesterday with Chinese president Xi Jinping and said he asked him “to exert pressure on Russia so that (president Vladimir) Putin finally calls off his insane campaign, withdraws his troops and ends this terrible war”.

But Mr Xi appeared to dismiss the meeting in Switzerland, saying efforts towards a peaceful resolution should be recognised by both sides and include equal participation by all parties.

“I would like to specially thank Olaf, the Chancellor of Germany, for his leadership and appropriate international communication,” Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.

“For the signals we have heard from Beijing. China can indeed help restore a just peace for Ukraine and stability in international relations.”

Mr Zelensky said the meeting in Switzerland “offers a real chance for all of us to ensure that the UN Charter and its goals and principles truly come into effect.”

Ukraine PM calls for more investment in war-torn country in US visit

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) prime minister Denys Shmyhal drumming up calls for investment and business in the war-torn Ukraine as he kicked off a United States visit with multiple stops in [*Chicago*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chicago).

He spoke to Chicago-area business leaders before a joint news conference with Penny Pritzker, the U.S. special representative for Ukraine’s economic recovery, and her brother, [*Illinois*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/illinois) governor JB Pritzker.

“We would warmly welcome the participation of Illinois companies in projects related to the recovery of Ukraine,” Mr Shmyhal told reporters, calling it the country’s “most difficult time” in recent history.

Shmyhal’s trip comes comes as Congress is considering an aid package for Ukraine, [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) and other allies.

He cited World Bank estimates of $486bn needed for recovery over the next decade. For example, more than 250,000 residential buildings that have been damaged or destroyed since Russia invaded in 2022, he said.

[*Ukraine prime minister calls for more investment in war-torn country during Chicago stop of US visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-chicago-illinois-israel-b2529788.html)

ICYMI: Ukraine says it downs all nine drones launched by Russia

Ukraine’s air defence systems destroyed all nine drones launched in a Russian attack, the air force said on Tuesday.

The aerial weapons were destroyed over several eastern and southern regions, Ukraine’s air force said on the Telegram messaging app.

ICYMI: Russia has so far lost 455,340 troops in war -Ukraine

Russia has lost 455,340 troops in Ukraine since invading the country in February 2022, Ukraine has said.

Some 920 of those casualties occurred in the past day, according to a report by Ukraine’s general staff of the Armed Forces.

According to the report, Moscow has also lost 7,189 tanks, 13,809 armored fighting vehicles, 15,563 vehicles and fuel tanks, 11,609 artillery systems, 1,046 multiple launch rocket systems, 759 air defense systems, 347 airplanes, 325 helicopters, 9,277 drones, 26 ships and boats, and one submarine.

ICYMI: On a China visit, the German chancellor says Russia’s invasion of Ukraine threatens global security

German Chancellor [*Olaf Scholz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olaf-scholz) told Chinese leader [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) who hosted him in Beijing on Tuesday that Russia’s full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) threatens global security, in an apparent call for [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) to apply greater pressure on its neighbor and close strategic partner to resolve the conflict.

Scholz also told Xi at their meeting that the use of nuclear weapons in the 2-year-old war should not even be threatened, German media reported. Russian President Vladimir Putin warned last month that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened, his latest such threat since invading Ukraine.

Full report:

[*On a China visit, the German chancellor says Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens global security*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-ukraine-xi-jinping-b2529411.html)

ICYMI: Thousands without power as strong winds and heavy rain damage energy infrastructure

Strong winds and heavy rain left thousands of people in Ukraine without power on Tuesday.

The adverse weather damaged electrical infrastructure, leaving four regions without power supply.

“Due to the bad weather, 173 settlements in four regions are without power supply,” Ukraine’s energy ministry said.

In Dnipropetrovsk, the worst affected area in central Ukraine, over 15,000 people in 96 towns and villages were cut off.

DTEK, one of the main energy providers, said its engineers had worked “all night and in the morning” to restore power to the region.

ICYMI: Kremlin dismisses France’s call for Olympic truce

The Kremlin reacted coolly on Tuesday to French president Emmanuel Macron’s call for a truce in international conflicts during the Paris Olympics, saying Ukraine might use it as an opportunity to regroup and rearm.

Suspending armed conflicts under an “Olympic truce” is a longstanding tradition of the Games, and Macron said in an interview on Monday that he would work towards achieving one when Paris hosts the Olympics from 26 July to 11 August.

Asked about Macron’s comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that both president Vladimir Putin and the Russian military had “noticed that, as a rule, the Kyiv regime uses such ideas, such initiatives to try to regroup, to try to rearm, and so on and so forth. This, of course, significantly complicates the process of considering such initiatives.”

ICYMI: Poland should be part of several air defence systems, says PM

Poland will cooperate with the European Sky Shield Initiative air defence umbrella and it makes sense for the country to be part of several air defence systems, prime minister Donald Tusk said on Tuesday.

The European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) is a common air defence scheme set up by Germany in 2022 to boost European air defence.

Earlier on Tuesday, President Andrzej Duda said Poland hadn’t given any thought to joining what he described as a “German business project”.

ICYMI: 15 Ukrainian civilians injured in Russian airstrike in Kherson

Some 15 Ukrainian civilians have been injured in a Russian airstrike on the city of Beryslav in the Kherson Oblast region.

The region’s prosecutor’s office said the 15 suffered concussions following a strike that damaged residential buildings, shops, a pharmacy and other buildings at around 11:30 local time.

All 15 received medical treatment at the scene.

Moscow to ‘redeploy Wagner troops’ to Ukraine

Moscow is set to redeploy Wagner troops working in Africa to bolster its offensive in Ukraine, according to a Russian insider source.

The source claimed Russian authorities are preparing to redeploy unspecified detachments of the Africa Corps from Africa to Belgorod, Ukraine, according to US think tank Institute for the Study of War.

ICYMI: Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters

***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** fleeing the horrors of war to find sanctuary in British homes were sent to live with suspected gangsters under the government’s [*flagship Homes for Ukraine scheme*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukraine-refugees-visa-home-office-hotels-b2256853.html) , The Independent can reveal.

[*People with suspected links to serious or organised crime*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/homes-for-ukraine-fake-sponsors-exploitation-b2257507.html) were among those approved as hosts under the scheme, which was set up in 2022 to encourage warm-hearted homeowners to lend a spare room to those fleeing Vladimir Putin’s invasion.

Full report:

[*Ukrainians granted sanctuary in Britain sent to live with suspected gangsters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html)

US defence chief speaks with Chinese counterpart, Pentagon says

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin spoke with China’s defense minister on Tuesday, the first engagement the two have had in over a year as the two countries seek to restore military ties.

The phone call comes as US president Joe Biden and Chinese president Xi Jinping have sought to manage tensions and after the two leaders last year resumed direct military talks.

In a readout after the call, the Pentagon said Austin "underscored the importance of respect for high seas freedom of navigation guaranteed under international law, especially in the South China Sea."

An escalating diplomatic dispute and recent maritime run-ins between China and the Philippines, a US treaty ally, have made the highly strategic South China Sea a potential flashpoint between Washington and Beijing.

The Pentagon said the two also discussed Russia’s war in Ukraine, North Korea, and Washington’s commitment to the one China policy.

ICYMI: Ukrainian weapons manufacturing fuelling economic progress, says minister

Ukrainian weapons has fuelled both military and economic progress in the country, a senior minister has said.

Oleksandr Kamyshin, Ukraine’s Minister of Strategic Industries said the country’s military-industrial complex grew Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 1.5% in 2023.

This a significant proportion of the total 5 per cent GDP growth last year.

Mr Kamyshin said he was confident that figure would double to 3% of GDP growth this year. But he warned Ukraine’s government could not afford to buy up all its domestic weapons’ production.

Ukraine was in discussions with international allies about the purchase of weapons for Ukraine from domestic manufacturers to cover the financial shortfall, he said.

“I am convinced that we will start purchases from Ukrainian manufacturers with foreign funds in the new future,” the minister said.

ICYMI: Russia paying Asian migrants to fight against Ukraine, say British intelligence update

Russia is employing foreign nationals to fight against Ukraine, according to the latest British intelligence update by the Ministry of Defence.

The Russian Armed Forces have advertised roles in neighbouring countries, such as Armenia and Kazakhstan, as well as migrants from India and Nepal.

Recruits are reportedly being paid around £2,000 a month.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 15 April 2024. Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/EwBELWpRTX*](https://t.co/EwBELWpRTX) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/0GPGaFG8ms*](https://t.co/0GPGaFG8ms) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 15, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1779838043022569588?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Poland should be part of several air defence systems, says PM Tuesday 16 April 2024 17:00 , Matt Mathers Poland will cooperate with the European Sky Shield Initiative air defence umbrella and it makes sense for the country to be part of several air defence systems, prime minister Donald Tusk said on Tuesday.The European Sky Shield Initiative (ESSI) is a common air defence scheme set up by Germany in 2022 to boost European air defence. Earlier on Tuesday, President Andrzej Duda said Poland hadn’t given any thought to joining what he described as a "German business project".Under an onslaught of Russian troops and drones, Ukraine’s troops say they are ‘screwed’ without US weaponsTuesday 16 April 2024 16:30 , Matt MathersAskold Krushelnycky travels from Kramatorsk to Chasiv Yar in Ukraine’s eastern frontline and hears from soldiers who say they cannot hold on much longer as they run out of ammunition. Even if their own drone attacks are so far keeping the waves of assaults at bay for now.Full report: [*Ukraine’s frontline troops say they are ‘screwed’ without US weapons*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-weapons-us-putin-b2529629.html) 37,000 Ukrainians missing -ombudsmanTuesday 16 April 2024 16:10 , Matt Mathers Some 37,000 Ukrainians have been registered missing since Russia’s invasion in February 2022, the chief ombudsman has said.The figure includes civilians, children, and military personnel. About 1,700 people have been illegally detained by Russia, Dmytro Lubinets said, speaking at an event in Kyiv on Tuesday.Mr Lubinets added that his office was doing everything it could to return the missing and abducted civilians, the Kyiv independent reported."Based on an initiative of our office, Ukraine has established an international platform for the release of civilians illegally detained by Russia," he said.US ambassador to Japan says boosting arms industry ties is key to a stronger security allianceTuesday 16 April 2024 15:50 , Matt Mathers The US ambassador to [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) urged [*Tokyo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tokyo) on Tuesday to take a greater role in developing, producing and supplying weapons “to enhance our collective security” amid conflict in Ukraine, Gaza and elsewhere.Ambassador [*Rahm Emanuel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rahm-emanuel) visited a Mitsubishi Heavy Industries’ F-35 fighter jet factory and stressed the importance of stronger defense industry cooperation between the allies. The United States alone can no longer supply all democracies, he said.Full report: [*The US ambassador to Japan says boosting arms industry ties is key to a stronger security alliance*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/rahm-emanuel-ap-japan-fumio-kishida-tokyo-b2529586.html) Russia arrests man over car bombing of double agent in MoscowTuesday 16 April 2024 15:30 , Matt Mathers Russia’s FSB security service said on Tuesday it had detained a man it claimed had tried to kill an ex-employee of Ukraine’s main security service in Moscow last week with a car bomb on Kyiv’s orders.A powerful explosion ripped through a Toyota Land Cruiser Prado belonging to Vasily Prozorov, a former Lieutenant-Colonel in Ukraine’s SBU security service, on 12 April, leaving Prozorov with wounds to his legs and arms.Prozorov, who now lives in Russia, had told Russian state news agency RIA how he used his SBU position in Ukraine to pass sensitive information to Russian intelligence agencies from 2014 onwards for ideological reasons.There was no immediate comment from Ukraine on Tuesday.Editorial: The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better runTuesday 16 April 2024 15:10 , Matt Mathers One of the good decisions made by Michael Gove, who as housing and communities secretary was responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme when it was set up two years ago, was to allow the project to be driven from the bottom up.The scheme was an [*expression of solidarity*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-putin-b2528144.html) from the British people to the Ukrainian people, and the role of the British government, as Mr Gove saw it, was to enable and support it – but mainly to get out of the way.Read the full editorial below: [*Editorial: The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/homes-ukraine-scheme-organised-crime-gove-b2528263.html) ICYMI: US citizen who was arrested in Moscow on drug charges appears in courtTuesday 16 April 2024 14:45 , Matt Mathers A US citizen arrested on drug charges in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) amid soaring Russia-US tensions over [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) appeared in court on Monday.Robert Woodland Romanov is facing charges of trafficking large amounts of illegal drugs as part of an organized group — a criminal offense punishable by up to 20 years in prison. He was remanded into custody in January, and the trial began in the Ostankino District Court in late March. A new court hearing is scheduled for next week.Full report: [*US citizen who was arrested in Moscow on drug charges appears in court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/moscow-ap-russia-ukraine-washington-b2529269.html) 15 Ukrainian civilians injured in Russian airstrike in KhersonTuesday 16 April 2024 14:29 , Matt Mathers Some 15 Ukrainian civilians have been injured in a Russian airstrike on the city of Beryslav in the Kherson Oblast region.The region’s prosecutor’s office said the 15 suffered concussions following a strike that damaged residential buildings, shops, a pharmacy and other buildings at around 11:30 local time.All 15 received medical treatment at the scene.Zelensky signs new army mobilization lawTuesday 16 April 2024 14:00 , Matt Mathers Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky signed into law a bill overhauling army mobilization rules, according to the parliamentary website.The law will come into force a month after it is officially published. It obliges men to update their draft data with the authorities, boosts payments to those who volunteer, and adds new punishment for draft dodging.Germany’s Scholz: I asked China’s Xi to pressure Russia to stop warTuesday 16 April 2024 13:45 , Matt Mathers German chancellor Olaf Scholz on Tuesday said he had asked Chinese president Xi Jinping to exert influence over Russia to end the war in Ukraine, adding that both leaders rejected attacks on nuclear facilities.Speaking on the final day of his trip to China, Scholz also said China had agreed to open up beef and apple imports from Germany and facilitate pork imports.Speaking on economic issues, Scholz said Europe wanted to reduce risks, intensify existing contacts and build new ones.Russian blogger Ivleeva accused of ‘discrediting’ Russian army -courtTuesday 16 April 2024 13:30 , Matt Mathers Russian blogger Anastasia Ivleeva, the organiser of a "Nearly Naked" party that caused a major scandal, has been charged with discrediting the Russian army, according to the Moscow court service.Ivleeva has been charged with an administrative offence, which could lead to a fine, and the hearing has been set for 25 April, the court service said.US house speaker says spending bills, including sanctions, to come TuesdayTuesday 16 April 2024 13:09 , Matt Mathers US house speaker Mike Johnson said spending legislation will be released later on Tuesday, as the house prepares to vote on four separate measures providing aid to Israel and Ukraine.One of the bills will also include additional sanctions on Russia and Iran, Johnson told Fox News in an interview, and lawmakers are trying to include provisions to secure the US border.ICYMI: Ukraine says it downs all nine drones launched by RussiaTuesday 16 April 2024 13:00 , Matt Mathers Ukraine’s air defence systems destroyed all nine drones launched in a Russian attack, the air force said on Tuesday.The aerial weapons were destroyed over several eastern and southern regions, Ukraine’s air force said on the Telegram messaging app.ICYMI: Russia has so far lost 455,340 troops in war -UkraineTuesday 16 April 2024 12:40 , Matt Mathers Russia has lost 455,340 troops in Ukraine since invading the country in February 2022, Ukraine has said.Some 920 of those casualties occurred in the past day, according to a report by Ukraine’s general staff of the Armed Forces.According to the report, Moscow has also lost 7,189 tanks, 13,809 armored fighting vehicles, 15,563 vehicles and fuel tanks, 11,609 artillery systems, 1,046 multiple launch rocket systems, 759 air defense systems, 347 airplanes, 325 helicopters, 9,277 drones, 26 ships and boats, and one submarine.ICYMI: Three Ukrainians killed in past 24 hoursTuesday 16 April 2024 12:20 , Matt Mathers Three people have been killed and eight others injured in Russian attacks over the past 24 hours, regional authorities have said.Two men, aged 63 and 65, were reportedly killed, while two other men, aged 38 and 65, and two women, aged 63 and 66, were injured in an attack on Kharkiv Oblast, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said.An attack on the city of Krasnohorivka in Donetsk Oblast killed one person and injured two other, regional governor Vadym Filashkin said.Russian troops also reportedly attacked the Bakhmut, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk districts, damaging 11 buildings, including three high-rise buildings, an infrastructure facility and an administrative building.In full: On a China visit, the German chancellor says Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens global securityTuesday 16 April 2024 11:48 , Matt Mathers German Chancellor [*Olaf Scholz*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/olaf-scholz) told Chinese leader [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) who hosted him in Beijing on Tuesday that Russia’s full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) threatens global security, in an apparent call for [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) to apply greater pressure on its neighbor and close strategic partner to resolve the conflict.Scholz also told Xi at their meeting that the use of nuclear weapons in the 2-year-old war should not even be threatened, German media reported. Russian President Vladimir Putin warned last month that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened, his latest such threat since invading Ukraine.Full report: [*On a China visit, the German chancellor says Russia's invasion of Ukraine threatens global security*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/olaf-scholz-ap-china-ukraine-xi-jinping-b2529411.html) ICYMI: The US and UK restrict the trade of Russian-origin metalsTuesday 16 April 2024 11:30 , Matt Mathers The US and UK will begin restricting the trade of new Russian-origin metals — including aluminum, copper and nickel — on global metal exchanges and in derivatives trading.The announcement is meant to follow up on the Group of Seven nations’ commitment in February “to reduce Russia’s revenues from metals” as its invasion into [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has dragged on for more than two years.Full report: [*The US and UK restrict the trade of Russian-origin metals*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-washington-ukraine-janet-yellen-london-metal-exchange-b2528058.html) Thousands without power as strong winds and heavy rain damage energy infrastructureTuesday 16 April 2024 11:20 , Matt Mathers Strong winds and heavy rain have left thousands of people in Ukraine without power on Tuesday.The adverse weather damaged electrical infrastructure, leaving four regions without power supply.“Due to the bad weather, 173 settlements in four regions are without power supply,” Ukraine’s energy ministry said.In Dnipropetrovsk, the worst affected area in central Ukraine, over 15,000 people in 96 towns and villages were cut off.DTEK, one of the main energy providers, said its engineers had worked “all night and in the morning” to restore power to the region.Ukraine’s ability to strike deep into Russian territory spooks military -MoDTuesday 16 April 2024 11:05 , Matt Mathers Read the Ministry of Defence’s latest intelligence update on the war in Ukraine below:Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 16 April 2024.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/EwBELWpRTX*](https://t.co/EwBELWpRTX) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/gZAEVfsz5q*](https://t.co/gZAEVfsz5q) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 16, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1780164061730050147?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kremlin dismisses France’s call for Olympic truceTuesday 16 April 2024 10:50 , Matt Mathers The Kremlin reacted coolly on Tuesday to French president Emmanuel Macron’s call for a truce in international conflicts during the Paris Olympics, saying Ukraine might use it as an opportunity to regroup and rearm.Suspending armed conflicts under an "Olympic truce" is a longstanding tradition of the Games, and Macron said in an interview on Monday that he would work towards achieving one when Paris hosts the Olympics from 26 July to 11 August.Asked about Macron’s comments, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that both president Vladimir Putin and the Russian military had "noticed that, as a rule, the Kyiv regime uses such ideas, such initiatives to try to regroup, to try to rearm, and so on and so forth. This, of course, significantly complicates the process of considering such initiatives."Russia’s invasion of Ukraine threatens global security -German chancellorTuesday 16 April 2024 10:30 , Matt Mathers Germany’s chancellor Olaf Scholz told Chinese leader Xi Jinping who hosted him in Beijing on Tuesday that Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine threatens global security.It was an apparent call for China to apply greater pressure on its neighbour and close strategic partner to resolve the conflict.Mr Scholz also told Mr Xi at their meeting that the use of nuclear weapons in the two-year-old war should not even be threatened, German media reported.Russian president Vladimir Putin warned last month that Russia is ready to use nuclear weapons if its sovereignty or independence is threatened, his latest such threat since invading Ukraine.Mr Scholz told Mr Xi that Germany’s "core interests" were impacted by the war against Ukraine, which has threatened to spread into a regional conflict and has disrupted energy and global food supplies and other trade.Russia’s actions "violate a principle of the United Nations Charter and the principle of the inviolability of national borders," Mr Scholz was quoted as saying by German media.China has refused to criticise the invasion and has maintained ties with Russia. While China says it is not sending military aid to Moscow, it has provided it with an economic lifeline to help it cope with sanctions from the West.US slaps sanctions on Belarus firms and individuals linked to Russian war machineTuesday 16 April 2024 10:20 , Matt Mathers The US has imposed sanctions on 12 Belarus businesses and 10 individuals with links to Russia’s war machine.The Department of the Treasury said the sanctions included six revenue-generating state-owned enterprises and one entity and five individuals involved in facilitating transactions for a US-designated major Belarusian defense sector enterprise. Five entities and five individuals involved in a global arms network doing business with a US-designated Belarusian defence firm were also sanctioned.“The authoritarian Lukashenka regime continues to rely on revenue from its SOEs to fund its violent suppression of its citizens and to circumvent US sanctions,” Brian E Nelson, under secretary of the Treasury for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence.“We will continue to leverage our broad suite of tools to target Belarus’s extensive illicit facilitation networks and hold the regime accountable for its complicity in, and profiteering from, Russia’s unjust war in Ukraine.”Ukraine ran out of missiles to protect power plant destroyed by Russia -ZelenskyTuesday 16 April 2024 10:07 , Matt Mathers Russia was able to destroy a thermal power plant in Kyiv Oblast because Ukraine ran out of missiles to protect it, Volodymyr Zelensky has said.The Ukrainian president made the comment in an interview with PBS NewsHour published on Wednesday.“Why? Because there were zero missiles,” the Ukraine president told the outlet. “We have run out of all the missiles that protected the Trypillia TPP.”Moscow forces destroyed the Trypillia thermal power plant during strikes on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure on 11 April.Russia has so far lost 455,340 troops in war -UkraineTuesday 16 April 2024 09:45 , Matt Mathers Russia has lost 455,340 troops in Ukraine since invading the country in February 2022, Ukraine has said.Some 920 of those casualties occurred in the past day, according to a report by Ukraine’s general staff of the Armed Forces.According to the report, Moscow has also lost 7,189 tanks, 13,809 armored fighting vehicles, 15,563 vehicles and fuel tanks, 11,609 artillery systems, 1,046 multiple launch rocket systems, 759 air defense systems, 347 airplanes, 325 helicopters, 9,277 drones, 26 ships and boats, and one submarine.Three Ukrainians killed in past 24 hoursTuesday 16 April 2024 09:31 , Matt Mathers Three people have been killed and eight others injured in Russian attacks over the past 24 hours, regional authorities have said.Two men, aged 63 and 65, were reportedly killed, while two other men, aged 38 and 65, and two women, aged 63 and 66, were injured in an attack on Kharkiv Oblast, regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said.An attack on the city of Krasnohorivka in Donetsk Oblast killed one person and injured two other, regional governor Vadym Filashkin said.Russian troops also reportedly attacked the Bakhmut, Kramatorsk and Pokrovsk districts, damaging 11 buildings, including three high-rise buildings, an infrastructure facility and an administrative building.ICYMI: House passes legislation to punish Iran after weekend drone attack on IsraelTuesday 16 April 2024 09:15 , Matt Mathers The [*House of Representatives*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/house-of-representatives) passed a series of [*Iran*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iran) -related bills on Monday evening with wide bipartisan support, a response to the attack on Saturday evening by Iranian forces against targets in [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel). Among the legislation passed on Monday were bills aimed at expanding sanctions over Chinese firms that do business with Iran’s petroleum sector and provisions to direct US representatives at the IMF to oppose financial assistance to Iran. Another bill directed the president to submit reports to [*Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/congress) on Iranian holdings and assets in the United States financial system.Full report: [*House passes legislation to punish Iran after weekend drone attack on Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/iran-israel-attack-house-mike-johnson-b2529249.html) In pictures: Nato’s operation Steadfast Defender 24Tuesday 16 April 2024 09:05 , Matt Mathers Pictures posted by Britain’s Ministry of Defence show troops taking part in Nato’s operation Steadfast Defender 24.Steadfast Defender 24 is Nato’s largest military exercise since the Cold War, involving 90,000 troops from all 32 allies.The operation takes place from January to May 2024 and aims to demonstrate “Nato’s ability to defend every inch of its territory, and the commitment by Nato allies to protect each other from any threat.” A round-up of imagery from the past few weeks on Exercise Steadfast Defender. Exercise Steadfast Defender is the largest NATO exercise for over a decade and will take place across many months [*pic.twitter.com/Iq8zaFSGlo*](https://t.co/Iq8zaFSGlo) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 15, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1779873234923528309?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

ICYMI: More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces

More civilians died across Ukraine Sunday as analysts warned that delays in U.S. military assistance would see [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) struggle to fight off Russian offensives.

One man was Sunday killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor’s office said.

Full report:

[*More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kyiv-kharkiv-washington-b2528507.html)

Ukraine man’s torture case against Russians seeks justice in Argentina

A Ukrainian man who alleges he was tortured by Russian occupying forces has filed a legal complaint halfway around the world in Argentina, an unusual bid to seek accountability for alleged war crimes at a time when prosecutors in Kyiv are overwhelmed.

In the filing, reported for the first time, the man accuses one named person, two identified by their call signs or military insignia, and others who are unnamed of using electrocution and unlawful imprisonment as forms of torture in mid to late 2022, the complaint seen by Reuters shows.

The man, who asked not to be identified by Reuters because of fears for his family who are still in Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine, filed the complaint with the Federal Court in Buenos Aires on Monday against the people who he says tortured him, the officials who ran the detention center in southern Ukraine where he says he was held, and his superior at work who he accuses of facilitating the abuse.

"I was detained at work. Then they tortured me. They used electric shocks," he told Reuters in an interview in a Buenos Aires apartment ahead of the filing.

"It was incredibly painful, so I lost consciousness. I was lucky to survive. Many people are still there."

Reuters was unable to independently confirm specifics of the victim’s account.

The Russian defense ministry on Monday declined to comment. Moscow denies committing war crimes in Ukraine and has dismissed previous International Criminal Court war crimes arrest warrants as part of a biased Western campaign to discredit Russia.

ICYMI: Ukraine uses UK Storm Shadow missile to hit target deep in occupied territory

Ukraine used British-made Storm Shadow cruise missiles to hit a Russian military headquarters deep inside the occupied city of Luhansk in country’s east.

A military source told Sky News the missile was launched from a Ukrainian aircraft and hit a command base for Russian ground troops on Saturday.

“This strike furthers Ukraine’s campaign to liberate the Luhansk region from the Russian Federation’s illegal invasion and ensure that Russia is not able to advance further into Ukraine,” the source said.

Ukraine says it downs all nine drones launched by Russia

Ukraine’s air defence systems destroyed all nine drones launched in a Russian attack, the air force said on Tuesday.

The aerial weapons were destroyed over several eastern and southern regions, Ukraine’s air force said on the Telegram messaging app.

House Speaker Mike Johnson pushes towards a vote on aid for Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan

The House has yet to take up supplemental funding legislation for Israel and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) passed by the Senate in February.

Instead, Speaker [*Mike Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mike-johnson) told Republicans at their conference meeting on Monday that he would split the legislation into multiple parts, allowing both the portions dealing with Israel and Ukraine’s militaries to stand alone.

MrJohnson is pushing toward action this week on aid for Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan, unveiling an elaborate plan yesterday to break the package into separate votes to squeeze through the House’s political divides on foreign policy.Facing an outright rebellion from conservatives fiercely opposed to aiding Ukraine, the Republican speaker’s move on the foreign aid package was a potentially watershed moment, the first significant action on the bill after more than two months of delay. But Johnson’s intention to hold four separate votes on parts of the package also left it open to being significantly altered from the $95bn aid package the Senate passed in February.It’s unclear if the House could end up with a package that is similar to the Senate’s bill or something significantly different, which could complicate the months-long, painstaking effort to get Congress to approve military funding for Ukraine.“We will let the House work its will,” Johnson told reporters.

Ukraine Russia trade blames over attacks on Zaporizhzhia

Ukraine and its allies again blamed Russia for dangers at the site of Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant on Monday, with the US saying, “Russia does not care about these risks” amid reports of attack on the facility.

“If it did, it would not continue to forcibly control the plant,” US deputy ambassador Robert Wood told the Security Council.

Russia, for its part, said Ukraine was to blame for the attacks.

“The IAEA’s report does not pinpoint which side is behind the attacks,” Russia’s UN ambassador Vassily Nebenzia said. “We know full well who it is.”

“Over the last few months, such attacks not only resumed,” the official said, “they significantly intensified.”

Zaporizhzhia sits in Russian-controlled territory in southeastern Ukraine and has six nuclear reactors.

Fears of a nuclear catastrophe have been at the forefront since Russian troops occupied the plant shortly after invading in February 2022.

Continued fighting between Russian and Ukrainian forces — as well as the tense supply situation at the plant — have raised the specter of a disaster.

Ukraine says it downs all nine Russian drones overnight

Ukraine’s air defence systems destroyed all nine drones launched in a Russian attack, the air force said today.

The aerial weapons were destroyed over several eastern and southern regions, Ukraine’s air force said on the Telegram channel.

The USA will continue to support Ukraine, says secretary of state

The US secretary of state has assured Ukraine and its allies surrounding the Black Sea they could depend on his country’s support to make the region more secure.

Anthony Blinken emphasised the importance of investing in the region’s security to ensure peace and freedom across Europe.

Addressing the attendees of the Second Black Sea Security Conference in Sofia, Bulgaria, he said: “Putin believed that Ukraine’s neighbours in the region would be divided, but he was wrong.

“The United States will continue to support Ukraine both so it can defend itself today and stand on its feet.”

Russia illegally annexed the Crimean Peninsula, on the northern coast of the Black Sea, in 2014, and it has served as a key hub supporting the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey, and Ukraine border the Black Sea.

Cameron explains why Ukraine cannot get UK’s assistance in downing missiles and drones

David Cameron has said Ukraine cannot get assistance from the UK in shooting down drones and missiles, like Israel did over the weekend, over fears of a direct war with Russia.

“I think the difficulty with what you suggest is if you want to avoid an escalation in terms of a wider European war, I think the one thing you do need to avoid is NATO troops directly engaging Russian troops. That would be a danger of escalation,” the foreign secretary said in an interview with LBC.

Lord Camerom was answering a question on why the Royal Air Force could not shoot down drones over Ukraine.

He added that jets are not always the ideal option to down missiles and drones since air defence systems work better, which the West has shared with Ukraine.

The foreign secretary added that Ukraine has a significant need for air defence systems, especially the Patriot air defence missile system, which the UK cannot provide.

The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run

One of the good decisions made by Michael Gove, who as housing and communities secretary was responsible for the Homes for Ukraine scheme when it was set up two years ago, was to allow the project to be driven from the bottom up.

The scheme was an [*expression of solidarity*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-news-putin-b2528144.html) from the British people to the Ukrainian people, and the role of the British government, as Mr Gove saw it, was to enable and support it – but mainly to get out of the way.

It was, and remains, an overwhelming success. More than 180,000 visas have been issued to [***Ukrainian******refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-bishop-uk-us-russia-cameron-b2526534.html) through the sponsorship route. The problems with the scheme, [*exclusively reported by The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/ukrainian-refugees-uk-homes-ukraine-crime-b2523166.html) , in no way undermine the policy in principle – on the contrary, they argue for improved safeguards in order to ensure continuing high levels of public support for it.

Read the full article here:

[*Editorial: The Homes for Ukraine scheme is bold and right but must be better run*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/homes-ukraine-scheme-organised-crime-gove-b2528263.html)

Vital US aid impacting Ukraine’s defence against Putin’s troops, think tank warns

Ukraine’s defence will be “catastrophically difficult” without western military assistance, a US-based think-tank monitoring the war has said.

“Ukrainian officials continue to warn that US security assistance is vital to Ukrainian forces’ ability to defend against current and future Russian offensive operations forecasted to begin in late spring and summer,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said yesterday.

It cited Ukrainian Main Military Intelligence Directorate (GUR) Head Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov who said that Ukrainian forces are preparing to repel a future Russian major offensive expected in late May or the beginning of June but noted that this will be “catastrophically difficult” without Western military assistance.

“ISW continues to assess that Russian forces are currently capitalising on Ukrainian material shortages resulting from the lack of US security assistance to make marginal tactical advances but that future Russian assaults may be able to achieve more significant and threatening gains, particularly west of Bakhmut, should the US continue to withhold assistance to Ukraine,” the think tank said.

Zelensky compares Ukraine war with Middle East conflict

Volodymyr Zelensky has lauded what he described as “unity” in helping Israel defend against Iranian air attacks last weekend as he called on Kyiv's allies to show the same unity they displayed in helping Israel fend off Iranian drone and missile attacks.

He pointed out the help Israel received from the US, the UK and other nations despite not being a Nato nation.

“Israel is not a member of Nato... and no one was drawn into the war,” he said.

“They simply helped save lives. Shaheds (drones) in the skies of Ukraine sound just like in the skies of the Middle East. Ballistics strike the same everywhere if not shot down,” Mr Zelensky said.

The Ukrainian president, pleading for more western aid and assistance, has called for “political will”, especially from the United States, where an aid package remains blocked in Congress.

In what has continued to drag on since November last year, US House of Representatives Speaker Mike Johnson is expected to decide this week on how to handle president Joe Biden’s request for billions of dollars in security assistance for Ukraine and other US allies.

More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces

More civilians died across Ukraine on Sunday as analysts warned that delays in U.S. military assistance would see [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) struggle to fight off Russian offensives.

One man was killed after a Russian drone hit the truck he was driving in the Sumy region, the local prosecutor’s office said.

Officials in the [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) region also said that they had retrieved the bodies of a 61-year-old woman and a 68-year-old man killed by a Russian strike the previous day. Ten Russian Shahed-type drones were shot down over the Kharkiv region overnight, the Ukrainian Air Force.

Read the full article:

[*More civilians die in Ukraine as a think tank warns delays in US aid will hamper Kyiv's forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kyiv-kharkiv-washington-b2528507.html)

Zelensky and his Ukrainian commanders discuss war strategy, ammunition supplies

Volodymyr Zelensky met Ukrainian commanders as he considered action on the frontline of the 25-month-old war against Russia and the acquisition of weaponry from Kyiv’s allies.

The Ukrainian president, speaking in his nightly address, mentioned the meeting and said there are three sectors where Ukraine’s forces face difficult situations in standing against Russian onslaughts: Chasiv Yar, west of the destroyed Russian-held town of Bakhmut in the east and Pokrovsk and Kupiansk, further west and north.

Mr Zelensky said reports were presented on supplying arms and electronic warfare systems and ways to protect infrastructure hit for weeks by Russian missile and drone attacks.

The leaders also discussed intelligence reports on new Russian offensives that he has predicted will also soon take place.

“This is about what we must prepare for – all forms of enemy action,” Mr Zelensky said. “It is clear that the madness in the Kremlin is still strong and the occupiers will try to intensify their advances. We will respond.”

Russian forces have made small advances in recent weeks, securing control of villages in eastern Donetsk region since recapturing the key town of Avdiivka in February.

IAEA warns that attacks on a nuclear plant in Russian-controlled Ukraine put the world at risk

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) traded blame before the [*United Nations Security Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations-security-council) for the attacks on Europe’s largest nuclear power plant, which the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency said have put the world “dangerously close to a nuclear accident.”

Without attributing blame, [*IAEA*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iaea) director general Rafael Mariano Grossi said his agency has been able to confirm three attacks against the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant since 7 April.

“These reckless attacks must cease immediately,” he told the Security Council. “Though, fortunately, they have not led to a radiological incident this time, they significantly increase the risk … where nuclear safety is already compromised.”

[*IAEA warns that attacks on a nuclear plant in Russian-controlled Ukraine put the world at risk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-united-nations-security-council-iaea-b2529211.html)

Ukraine's foreign minister says Israel's response to an Iranian aerial attack shows what Kyiv needs

The success of [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) and its allies in largely thwarting a massive Iranian missile and drone attack shows what Ukraine could achieve against Russian aerial barrages if it had more support from its partners, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said Monday.

A recent Russian aerial campaign targeting Ukraine’s energy infrastructure and other targets has wrought extensive damage, and Ukrainian officials have pleaded with the country’s Western allies to provide more air defense systems as the war stretches into its third year.

Israel’s defense system, with assistance from the U.S. and Britain — countries that are also supporting Ukraine’s war effort — is credited with preventing serious damage or casualties in Sunday’s attack by Iran using more than 300 drones and missiles.

Read the full article here:

[*Ukraine's foreign minister says Israel's response to an Iranian aerial attack shows what Kyiv needs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kyiv-israel-mike-johnson-washington-b2528968.html)

Iran’s strikes have changed the conversation on Ukraine and Israel aid in Congress

On Monday, both Democrats and Republicans gathered to condemn the weekend’s new development in the Middle East: a sizable drone and missile attack launched by Iran against Israeli targets.

Saturday’s attack by Iran refreshed the importance of the geopolitical consequences of Israel’s war in Gaza for Washington and led to a flurry of activity in the lower chamber, where Republican leaders have teed up a series of bills and resolutions in response.

The first pieces of legislation are set to pass the chamber Monday evening. They deal with a range of issues, including directing US representatives at both the IMF and World Bank to oppose financial assistance to Iran and tightening sanctions against Chinese firms known to do business with Iran’s energy sector.

Read the full article here:

[*Iran’s strikes have changed the conversation on Ukraine and Israel in Congress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iran-strikes-israel-ukraine-aid-votes-b2529142.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war live: Kyiv planning ‘serious operation’ in Crimea as Zelensky slams Pope’s white flag claim*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BHT-D0X1-DY4H-K16V-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 9650 words

**Byline:** Alisha Rahaman Sarkar,Joe Middleton and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Ukrainian attacks on Putin’s prized Black Sea fleet are ‘message’ to Crimean residents who feel ‘forgotten’, says Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is planning a “serious operation” in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) , the peninsula illegally annexed by [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in 2014, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) ’s military intelligence chief has said.

Speaking in a new programme aired on Ukrainian television, Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov pointed to recent Ukrainian attacks on [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s prized Black Sea fleet as sending a message to “forgotten” residents in the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.

“These are all preparatory measures for a serious operation in Crimea,” said Mr Budanov, in reference to Ukrainian attacks on Russia’s navy. “This is a test of the correctness of our statements about the ways of approach and departure from there.

“In addition, it is a good message for the population that has been living under occupation for 10 years. Many of them believe that they have been forgotten.”

It came as president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) hit back at [*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) ’s claims that Ukraine should have the “courage of the white flag”, telling the Catholic leader that [*Ukrainians “with weapons in their hands*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/ukraine-war-anniversary-russia-putin-congress-b2501362.html) and under the blue and yellow flag” were resisting Russia’s further invasion into Europe.

Key Points

Ukraine planning ‘serious operation’ in Crimea, Kyiv’s intelligence chief says Zelensky responds to Pope’s call for Ukraine to raise ‘white flag’ Ukrainian air defences shoot down 15 out of 25 Russian drones in overnight attack Washington prepared for Russian nuclear attack on Ukraine in 2022 Pope sparks outrage after saying Ukraine should wave ‘white flag'

Russia producing nearly three times more artillery shells than West, report suggests

Russia is on track to produce nearly three times more artillery shells than Europe and the United States this year to support its war in Ukraine, CNN reports.

The news outlet cited Nato intelligence estimates and sources familiar with the matter in saying that Vladimir Putin has the capacity to produce some three million artillery shells a year – which compares with the US and Europe being capable of sending just 1.2 million shells to Ukraine.

Both armies have been expending ammunition at a ferocious rate since Russia’s invasion, but a European official said Russia is now currently firing around 10,000 shells a day, compared with Ukraine firing just 2,000 a day on average, with disparities in these figures differing along the vast frontline.

“What we are in now is a production war,” a senior Nato official told CNN. “The outcome in Ukraine depends on how each side is equipped to conduct this war.”

Nato chief distances himself from Macron’s claim about deploying troops to Ukraine

Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg has distanced himself from French president Emmanuel Macron’s claim that Western allies should not rule out deploying troops to Ukraine.

“Nato has no plans to send troops to Ukraine and Nato’s not party to the conflict, nor are Nato allies,” Mr Stoltenberg told Reuters.

Mr Stoltenberg said that even if individual Nato countries sent troops to Ukraine, that would affect the alliance as a whole as its members are bound by a collective defence pact.

Asked if Mr Macron had made a mistake by talking of “strategic ambiguity” on the possible deployment of Western troops to Ukraine, Mr Stoltenberg said: “I think it is important that we consult and that we have a common approach to these important topics because they matter for all of us.”

Poland’s president to propose Nato members spend 3% of GDP on defence

Poland’s president will propose during a visit to the United States that Nato members spend 3 per cent of their GDP on defence, arguing that the military alliance’s response to Russia’s war in Ukraine must be “clear and bold”.

“I want to propose ... that Nato countries decide together that the alliance’s requirement will be to spend not 2 per cent, but 3 per cent of GDP on defence, and that this will be a limit below which it is absolutely not recommended to go,” Andrzej Duda told a meeting of Poland’s National Security Council on Monday.

Mr Duda and Polish prime minister Donald Tusk will visit the White House in Washington on Tuesday to mark the 25th anniversary of Poland joining Nato.

Poland is spending around 4 per cent of its GDP on boosting its armed forces this year.

\*Edit – a previous title of this blog post incorrectly stated Poland would urge Nato members to spend 4 per cent, not 3.\*

Russia claims US trying to meddle in presidential elections

Russia’s foreign intelligence service has accused the United States of trying to meddle in Russia’s presidential election, with Vladimir Putin having warned the West that any attempts by foreign powers to meddle in the ballot will be considered an act of aggression.

Russia’s SVR Foreign Intelligence Service claimed on Monday to have information that Joe Biden’s US administration had set out to meddle in the election – and even had plans to launch a cyber attack on the online voting system, state media reported.

“According to information received by the Foreign Intelligence Service of the Russian Federation, the administration of J. Biden is setting a task for American NGOs to achieve a decrease in turnout,” the SVR was cited as saying.

“With the participation of leading American IT specialists, it is planned to carry out cyber attacks on the remote electronic voting system, which will make it impossible to count the votes of a significant proportion of Russian voters,” the SVR said.

The spying service did not provide any evidence for its claims, and there was no immediate reaction from Washington. There is next to no prospect of anyone other than Mr Putin – already Russia’s longest-serving leader since Joseph Stalin – will even come close to winning the tightly-controlled elections later this week.

Last week, the Kremlin insisted Russia would not meddle in the upcoming US presidential elections in November, dismissing American findings that Moscow orchestrated campaigns to sway both the 2016 and 2020 US presidential elections.

South Korean citizen arrested in Russia on suspicion of spying, state news says

A South Korean citizen has been arrested in Russia on suspicion of espionage, Russian state news agency Tass has reported.

Russian law enforcement claimed the man had been detained in the far eastern city of Vladivostok before being transferred to Moscow for “investigative actions”, Tass reported, in what the state outlet said was the first such case against a South Korean national. It did not provide any detail on the nature of the alleged spying.

An official reached at South Korea’s foreign ministry had no immediate comment.

Russia regards South Korea as an “unfriendly” country because of Seoul’s support for Western sanctions against Moscow over the war in Ukraine. Moscow has also cultivated closer relations with North Korea, which is believed to be supplying Russia with ammunition for the war, which both nations have denied.

Ukraine planning ‘serious operation’ in Crimea, Kyiv’s intelligence chief says

Ukraine is planning a “serious operation” in Crimea, Kyiv’s military intelligence chief has said.

Speaking in a new film aired on Ukrainian television called War for the Sea: from the Dnipro to the Crimea, Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov pointed to recent Ukrainian attacks on Vladimir Putin’s prized Black Sea fleet as sending a message to “forgotten” residents in the peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.

“These are all preparatory measures for a serious operation in Crimea,” said Mr Budanov, in reference to Ukrainian attacks on Russia’s navy.

“This is a test of the correctness of our statements about the ways of approach and departure from there. In addition, it is a good message for the population that has been living under occupation for 10 years. Many of them believe that they have been forgotten.”

Putin pledges over £99bn in public spending as election looms

Vladimir Putin is set to extend his 24 years as Russia’s ruler in an election on this week and has promised more than 11.5trn roubles (£99bn) in infrastructure and social spending over the next six years.

“This is the programme of a strong, sovereign country that confidently looks to the future,” the president told Russia’s elite in a speech on 29 February. “We have both the resources and tremendous opportunities to achieve our goals.”

Russia’s total budget spending in 2024 is planned at 36.6 trillion roubles (£310bn), with military expenditure set to exceed social spending for the first time this year, as Moscow presses on with its war in Ukraine.

The announced measures could cost the budget up to 2trn roubles a year, estimated Dmitry Polevoy, head of investments at Astra Asset Management. “At first glance, it does not look “unaffordable”, although in the case of a more negative economic situation than the authorities predict, this will require a search for additional sources of financing,” Mr Polevoy told Reuters.

Sinara Investment Bank analysts said the measures imply significant fiscal stimulation of the economy, meaning an imminent tax increase is likely. Mr Putin has already hinted at raising the tax burden for wealthy individuals and companies.

Watch: 20 Days in Mariupol director gives moving speech as he wins Oscar

Exhaustion, dwindling reserves and a commander who disappeared: How Ukraine lost Avdiivka to Russia

One Ukrainian brigade had defended the same block of industrial buildings for months without a break. Another had been in Avdiivka for nearly the entire two years of the war, bone-tired but with no replacements to relieve them.

Ammunition was low, and the Russians conducted dozens of airstrikes every day, using “glide bombs” to obliterate even fortified positions.

Russian soldiers came in waves: First lightly armed grunts, to force the Ukrainian defenders to spend precious bullets, followed by well-trained soldiers. Sometimes groups of Russians popped out of tunnels in front of them and opened fire.

[*Exhaustion, dwindling reserves and a commander who disappeared: How Ukraine lost Avdiivka to Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-donetsk-soviet-mariupol-b2510461.html)

Sweden’s flag raised at Nato headquarters

Sweden’s national flag has been raised at Nato headquarters, cementing the Nordic country’s place as the 32nd member of the alliance.

The ceremony came two years after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine persuaded Sweden’s reluctant public to seek safety under Nato’s security umbrella.

Under a steady rain, Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and Nato secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg looked on as two soldiers raised the blue banner emblazoned with a yellow cross among the official circle of national flags at the headquarters in Brussels, Belgium.

“We are humble, but we are also proud. We know the expectations for Sweden are high, but we also have high expectations for ourselves,” Mr Kristersson told reporters minutes before the ceremony. “We will share burdens, responsibilities and risks with our allies.”

Sweden set aside decades of post-war neutrality when it formally joined Nato last Thursday.

ICYMI: Russian gas pipeline explodes in huge fireball blast amid series of 'Ukrainian strikes'

Polish PM to propose 3% GDP boost for defence spending

Poland’s president will propose during a visit to the United States that Nato members spend 3 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) on defence, he said on Monday.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022 has made defence a top priority for members of Nato’s eastern flank, and Poland is spending around 4 per cent of GDP on boosting its armed forces this year.

“I want to propose... that NATO countries decide together that the alliance’s requirement will be to spend not 2%, but 3% of GDP on defence, and that this will be a limit below which it is absolutely not recommended to go,” Andrzej Duda said during a meeting of Poland’s National Security Council.

He said that Nato’s response to Russia following the outbreak of war in Ukraine must be “clear and bold”.

Duda and Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk will visit the White House in Washington on Tuesday to mark the 25th anniversary of Poland joining Nato.

Ukrainian Oscar winner Mstyslav Chernov: ‘I am the first director to admit I wish I never won this award’

Ukrainian director who has won his country’s first Academy Award has admitted he would trade the Oscar in a second if it would stop the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Mstyslav Chernov, a Ukrainian journalist, was given a standing ovation last night after winning Best Documentary Feature for his film 20 Days in Mariupol. During his acceptance speech, he called on his fellow Academy Award attendees to help set the history books straight in the face of Russian propaganda.

“This is the first Oscar in Ukrainian history, and I’m honoured,” Mr Chernov said. “But probably I will be the first director on this stage who will say I wish I never made this film. I wish to be able to exchange this to Russia never attacking Ukraine, never occupying our cities.

Tom Watlingreports.

[*Ukrainian Oscar-winner Mstyslav Chernov: ‘This is not for me, this is for Mariupol’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/oscar-ukraine-mariupol-mstyslav-chernov-b2510532.html)

Hungarian PM Orban claims Trump won’t hand over funds to Ukraine

Donald Trump will not give money to help Ukraine fight Russia if he wins the presidency again and that will hasten an end to the war, Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban said after meeting him.

Orban, who is backing his long-time ally’s bid to return to White House, met Trump in Florida on Friday.

“He will not give a penny into the Ukraine-Russia war and therefore the war will end,” Orban told state television late on Sunday. As it is obvious that Ukraine on its own cannot stand on its feet.”

“If the Americans do not give money and weapons, and also the Europeans, then this war will be over. And if the Americans do not give money the Europeans are unable to finance this war on their own, and then the war will end.”

Orban has refused to send weapons to Kyiv and kept up close economic ties with Moscow since Russian forces invaded Ukraine in 2022. He last met Russian president Vladimir Putin in October in China despite EU efforts to isolate Moscow.

Video: Sweden welcomed into Nato with flag-raising ceremony

Watch live as [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) is welcomed into [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) with a [*flag-raising ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-nato-members-list-russia-border-b2509202.html) on Monday, 11 March.

[*The Scandinavian country*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/sweden-ap-nato-europe-stockholm-b2505768.html) has become the alliance’s second new member since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

It follows [*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) ’s accession to Nato in April 2023 after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ordered the invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

[*Watch live: Sweden welcomed into Nato with flag-raising ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-nato-russia-ukraine-war-b2510581.html)

Ukrainian air defences shoot down 15 out of 25 Russian drones amid overnight attack

Ukrainian air defences shot down 15 out of 25 Russian drones launched in an overnight attack on the southern Odesa region, but an infrastructure facility was hit, the military and regional officials said on Monday.

The military said in a statement that 10 drones were downed in the skies over the Black Sea port of Odesa.

“Another massive nighttime drone attack by the Russians in the Odesa region. Combat work lasted for one hour and a half,” said Oleh Kiper, the Odesa regional governor.

“Air defence units repelled many waves of Shaheds coming from the Black Sea via complex manoeuvres and between residential buildings and industrial districts, that made air defence work more difficult.”

There were no immediate reports of casualties. The Odesa region has come under six Russian drone attacks so far this month.

Russia has intensified bombardments of Ukrainian ports, including Odesa, and grain infrastructure after Moscow last summer pulled out of a UN-brokered deal that allowed some food exports to flow, despite the war, now in its third year.

Putin ‘ready for talks’ amid Pope intervention

Russian president Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said that Russia is ready for talks to resolve the Ukraine crisis, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said on Monday, commenting on a call by Pope Francis for Ukraine to enter negotiations.

Ukraine has rebuffed the pope’s call for it to show what he called the courage of the “white flag” and negotiate an end to the two-year war.

Volodymyr Zelensky hit back at Pope Francis after his intervention and said Ukrainians “with weapons in their hands and under the blue and yellow flag” were resisting Russia’s further invasion into Europe. “Christians, Muslims, Jews --everyone... They support us with prayer, conversation, and deeds.”

Grain silo destroyed by Russian missile attack, says owner

A grain silo was completely destroyed in a Russian missile attack on the eastern Ukrainian Dnipro region this weekend, the facility’s owner Ukrlandfarming said late on Sunday.

Ukrlandfarming is one of the Ukraine‘s largest agrarian holdings, which as a result of the Russian invasion in 2022 suffered losses at around $1 billion as of the end of 2023.

“On the evening of 9 March 2024, the enemy launched a missile attack on the Dnipro region. A 58-year-old man, our employee, was injured. The production facilities of our company were completely destroyed,” the company said in a statement. It provided no further details.

Analysts from the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) said last month the Ukrainian agricultural sector has suffered almost $80 billion in direct and indirect losses linked to Russia’s invasion.

ICYMI: Russian gas pipeline explodes in huge fireball after series of ‘Ukrainian strikes’

[*Vladamir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladamir-putin) ’s key Russian gas pipeline erupted into a huge fireball after a series of “Ukrainian strikes”.

The major explosion hit the key Russian gas pipeline for the second time in ten months.

According to the Telegram channel Shot, the explosion occurred near the village of Lykhma, in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KhMAO).

Footage filmed several miles away captured the glow from the inferno that engulfed the Yamburg-Yelets 1 main supply pipe.

The cause of the explosion is being investigated and comes amid a series of sabotage strikes on key Russian energy facilities linked to the [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The Independent has not been able to independently verify the footage.

[*Russian gas pipeline explodes in huge fireball after series of ‘Ukrainian strikes’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russian-gas-pipeline-explosion-video-b2510173.html)

Sending foreign troops would provide ‘targets’ for Russia, says Cameron

David Cameron has said he is opposed to sending Western troops to Ukraine even for training missions, warning that the UK “should not create obvious targets” for Vladimir Putin.

During an interview with German daily newspaper Suddeutsche Zeitung, the foreign secretary was asked whether it was wise to rule out sending Western soldiers to Ukraine.

He said training missions were best carried out abroad, and added that 60,000 Ukrainian soldiers have been trained in the UK.

More here.

[*Cameron says sending foreign troops to Ukraine would provide ‘targets’ for Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/david-cameron-russia-ukraine-targets-britain-b2510263.html)

Russian missile attack destroys large silo in Ukraine, owner says

A large grain silo was completely destroyed in a Russian missile attack on the eastern Ukrainian Dnipro region this weekend and injured one person, the facility’s owner Ukrlandfarming said late on Sunday.

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Analysts from the Kyiv School of Economics (KSE) said last month the Ukrainian agricultural sector has suffered almost $80 billion in direct and indirect losses linked to Russia’s invasion.

The figure included losses of $5.8 billion from the destruction of equipment, $1.8 billion from damage to silos and almost $2 billion from ruined agricultural products.

At the beginning of January 2023, analysts estimated such losses at $38 billion.

Russian student jailed for pro-Ukraine WiFi name

A court in Moscow has sentenced a student to prison for renaming his WiFi network “Slava Ukraini“, which translates to “Glory to Ukraine”.

Slava Ukraini has been a war cry for the Ukrainian defenders since the onset of Vladimir Putin’s invasion in February 2022.

The Moscow State University student was sentenced to 10 days in prison after the court found him guilty of displaying “public demonstration of Nazi symbolics… or symbols of extremist organisations”.

Russia says pope's appeal on Ukraine war is to the West

Russia said Pope Francis’s call for talks with Moscow to end the war in Ukraine was a request to Kyiv’s Western allies to abandon their ambition to defeat Russia and to recognise the West’s mistake in the Ukraine war, Italy’s ANSA news agency reported.

Pope Francis has said that Ukraine should have what he called the courage of the “white flag” and negotiate an end to the war with Russia that followed Moscow’s full-scale invasion two years ago and that has killed tens of thousands.

“The way I see it, the Pope is asking the West to put aside its ambitions and admit that it was wrong,” the ANSA news agency quoted Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova as saying.

Zakharova said that the West was using Ukraine as an instrument of its ambitions to weaken Russia.

Serbia revokes an expulsion order for a Russian woman after a public outcry

After a public outcry, Serbia’s authorities have revoked an expulsion order for a Russian woman who signed an open letter denouncing the invasion of Ukraine, a pro-democracy Russian group in the Balkan country said on Friday.

Police told Elena Koposova that her appeal has been granted and that she can stay in Serbia, where she has lived with her family since 2019, the Russian Democratic Society group said in a statement.

Full report:

[*Serbia revokes an expulsion order for a Russian woman after a public outcry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/serbia-ap-ukraine-belgrade-police-b2509536.html)

Polish minister wades into Pope’s ‘white flag’ controversy

Polish foreign minister Radek Sikorski on Sunday said Pope Francis should ask Vladimir Putin to withdraw his troops from Ukraine.

His statement comes a day after the Pope urged Kyiv to have the “courage of the white flag”, urging them to negotiate with Russia, more than two years into the invasion.

“How about, for balance, encouraging Putin to have the courage to withdraw his army from Ukraine,” Mr Sikorski wrote on X.

“Peace would immediately ensue without the need for negotiations.”

How about, for balance, encouraging Putin to have the courage to withdraw his army from Ukraine?Peace would immediately ensue without the need for negotiations. [*https://t.co/gWNYSUt79u*](https://t.co/gWNYSUt79u) — Radosław Sikorski (@sikorskiradek) [*March 10, 2024*](https://twitter.com/sikorskiradek/status/1766757253502169360?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ICYMI: Britain says it will provide 10,000 drones to Ukraine in its fight against Russia 06:00 , Matt Mathers[*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) said Thursday that it would provide 10,000 drones to arm [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in its fight against Russia.The announcement by Defense Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) during a visit in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky includes an investment of 125 million pounds ($160 million) on top of 200 million pounds ($256 million) previously committed for drones.Full report: [*Britain says it will provide 10,000 drones to Ukraine in its fight against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-drones-uk-aid-shapps-b2509206.html) St Petersburg airport resumes operations after ‘drone attack'05:30 , Alisha Rahaman Sarkar Pulkovo airport in St Petersburg has resumed operations after the Russian defence ministry said a Ukrainian drone was shot down in the neighbouring Leningrad region on Sunday.Alexander Drozdenko, the Leningrad region’s governor, said Pulkovo’s airspace was sealed off due to the drone, which did not inflict any damage or casualties.The airport and Rosaviatsia, the country’s aviation watchdog, did not say why the restrictions had been imposed.Program that brought Ukrainians to North Dakota oil fields ends05:00 , Matt Mathers An oil and gas trade group has ended a recruitment program that brought Ukrainians from their war-torn country to [*North Dakota*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-dakota) ‘s oil field to fill jobs.The North Dakota Petroleum Council shelved the Bakken Global Recruitment of Oilfield Workers program after placing about 60 Ukrainians with 16 employers from July to November 2023, the group’s president, Ron Ness, said. The goal had been to recruit 100 workers by the end of last year and 400 within the first 12 months of the program, not all of them from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Full report: [*Program that brought Ukrainians to North Dakota oil fields ends*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-north-dakota-ukraine-alaska-europe-b2509714.html) Three killed in Russian attack in Donetsk04:30 , Alisha Rahaman Sarkar At least two bodies were pulled out from under the rubble after Russian drones hit residential buildings in Dobropillia, Donetsk Oblast.The Russian military targeted the residential area with Shahed drones on Sunday, governor Vadym Filashkin said.Another person was killed in the Russian shelling of Chasiv Yar in Donetsk Oblast on Sunday morning. “The situation in the city is consistently difficult. There are many attacks during the day,” said Serhiy Chaus, the city’s military administration head.A lonely radio nerd. A poet. Vladimir Putin's crackdown sweeps up ordinary Russians04:00 , Matt Mathers A lonely man jailed for criticizing the government on his ham radio. A poet assaulted by police after he recited a poem objecting to Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). A low-profile woman committed to a psychiatric facility for condemning the invasion on social media.President Vladimir Putin’s 24 years in power are almost certain to be extended six more by this month’s presidential election. That leadership has transformed [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). A country that tolerated some dissent is now one that ruthlessly suppresses it.Full report: [*A lonely radio nerd. A poet. Vladimir Putin's crackdown sweeps up ordinary Russians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-russia-ukraine-prison-vladimir-putin-b2509827.html) Zelensky responds to Pope’s call for Ukraine to raise ‘white flag’03:47 , Alisha Rahaman Sarkar Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky criticised Pope Francis’s call to negotiate with Russia.The Pope over the weekend said Kyiv should have the “courage of the white flag”. Some of the Ukrainian officials compared the statement to a few Catholic churches collaborating with Nazi Germany during World War II.Mr Zelensky in his evening address responded by saying that Ukrainians of all faiths stood up to defend their country when Russia invaded in February 2022.“Russian murderers and torturers are not moving further into Europe only because they are being held back by Ukrainians with weapons in their hands and under the blue and yellow flag,” he said.“Christians, Muslims, Jews --everyone... They support us with prayer, conversation, and deeds.“This is what the church is --with people. And not two and a half thousand kilometres away, somewhere to mediate virtually between someone who wants to live and someone who wants to destroy you,” Mr Zelensky said.‘20 Days in Mariupol’ wins best documentary at the Academy Awards03:21 , Alisha Rahaman Sarkar Filmmaker Mstyslav Chernov’s 20 Days in Mariupol, a harrowing first-person account of the early days of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in 2022, has won the best documentary Oscar.A joint production of The Associated Press and PBS’ “Frontline”, statuettes were awarded to Chernov, producer and editor Michelle Mizner and producer Raney Aronson-Rat.“This is the first Oscar in Ukrainian history, and I’m honored,” an emotional Chernov said. “Probably I will be the first director on this stage to say I wish I’d never made this film, I wish to be able to exchange this to Russia never attacking Ukraine.”He called on Russia to cease aggression in Ukraine. “I wish for them to release all the hostages, all the soldiers who are protecting their land, all the civilians who are in their jails,” he said.“We can make sure that the history record is set straight and the truth will prevail, and that the people of Mariupol, and those who have given their lives, will never be forgotten. Because cinema forms memories and memories form history.”Nepali mercenaries lured to fight for Russia in Ukraine03:00 , Matt Mathers Pushed by poverty, now desperate to return, Narendra Shrestha speaks with the families of men who enlisted to fund a better life – only to quickly discover how easily they might lose the one they have.Read Narendra’s piece in full here: [*Nepali mercenaries lured to fight for Russia in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/photography/nepali-mercenaries-lured-fight-russia-ukraine-b2503358.html) Moldova faces multiple threats from Russia as it turns toward EU membership, foreign minister says02:00 , Matt Mathers The past two years have been the hardest and most tumultuous for [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) candidate Moldova in more than three decades as it faces threats from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in multiple spheres of public life, the country’s foreign minister says.Since Russia invaded [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in 2022, its neighbor Moldova has faced a litany of crises that have at times raised fears the country is also in Russia’s crosshairs. These included errant missiles landing on its territory; a severe energy crisis after Moscow dramatically reduced gas supplies; rampant inflation; and protests by pro-Russia parties against the pro-Western government. Moldova has also taken in the highest number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** per capita of any country.Full report: [*Moldova faces multiple threats from Russia as it turns toward EU membership, foreign minister says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-moldova-russia-european-union-ukraine-b2510182.html) A French frigate 'destroys' a German sub in Norway's waters in NATO's biggest drills since Cold War01:00 , Matt Mathers Large NATO drills in the frigid fjords of northern [*Norway*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/norway) may be just war games meant to hone the fighting skills of the newly expanded 32-nation military alliance. But for troops taking part, they are very real.And that’s the whole point.Full report: [*A French frigate 'destroys' a German sub in Norway's waters in NATO's biggest drills since Cold War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/nato-ap-norway-russia-french-b2509937.html) Russia replaces navy chief, Fontanka reports00:01 , Matt Mathers Russia has appointed Admiral Alexander Moiseev as acting commander-in-chief of the Russian navy, the Fontanka news outlet reported on Sunday, citing unidentified sources.Reuters could not immediately verify the Fontanka report which said that Moiseev, 61, currently commander of the Northern Fleet, will soon be appointed as naval commander-in-chief on a permanent basis.Fontanka, a private news service based in St Petersburg, did not mention any reason for the appointment. It said the navy’s press service redirected its request for a comment to the defence ministry which did not respond to a request for comment.Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, navy commander-in-chief since May 2019, is still listed in that role on the defence ministry’s website.Ukraine has in recent months stepped up attacks in the Black Sea and on Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014.Kyiv has reported a series of strikes, including the sinking of a large landing ship by naval drones in mid-February and a patrol ship this week. Russia has not acknowledged any such losses.St Petersburg airport resumes operations after drone shot down in nearby regionSunday 10 March 2024 23:00 , Matt Mathers Pulkovo airport in Saint Petersburg has resumed operations as Russian Defence Ministry said a Ukrainian drone was shot down in the neighbouring Leningrad region on Sunday.Alexander Drozdenko, the Leningrad region’s governor, adjacent to Saint Petersburg, said on Telegram that airspace was sealed off due to the drone, which did not inflict any damage or casualties.The airport and Rosaviatsia, the country’s aviation watchdog, did not say why the restrictions had been imposed.Ukraine minister, responding to Pope Francis, says Kyiv will never raise white flagSunday 10 March 2024 22:00 , Matt Mathers Ukraine’s foreign minister, responding to Pope Francis’s call to show "the courage of the white flag" and negotiate an end to the war with Russia, said on Sunday that Kyiv would never capitulate and told the Vatican to pay special heed to its role in World War Two.Francis made the comments in an interview made available in part at the weekend. He responded to a presenter’s suggestion by saying that when things were not going well for a party to a conflict "you have to have the courage to negotiate".Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, writing on social media platform X, said that the strong person in any dispute "stands on the side of good rather than attempting to put them on the same footing and call it ‘negotiations’"."Our flag is a yellow and blue one," Kuleba wrote in English, referring to the Ukrainian national flag. "This is the flag by which we live, die, and prevail. We shall never raise any other flags."Kuleba also pointed to allegations that Pope Pius XII failed to take action against Nazi tyranny in World War Two."At the same time, when it comes to the white flag, we know this Vatican’s strategy from the first half of the twentieth century," he wrote."I urge (the Vatican) to avoid repeating the mistakes of the past and to support Ukraine and its people in their just struggle for their lives."Найсильніший той, хто у битві добра зі злом стає на бік добра, а не намагається зрівняти їх, назвавши це «переговорами».Що стосується білого прапору, то з історії першої половини ХХ століття нам відома ця стратегія Ватикану. Закликаю не повторювати історичних помилок і…— Dmytro Kuleba (@DmytroKuleba) [*March 10, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DmytroKuleba/status/1766819134891844070?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine’s Zelensky dismisses pope’s appeal for talks with Russia as ‘virtual mediation’Sunday 10 March 2024 21:00 , Matt Mathers Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky on Sunday dismissed Pope Francis’s call for talks with Russia as "virtual mediation" from a distance.Zelensky, in his nightly video address, did not refer directly to Francis or his remarks, but said the pope’s ideas had nothing to do with efforts by religious figures in Ukraine to help the country."They support us with prayer, with their discussion and with deeds. "This is indeed what a church with the people is," Zelensky said."Not 2,500 km away, somewhere, virtual mediation between someone who wants to live and someone who wants to destroy you."Glory to heroes! Georgia mourns two soldiers killed on front linesSunday 10 March 2024 19:00 , Barney Davis Two more soldiers of the Georgian Legion, fighting Russian forces, have been killed in Ukraine, according to the force.A Georgian Legion Facebook post announced the deaths of Nodar Nasirov and Giorgi Gogiashvili on Sunday.It is unknown where on the front line they were killed.A spokesman said: “Nodar Nasirov and Giorgi Gogiashvili soldiers of the Georgian Legion, died while performing combat duties on the front line. “The Georgian Legion expresses its condolences to the families of the deceased. Glory to the heroes!”Russia replaces navy chief, Fontanka reportsSunday 10 March 2024 18:21 , Barney Davis Russia has appointed Admiral Alexander Moiseev as acting commander-in-chief of the Russian navy, the Fontanka news outlet reported on Sunday, citing unidentified sources.Reuters could not immediately verify the Fontanka report which said that Moiseev, 61, currently commander of the Northern Fleet, will soon be appointed as naval commander-in-chief on a permanent basis.Fontanka, a private news service based in St Petersburg, did not mention any reason for the appointment. It said the navy’s press service redirected its request for a comment to the defence ministry which did not respond to a request for comment.Admiral Nikolai Yevmenov, navy commander-in-chief since May 2019, is still listed in that role on the defence ministry’s website.Ukraine has in recent months stepped up attacks in the Black Sea and on Crimea, which Russia annexed in 2014.Kyiv has reported a series of strikes, including the sinking of a large landing ship by naval drones in mid-February and a patrol ship this week. Russia has not acknowledged any such losses.‘The Kremlin tried to recruit me – but when I condemned the war, I was forced into exile’Sunday 10 March 2024 17:17 , Barney DavisPinchas Goldschmidt, the chief Rabbi of Moscow, witnessed first-hand the rise of Putin, writesAdam Luck. Now that he’s fled the country after criticising the Ukraine war, he has a stark warning for the West – the Russian leader has his sights set on more than just Kyiv...When the chief rabbi of [*Moscow was summoned*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/alexei-navalny-funeral-russia-moscow-b2505582.html) by [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) ’s FSB agents to Sadovnicheskaya Street police station in 2003, they had one goal: to turn him into a Russian agent.Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, who had been chief rabbi for the previous decade, was able to resist the Russian state in their efforts to turn him. But when [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded Ukraine two years ago, his time was up.[*‘The Kremlin tried to recruit me – then I had to flee for my safety’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/kremlin-putin-russia-pinchas-goldschmidt-b2507955.html) Investigators bust ring trafficking Indians to fight for Russia in UkraineSunday 10 March 2024 17:00 , Barney Davis India’s federal investigation agency says it has busted a major international human trafficking network involved in[*sending workers to the Russia-Ukraine war under the guise of lucrative job offers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/indians-russian-army-israel-gaza-war-b2507867.html). Multiple from India’s [*Central Bureau of Investigation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/central-bureau-of-investigation) (CBI) conducted searches at 15 places in seven cities including the capital [*New Delhi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-delhi) on Thursday.The raids came amid growing media reports of[*Indian nationals being unwittingly recruited to join the Russian army*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/indians-fighting-russia-war-ukraine-b2501238.html) in its invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after they moved countries in response to adverts for jobs seeking “army helpers”.[*Investigators bust ring trafficking Indians to fight for Russia in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/india-russia-ukraine-war-trafficking-b2509281.html) Flights resume at airport after Ukrainain drone shot downSunday 10 March 2024 16:18 , Barney Davis Pulkovo airport in Saint Petersburg has resumed operations as Russian Defence Ministry said a Ukrainian drone was shot down in the neighbouring Leningrad region on Sunday.Alexander Drozdenko, the Leningrad region’s governor, adjacent to Saint Petersburg, said on Telegram that airspace was sealed off due to the drone, which did not inflict any damage or casualties.The airport and Rosaviatsia, the country’s aviation watchdog, did not say why the restrictions had been imposedPope criticised for ‘white flag’ commentSunday 10 March 2024 15:07 , Barney Davis Ukrainian and allied officials have criticised Pope Francis for saying Kyiv should have the “courage” to negotiate an end to the war with Russia, a statement many interpreted as a call on Ukraine to surrender.The foreign minister of Poland, a vocal ally of Kyiv, and Ukraine’s ambassador to the Vatican both used Second World War analogies to condemn the pope’s remarks, while a leader of one of Ukraine’s Christian churches said on Sunday that only the country’s determined resistance to Russia’s aggression had prevented a mass slaughter of civilians.In an interview recorded last month with Swiss broadcaster RSI and partially released on Saturday, Francis used the phrase “the courage of the white flag” as he argued that Ukraine, facing a possible defeat, should be open to peace talks brokered by international powers.“How about, for balance, encouraging (Russian President Vladimir) Putin to have the courage to withdraw his army from Ukraine? Peace would immediately ensue without the need for negotiations,” Polish Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski responded with a post on X, formerly Twitter.In a separate post, Mr Sikorski drew parallels between those calling for negotiations while “denying (Ukraine) the means to defend itself” and European leaders’ “appeasement” of Adolf Hitler just before the Second World War.Andrii Yurash, Ukraine’s ambassador to the Holy See, said it is “necessary to learn lessons” from that conflict. His post on X appeared to compare the pope’s comments to calls for “talking with Hitler” while raising “a white flag to satisfy him”.A Vatican spokesman later clarified that the pope supported “a stop to hostilities (and) a truce achieved with the courage of negotiations”, rather than an outright Ukrainian surrender.Female soldier explains why she fights for UkraineSunday 10 March 2024 13:30 , Barney DavisUkraine has inspired the world with their unique bravery and spirit.One soldier tells her powerful story of serving her country and the impact it’s had on her life. Watch the full video here: [*https://t.co/nLC4NREtjM*](https://t.co/nLC4NREtjM) [*#StandwithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/XvDzkqbrc3*](https://t.co/XvDzkqbrc3) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*March 10, 2024*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1766766125428187261?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Two trapped under rubble after Russian kamikaze drone strike

Donetsk has suffered destruction and at least two civilians are believed to have been trapped under the rubble after a Russian drone strike.

“After midnight, enemy drones hit Dobropillia, causing destruction in the residential sector. Two civilians are likely under the rubble,” a local police report says on Telegram.

According to the police report, a person was killed, 14 residents were injured, residential buildings and a church were damaged in Donetsk region as a result of Russian strikes.

As Russian artillery pummeled Chasiv Yar, a civilian was killed and two apartment blocks sustained damage.

According to local authorities, 134 people, including 23 children, were evacuated from front line settlements in Donetsk region over the past 24 hours.

Russian gas pipeline explodes in huge fireball after series of ‘Ukrainian strikes’

[*Vladamir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladamir-putin) ’s key Russian gas pipeline erupted into a huge fireball after a series of “Ukrainian strikes”.

The major explosion hit the key Russian gas pipeline for the second time in ten months.

According to the Telegram channel Shot, the explosion occurred near the village of Lykhma, in the Khanty-Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug (KhMAO).

Footage filmed several miles away captured the glow from the inferno that engulfed the Yamburg-Yelets 1 main supply pipe.

The cause of the explosion is being investigated and comes amid a series of sabotage strikes on key Russian energy facilities linked to the [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The Independent has not been able to independently verify the footage.

[*Russian gas pipeline explodes in huge fireball after series of ‘Ukrainian strikes’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russian-gas-pipeline-explosion-video-b2510173.html)

Moldova facing Russian threat as it turns towards EU

The past two years have been the hardest and most tumultuous for European Union candidate Moldova in more than three decades as it faces threats from Russia in multiple spheres of public life, the country’s foreign minister says.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, its neighbour Moldova has faced a litany of crises that have at times raised fears the country is also in Russia’s crosshairs.

These included errant missiles landing on its territory; a severe energy crisis after Moscow dramatically reduced gas supplies; rampant inflation; and protests by pro-Russia parties against the pro-Western government. Moldova has also taken in the highest number of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** per capita of any country.

“This past two years without exaggeration have been by far the most difficult in the past 30 years,” Mihai Popsoi, appointed foreign minister in late January, told The Associated Press in an interview.

Moldova gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, but Russia continues to see the country — sandwiched between Ukraine and EU member Romania — as within its sphere of influence.

Ukraine’s sacked military commander named new ambassador to the UK

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s former military chief has been appointed the country’s new ambassador to the United Kingdom, a month after he was sacked as head of the armed forces by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Zelenskyy announced that he has approved the appointment of Valerii Zaluzhnyi to one of Ukraine’s most important diplomatic positions.

Britain is a key supporter of Ukraine in its war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

[*Ukraine’s sacked military commander named new ambassador to the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/valerii-zaluzhnyi-uk-ukraine-zelensky-b2509429.html)

Woman dies in Ukraine's shelling of Russia's Kursk, governor says

A woman died as a result of Ukraine‘s shelling of the village of Kulbaki in Kursk and her husband was seriously injured, the governor of the Russian region bordering Ukraine said on Sunday.

“A residential building caught fire and a local female resident died,” Governor Roman Starovoit said on the Telegram messaging app. “Her husband suffered extensive burns.”

Another home was damaged in the village, parts of which were left without supply of electricity.

Reuters could not independently verify the report. There was no immediate comment from Ukraine.

Blasts and attacks on Russian regions bordering Ukraine have been frequent during the two years since Russia launched war on Ukraine. Russian officials have blamed either Ukrainian forces or pro-Ukrainian saboteurs for the attacks.

Moscow terror warning as UK and US embassy issue statement against travel

[*Uk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) and [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) residents have been told not to travel to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) amid a warning that a terror attack was planned for the country’s capital.

The US [*embassy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/embassy) in Russia warned that “extremists” had imminent plans for an attack in Moscow, hours after Russian security services said they had foiled a planned shooting at a synagogue by a cell from the Afghan arm of Islamic State.

The embassy, which has repeatedly urged all US citizens to leave Russia immediately, gave no further details about the nature of the threat, but said people should avoid concerts and crowds and be aware of their surroundings.

[*Moscow terror warning as UK and US embassy issue statement against travel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/moscow-terrorist-warning-embassy-russia-b2509332.html)

Sweden finally joins Nato after months of wrangling – meaning Putin has another member on his doorstep

Sweden has officially joined [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) – ending decades of post-[*Second World War neutrality*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/indians-russian-army-israel-gaza-war-b2507867.html) to become the[*alliance’s second new member*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-500-aid-trucks-gaza-germany-b2508871.html) since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The ratification [*cements Nato’s presence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-500-aid-trucks-gaza-germany-b2508871.html) in the Nordic region with all countries now members, and makes the [*Baltic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/baltic) essentially a “Nato sea” right on [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ‘s doorstep.

Swedish Prime Minister Ulf Kristersson and US Secretary of State Antony Blinken presided at a ceremony in which Sweden’s “instrument of accession” to the alliance was officially deposited at the State Department.

[*Sweden finally joins Nato after months of wrangling*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-nato-members-list-russia-border-b2509202.html)

Ukraine says Russia launched 39 drones, Ukraine downed 35

Ukraine‘s air defence systems destroyed 35 of 39 attack drones Russia launched overnight, Ukraine‘s air force said on Sunday.

Most of the drones were destroyed over Ukraine‘s eastern and southern regions, the air force said on the Telegram messaging app. It did not say whether there was any damage.

Russia launched four S-300 anti-aircraft guided missiles, the air force said. It did not say what happened to the missiles or whether they reached their targets.

Ukraine-launched drone catches fire at oil depot in Russia's Kursk, governor says

A drone launched by Ukraine fell and caught fire at an oil depot in Russia‘s Kursk region bordering Ukraine, the regional governor said on Sunday.

“Fire brigades and emergency services are working at the scene,” the governor, Roman Starovoit, said on the Telegram messaging app, without giving further details.

Pope Francis: Ukraine should have the courage of the 'white flag,' negotiate end of war with Russia

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) said in an interview that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , facing a possible defeat, should have the courage to negotiate an end to the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) and not be ashamed to sit at the same table to carry out peace talks.

The pope made his appeal during an interview recorded last month with Swiss broadcaster RSI, which was partially released on Saturday.

“I think that the strongest one is the one who looks at the situation, thinks about the people and has the courage of the white flag, and negotiates,” Francis said, adding that talks should take place with the help of international powers.

[*Pope Francis: Ukraine should have the courage of the 'white flag,' negotiate end of war with Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-russia-ukraine-recep-tayyip-erdogan-b2510031.html)

ICYMI: 2 killed including a 16-year-old in Russian artillery strikes in Ukraine

Ukrainian authorities said two people including a teenage boy were killed Saturday in Russian artillery attacks and Russia reported it had shot down a Ukrainian fighter jet and destroyed a wave of drones over several regions.

The attacks came as Russia is gaining momentum on battlefield and Ukraine is running low on ammunition.

Full report:

[*2 killed including a 16-year-old in Russian artillery strikes in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-emmanuel-macron-recep-tayyip-erdogan-donetsk-polish-b2509912.html)

ICYMI: With dissent stifled, some Russians help political prisoners by writing them letters of support

For Margarita, a 33-year-old event planner in St. Petersburg, the prison death of opposition leader [*Alexei Navalny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexei-navalny) was devastating news that left her dispirited and longing to take some sort of action.

But she said she had “no courage or strength” to stage a protest in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s increasingly repressive climate, where even the most innocuous expression of dissent can land people in jail.

Full report:

[*With dissent stifled, some Russians help political prisoners by writing them letters of support*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-vladimir-putin-alexei-navalny-tallinn-b2509187.html)

ICYMI: Sweden finally joins Nato after months of wrangling – meaning Putin has another member on his doorstep

Sweden has officially joined [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) – ending decades of post-[*Second World War neutrality*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/indians-russian-army-israel-gaza-war-b2507867.html) to become the[*alliance’s second new member*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-500-aid-trucks-gaza-germany-b2508871.html) since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The ratification [*cements Nato’s presence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/cameron-500-aid-trucks-gaza-germany-b2508871.html) in the Nordic region with all countries now members, and makes the [*Baltic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/baltic) essentially a “Nato sea” right on [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ‘s doorstep.

Full report:

[*Sweden finally joins Nato after months of wrangling*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sweden-nato-members-list-russia-border-b2509202.html)

ICYMI: Russia says its forces shot down 41 drones launched over Rostov region

The Russian Defense Ministry said its forces shot down 41 drones that were launched over the Rostov region, which borders Ukraine and is home to Russia‘s southern military command, along with two drones over the Kursk region and three over Volgograd.

There were no immediate reports of injuries.The ministry also said the air force had shot down a Ukrainian MiG-29 fighter jet over Pokrovsk, a city and important railway junction in the Donetsk region that is a prime Russian target following Ukrainian forces’ February withdrawal from Avdiivka, a significant setback for Ukraine‘s struggling war effort.

The governor of Russia‘s Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, reported that Ukrainian drones attacked two villages near the border Saturday, but that no one was injured. The governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov, did not specify damage from the attacks.

Despite its military setbacks, Ukraine resists suggestions of peace negotiations with Russia. During a visit by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Friday, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said his country was willing to host a peace summit of Russia and Ukraine.

But Zelensky remains firm on not engaging directly with Russia on peace talks and has said multiple times the initiative in peace negotiations must belong to the country which has been invaded.

A French frigate 'destroys' a German sub in Norway's waters in NATO's biggest drills since Cold War

Large NATO drills in the frigid fjords of northern [*Norway*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/norway) may be just war games meant to hone the fighting skills of the newly expanded 32-nation military alliance. But for troops taking part, they are very real.

And that’s the whole point.

Full report:

[*A French frigate 'destroys' a German sub in Norway's waters in NATO's biggest drills since Cold War*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/nato-ap-norway-russia-french-b2509937.html)

ICYMI: Russia says it downs Ukrainian fighter jet

Russian air defences have downed a Ukrainian MiG-29 fighter jet over Ukraine‘s Donetsk region, the RIA news agency cited Russia‘s defence ministry as saying on Saturday.

Ukrainian authorities have not reported any fighter jet losses in recent days.

ICYMI: 2 killed including a 16-year-old in Russian artillery strikes in Ukraine

Ukrainian authorities said two people including a teenage boy were killed Saturday in Russian artillery attacks and Russia reported it had shot down a Ukrainian fighter jet and destroyed a wave of drones over several regions.

The attacks came as Russia is gaining momentum on battlefield and Ukraine is running low on ammunition.

Full report:

[*2 killed including a 16-year-old in Russian artillery strikes in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-emmanuel-macron-recep-tayyip-erdogan-donetsk-polish-b2509912.html)

Britain says it will provide 10,000 drones to Ukraine in its fight against Russia

[*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) said Thursday that it would provide 10,000 drones to arm [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in its fight against Russia.

The announcement by Defense Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) during a visit in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky includes an investment of 125 million pounds ($160 million) on top of 200 million pounds ($256 million) previously committed for drones.

Full report:

[*Britain says it will provide 10,000 drones to Ukraine in its fight against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-drones-uk-aid-shapps-b2509206.html)

ICYMI: Program that brought Ukrainians to North Dakota oil fields ends

An oil and gas trade group has ended a recruitment program that brought Ukrainians from their war-torn country to [*North Dakota*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-dakota) ‘s oil field to fill jobs.

The North Dakota Petroleum Council shelved the Bakken Global Recruitment of Oilfield Workers program after placing about 60 Ukrainians with 16 employers from July to November 2023, the group’s president, Ron Ness, said. The goal had been to recruit 100 workers by the end of last year and 400 within the first 12 months of the program, not all of them from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Full report:

[*Program that brought Ukrainians to North Dakota oil fields ends*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-north-dakota-ukraine-alaska-europe-b2509714.html)

A lonely radio nerd. A poet. Vladimir Putin's crackdown sweeps up ordinary Russians

A lonely man jailed for criticizing the government on his ham radio. A poet assaulted by police after he recited a poem objecting to Russia’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). A low-profile woman committed to a psychiatric facility for condemning the invasion on social media.

President Vladimir Putin’s 24 years in power are almost certain to be extended six more by this month’s presidential election. That leadership has transformed [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). A country that tolerated some dissent is now one that ruthlessly suppresses it.

Full report:

[*A lonely radio nerd. A poet. Vladimir Putin's crackdown sweeps up ordinary Russians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-russia-ukraine-prison-vladimir-putin-b2509827.html)

ICYMI: India says some of its citizens have been duped into working for the Russian army

Indian authorities on Friday said they are in talks with Russia’s government about the return of Indian citizens who were duped into working for the Russian army, a day after a federal investigation agency said it broke up a human trafficking network that lured people to Russia under the pretext of giving them jobs.

India’s foreign ministry said the government has initiated action against a network of agents who duped the men into traveling to Russia.

“We remain committed to the early release of our nationals serving as support staff with the Russian army and their eventual return home,” Indian External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in New Delhi.

Jaiswal urged Indian citizens not to be deceived by offers by agents of support jobs with the Russian army.

Who are the Russian dissidents still serving time after Alexei Navalny died behind bars?

Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) is expected to secure his fifth term in power this month on the heels of opposition leader [*Alexei Navalny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alexei-navalny) ‘s death in prison, which devastated [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) critics and spurred concerns about the safety of other imprisoned dissidents.

Putin has gone from tolerating dissent to suppressing anyone who dared challenge him during his 24-year rule. Over the past decade, his government has restricted freedom of speech and assembly, targeted people considered threats to the Kremlin, and restricted access to many independent news outlets.

Full report:

[*Who are the Russian dissidents still serving time after Alexei Navalny died behind bars?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-vladimir-putin-alexei-navalny-kremlin-vladimir-karamurza-b2509833.html)

ICYMI: Serbia revokes an expulsion order for a Russian woman after a public outcry

After a public outcry, Serbia’s authorities have revoked an expulsion order for a Russian woman who signed an open letter denouncing the invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , a pro-democracy Russian group in the Balkan country said on Friday.

[*Police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) told Elena Koposova that her appeal has been granted and that she can stay in Serbia, where she has lived with her family since 2019, the Russian Democratic Society group said in a statement.

Full report:

[*Serbia revokes an expulsion order for a Russian woman after a public outcry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/serbia-ap-ukraine-belgrade-police-b2509536.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin’s troops redeployed to Bakhmut as Kyiv makes ‘tactical gains’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:688D-2S31-JBNF-W2MG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Redeployment to Bakhmut region comes amid doubts about commitment of Wagner forces there

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has “high likely” redeployed troops to the key battle town of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) after [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) forces made tactical gains there, Britain’s Ministry of Defence has said.

It comes amid doubts about the commitment of fighters in Bakhmut belonging to the Russian mercenary group Wagner, whose leader has become increasingly critical of the Kremlin.

Elsewhere, [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has landed in Japan for the [*G7*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g7) summit, marking his first high-level visit to Asia since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine last year.

His visit comes after a massive boost for Ukraine’s ammunition plan against the Russian invasion as US President Joe Biden told G7 leaders that Washington supports joint allied training programs for Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets, in a significant endorsement as [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) seeks to boost its air power against Russia.

Key Points

Zelensky arrives in Japan for G7 Ukraine making ‘tactical gains’ near Bakhmut Zelensky will reach G7 summit on French government plane – report US to provide F-16 fighter jets in battle against Putin Kyiv destroys all drones launched overnight, official claims Wagner chief again claims his forces close to capturing Bakhmut Ukraine deputy defence minister says Russia on offensive in Bakhmut Zelensky urges Saudi Arabia not to turn blind eye to Putin’s invasion

Zelensky arrives in Japan

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy landed Saturday in Hiroshima for diplomatic talks with the leaders of the world’s most powerful democracies who have tightened sanctions meant to punish Moscow and change the course of its 15-month invasion of Ukraine.

Japan says Zelenskyy’s decision to visit Hiroshima stems from his "strong wish" to participate in talks that will influence his nation’s defense against Russia.

An EU official, speaking on condition of anonymity to brief reporters on the deliberations, said Zelenskyy will take part in two separate sessions Sunday. The first session will be with G7 members only and will focus on the war in Ukraine. The second session will include the G7 as well as the other nations invited to take part in the summit, and will focus on "peace and stability."

Sunak meets Zelensky at G7 summit as hopes rise of Ukraine getting fighter jets

Rishi Sunak has met [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) at the G7 summit in [*Hiroshima*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hiroshima) after the Ukrainian president closed in on obtaining the F-16 fighter jets he wants to fight off Russia.

“Good to see you,” the Prime Minister said, slapping him on the back after they greeted each other with an embrace. “You made it.”

Asked by reporters if it was a good day for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , Mr Zelensky smiled, nodded and said “thank you so much”.

Sam Blewett has the full report:

[*Sunak meets Zelensky at G7 summit as hopes rise of Ukraine getting fighter jets*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/volodymyr-zelensky-ukraine-joe-biden-hiroshima-japan-b2342597.html)

Russia says supplying F-16 jets to Ukraine would carry 'colossal' risks for West -TASS

Western countries will be running "colossal risks" if they supply Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets, TASS news agency quoted Russian deputy foreign minister Alexander Grushko as saying on Saturday.

Grushko was responding to a question about the implications of providing the jets, which Ukraine has been requesting from NATO countries.

It has not yet won commitments to deliver the planes, but US President Joe Biden told G7 leaders on Friday that Washington supports joint allied training programs for Ukrainian pilots on F-16s, senior US officials said.

"We see that Western countries are still adhering to the escalation scenario. It involves colossal risks for themselves," Grushko was quoted as saying.

"In any case, this will be taken into account in all our plans, and we have all the necessary means to achieve the goals we have set."

A year after Mariupol’s fall, Azovstal survivor recalls surrender with pain and a sense of purpose

Mikhailo Vershinin was a shadow of the burly [*Mariupol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mariupol) policeman he was when he emerged after four months in Russian captivity.

The head of Mariupol’s Police Patrol, he was among hundreds to surrender from the Russian siege of the Azovstal steel mill on the orders of the Ukrainian president a year ago and was close to death on the day he was exchanged for Russian prisoners of war.

He experienced first-hand the day the final square of the besieged city fell and now recalls it with both deep sadness, but a sense of purpose for Ukraine’s future.

Mstyslav Chernovreports:

[*A year after Mariupol’s fall, Azovstal survivor recalls surrender with pain and a sense of purpose*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-mariupol-kyiv-torture-b2342581.html)

Sunak meets Zelensky at G7

Rishi Sunak met Volodymyr Zelensky with an embrace at the G7 summit in Hiroshima.

The prime minister said: "You made it."

Asked if it was a good day, the Ukrainian president smiled, nodded and said "thank you".

Independent editorial: As Zelensky flies in to the G7, oily Russia is once again slipping the net

The Russian economy has suffered from its isolation, and from the sudden withdrawal of Western trade and investment, but it has certainly not been ‘strangled’

Read the full editorial below:

[*Editorial: As Zelensky flies in to the G7, oily Russia is once again slipping the net*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/zelensky-g7-ukraine-russia-b2342132.html)

Zelenksy holds meeting with Italy’s Meloni

Volodymyr Zelensky has held talks with Italy’s prime minister on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

The UK president spoke with Giorgia Meloni after arriving at the gathering in Hiroshima, Japan, earlier this morning.

Mr Zelensky is at the summit to drum up support from the world’s rich democracies and sound out "Global South" leaders with long ties to Russia.

Sanctions against Russia and what the G7 may do to fortify them

The Group of Seven advanced economies are expected to announce a new set of sanctions against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) to try to further hinder its war effort in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) during their summit in Hiroshima, Japan.

In traveling to Japan, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy will help to drive home the need to better enforce measures meant to stifle Moscow’s war machine.

Russia is now the most-sanctioned country in the world, but there are questions about their effectiveness. [*EU Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu-council) President Charles Michel said the plan was to close loopholes and ensure the sanctions are painful for Russia, not for the countries enforcing them.

Elaine Kurtenbachreports:

[*Sanctions against Russia and what the G7 may do to fortify them*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-japan-ukraine-eu-council-b2342514.html)

Watch live: Zelensky arrives in Japan for G7

Peace will become ‘closer today’ -Zelenksy

Peace will become “closer today”, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenksy said ahead of his visit to Japan for the G7 summit.

Mr Zelenksy touched down in Hiroshima earlier for the gathering of the world’s largest economies in meetings set to be dominated by Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine last February.

“Japan. G7. Important meetings with partners and friends of Ukraine,” Mr Zelenksy said in a tweet. “Security and enhanced cooperation for our victory. Peace will become closer today.”

Japan. G7. Important meetings with partners and friends of Ukraine. Security and enhanced cooperation for our victory. Peace will become closer today.— Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*May 20, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1659813921857912833?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) White House: Biden to discuss Ukraine with Brazil’s Lula, India’s Modi 07:20 , Matt Mathers US President Joe Biden aims to speak this weekend with Brazil’s President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva and Indian prime minister, Narendra Modi, about Ukraine and the "sacrosanct" issue of sovereignty and territorial integrity, US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Saturday.Lula and Modi are attending a summit of the Group of Seven (G7) rich nations in Hiroshima at the invitation of Japan, this year’s host of the G7, which also includes the US., Germany, Britain, France, Italy and Canada.Asked if Biden would pressure or urge the two leaders to toughen their approach on China and Russia, Sullivan said, "I think pressure is just the wrong word. I mean, that’s not how President Biden operates with these key leaders with whom he has deep relationships, like President Lula and President Modi."Instead, Biden would "look for the opportunity to speak with both of them about the constructive role that each country can play in supporting the most basic and fundamental element of any outcome, which is sovereignty and territorial integrity, which is sacrosanct in the (United Nations) Charter," Sullivan told reporters in Hiroshima.Putin redeploying several battalions to Bakhmut as capture remains key war aim – UK MoD07:02 , Arpan Rai Russia has highly likely redeployed up to several battalions to reinforce the Bakhmut sector in the last four days, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said today. “Russia’s leadership likely continue to see capturing Bakhmut as the key immediate war aim which would allow them to claim some degree of success in the conflict,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update on the continuing war. It added that the amped up redeployment of several troops “follows Ukrainian tactical gains on the flanks of the contested Donetsk Oblast town through mid-May and publicly aired doubts about the commitment of Wagner Group forces to continue fighting in the sector”.“With Russia likely maintaining relatively few uncommitted combat units in Ukraine, the redeployment represents a notable commitment by the Russian command,” the MoD said. Britain says Russia will ‘pay the price’ for Ukraine invasion06:22 , Arpan Rai Rishi Sunak has issued a warning to Vladimir Putin that he and other Western leaders are “not going away”, at the start of the G7 summit in Japan.The prime minister said Russia’s president must understand that Western allies of Ukraine are “steadfast” in their support for the country’s resistance against his invasion.“My message to Putin is straightforward. We’re not going away,” Mr Sunak told Sky News at Hiroshima’s Seifukan tea house shortly before the start of the summit.Read the full story here:[*Britain says Russia will ‘pay the price’ for invasion as fresh sanctions unveiled*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/putin-sanctions-ukraine-war-sunak-b2341918.html) Russia puts International Criminal Court prosecutor on wanted list06:08 , Arpan Rai Russia has listed International Criminal Court prosecutor Karim Ahmad Khan on a wanted list following its arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin over forced deportation of Ukrainian children, independent Russian media publication Mediazona reported.Mr Khan’s photo and personal information are visible on the Interior Ministry’s database, listed as “wanted on felony charges”, the report added.In early March, the ICC slapped arrest warrants for Mr Putin and Russia’s Children’s Rights Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova, holding them “allegedly responsible” for the illegal transfer and deportation of children from Ukraine and the occupied territories to Russia during its full-scale invasion of the country since last February.Fallen debris sparks fire in Dnipro, official says05:33 , Arpan Rai A fire has been caused by falling debris in the Dnipro district of the capital, Kyiv mayor Vitalii Klitschko said. “Fire on the roof of a 9-story building in one of the housing complexes in the Dnipro district. All services work on site. Information about the victims has not yet been received,” he said.Zelensky will reach G7 summit on French government plane, report claims05:29 , Matt Mathers Volodymyr Zelensky will reach the Hiroshima G7 summit aboard a French government plane, reported CNN citing a diplomatic source.It is not immediately clear when the Ukrainian war-time president will arrive in Hiroshima but he is expected to reach today, according to a statement by the Japan government. This comes a day after Mr Zelensky reached Jeddah to attend the Arab League summit also aboard a French government plane, the French ambassador to Saudi Arabia said.Kyiv destroys all drones launched overnight, official claims05:14 , Arpan Rai The Ukrainian air defences have managed to shoot down all Russian drones launched overnight, the Kyiv city military administration said.Air defenses in Kyiv intercepted all Iranian-made Shahed drones launched by Russia, as per the preliminary information overnight on May 20, officials said. Revealed: Boris Johnson’s first words to Zelensky on night of Russia attack05:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) told [*Boris Johnson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/boris-johnson) “I hope this is not the last time we speak” at the dawn of the Russian invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , according to the former PM’s comms chief.Those were among the first words the pair shared during a 4am interaction on the night of the advance in February 2022, Guto Harri said, describing it as a “man-to-man thing” between the PM and the Ukrainian president.[*Former GB News presenter Mr Harri*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/guto-harri-gb-news-taking-knee-b1886084.html) told his Unprecedented podcast on Thursday that the two leaders were on the phone within minutes of Mr Johnson being woken to be told the news.[*Revealed: Boris Johnson’s first words to Zelensky on night of Russia attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/boris-johnson-first-words-zelensky-b2341553.html) Remains of Marine veteran killed in Ukraine flown home to US04:54 , Arpan Rai The remains of a US marine veteran who was missing in Ukraine for more than a year have been returned to the United States and were headed to his hometown in eastern North Carolina.A Turkish Airlines plane flying from Istanbul with the remains of retired Marine Capt Grady Kurpasi landed at New York’s John F Kennedy International Airport in the early evening yesterday. They were loaded onto a private jet bound for Wilmington, North Carolina.Kurpasi, a 50-year-old Iraq War veteran, volunteered in February 2022 to help evacuate Ukrainian residents and later fought in the Ukrainian Foreign Legion, according to the Weatherman Foundation, the group that located his remains and repatriated them.[*Remains of Marine veteran killed in Ukraine flown home to US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-new-york-ukraine-north-carolina-turkish-airlines-b2342488.html) Wagner chief again claims his forces close to capturing Bakhmut04:44 , Arpan Rai Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of the Russian Wagner private army that is leading the assault on the city, said in a Telegram message that “heavy, bloody battles” were continuing and claimed his men were close to completing the capture of Bakhmut itself.The Wagner chief has made similar claims in the past and followed it up with threats to pull out his mercenary force from Bakhmut due to lack of ammunition supply from Russia. A Ukrainian mortar unit near the city told Reuters it had advanced this week, but was facing heavy fire from Russian forces who appeared to have significant strength in manpower and stocks of ammunition.“The fire was intensive this week. Our forces pushed forward a little, stopped near the canal. It’s hard to push them (the Russians) out of there,” said a soldier with the call sign Medvid, which means “bear” in Ukrainian.The unit’s troops said they were firing around 100 mortar rounds a day at Russian positions. They said their location could not be disclosed.'Extremely fierce' fighting continues in Bakhmut, says Ukraine04:22 , Arpan Rai Russian forces had gained some ground inside Bakhmut but did not control the city in the latest war update from the frontline city in besieged eastern sector, deputy Ukrainian defence minister Hanna Malyar said.“Extremely fierce fighting continues in the area of Bakhmut. The enemy cannot win with quality, so he tries with quantity,” she said in a Telegram post. Russia had boosted its number of troops and amounts of ammunition, she said.“The rate of our troops’ advance in the suburbs of Bakhmut today is somewhat reduced. At the same time, the enemy is unable to regain lost positions – our soldiers repel all enemy attacks in this area,” she said.While the salt mining city holds little strategic value, Russia attaches significant symbolic value to it and has throw men and ammunition to capture it over the past 10 months. Moscow regards its assault on Bakhmut as an important part of a campaign to capture the rest of the Donbas region.Biden informs G7 allies US will support joint F-16 training effort for Ukrainian pilots04:11 , Arpan Rai Joe Biden has told leaders in Japan that the US will participate in the F-16 training, and that decisions on providing the jets to Ukraine will come later, officials in the US said.It is not immediately clear if the US will simply allow other nations to send F-16s to Ukraine, or if the US will also send some. There are also no estimates on how many jets will be provided to the war-hit nation and when will the deliveries be made. Officials have acknowledged that it will not be in time for the anticipated spring offensive.While they have added that the training will begin soon, it is not clear where it will be, how many pilots will be trained and what is going to be the duration of the training.The US Air Force has two F-16 air wings in Europe: the 31st Fighter Wing at the Aviano Air Base in Italy and the 52nd Fighter Wing at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany. The US also routinely sends F-16 fighters in and out of Europe on a rotational basis in smaller groups.Zelensky to attend G7 Summit in person, confirms Japan03:57 , Arpan Rai Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky will attend the Group of Seven (G7) Hiroshima summit in person tomorrow and hold a bilateral meeting with Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida during his stay, Japan’s foreign ministry confirmed today.This comes amid conflicting messages from Kyiv on whether Mr Zelensky would attend the G7 in Japan in person or virtually. The secretary of Ukraine’s National Security and Defence Council said on national television the president would be there, but the council later walked back those remarks, saying Mr Zelensky would join via video link. The president’s office has not confirmed either way for security reasons so far.Mr Zelensky will take part in a session regarding peace and security alongside the G7 leaders and invited outreach countries, according to the foreign ministry.The Ukrainian president is set to arrive in Hiroshima today, and is expected to hold bilateral meetings with other attendees of the G7 summit.Not flying Zelensky to Japan for G7 meeting, says US03:50 , Arpan Rai The United States is not flying Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky to Japan, White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said today. The top White House official added that it was a “safe bet” that Joe Biden would directly meet Mr Zelensky in Japan.Mr Zelensky is set to make his first public appearance at the G7 summit in Japan since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia last year. The Ukrainian leader will travel from Saudi Arabia to the G7 summit tomorrow, officials in Tokyo said. He will take part in the summit’s session with leaders and take part in a bilateral meeting with Japanese prime minister Fumio Kishida.This is also Mr Zelensky’s first trip to Asia since the war broke out in Europe last year. Putin claims West is trying to break up Russia into different states03:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Vladimir [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) has said the West is trying to drive a wedge between different ethnic and national groups in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). The Russian President said on Friday the West wants to break the country into lots of different states, according to Reuters.He added that the more sanctions the West hits Russia with, the greater the level of cohesion within Russian society.[*Putin claims West is trying to break up Russia into different states*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/putin-west-break-up-russia-b2342313.html) The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary02:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain It was a month into Vladimir Putin’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Russian forces had withdrawn from around Kyiv and in their wake Bel Trew and her team stumbled on a body by an abandoned Russian camp.His hands were tied. He had been burned and shot in the back. Soldiers said he was a teenager.As Bel tried to find out who he was and what had happened, she uncovered a nightmare world: a nation struggling to find thousands of its missing and to identify its dead.The Body in the Woods by Bel Trew is[*streaming now on Independent TV and on your smart TV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/independent-tv-download-smart-tv-how-b2287476.html). [*The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-documentary-crimes-b2291759.html) Zelensky accuses some Arab leaders of ‘turning a blind eye’ to Russian invasion of Ukraine01:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has accused some Arab leaders of “turning a blind eye” to Russia’s invasion of his country.The Ukrainian president on Friday attended an [*Arab League*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/arab-league) summit in [*Saudi Arabia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/saudi-arabia) in an effort to seek support in the region for his war effort.Appearing to evoke the Arab world’s own history of occupation, he said the leaders in the hall would understand that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) “will never submit to any foreigners or colonisers”, adding: “That’s why we fight.”But Mr Zelensky added: “Unfortunately, there are some in the world, and here among you, who turn a blind eye to those [prisoner of war] cages and illegal annexations.“I’m here so that everyone can take an honest look: no matter how hard the Russians try to influence, there must still be independence.”[*Zelensky accuses Arab leaders of ‘turning a blind eye’ to Russian invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/zelensky-arab-league-summit-ukraine-invasion-blind-eye-b2342299.html) Ukraine says it repels attacks as Russia tries to retake land near BakhmutSaturday 20 May 2023 00:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukraine said on Friday it had repelled attacks by Russian forces trying to recapture land they had lost around the devastated eastern city of Bakhmut, where Kyiv says it has inflicted heavy Russian casualties.Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of the Russian Wagner private army that is leading the assault on the city, said in a Telegram message that “heavy, bloody battles” were continuing and claimed his men were close to completing the capture of Bakhmut itself.He has though made over-optimistic military assessments in the past and Reuters was unable to verify his account.A Ukrainian mortar unit near the city told Reuters it had advanced this week, but was facing heavy fire from Russian forces who appeared to have significant strength in manpower and stocks of ammunition.“The fire was intensive this week. Our forces pushed forward a little, stopped near the canal. It’s hard to push them (the Russians) out of there,” said a soldier with the call sign Medvid, which means “bear” in Ukrainian.The unit’s troops said they were firing around 100 mortar rounds a day at Russian positions. They said their location could not be disclosed.Ukraine says it has made small advances this week on the flanks of the city in the industrial Donbas region even as Wagner has inched closer to capturing the city itself.Deputy Ukrainian Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said the Russian forces had gained some ground inside Bakhmut but did not control the city.“Extremely fierce fighting continues in the area of Bakhmut. The enemy cannot win with quality, so he tries with quantity,” she said in a Telegram post. Russia had boosted its number of troops and amounts of ammunition, she said.“The rate of our troops’ advance in the suburbs of Bakhmut today is somewhat reduced. At the same time, the enemy is unable to regain lost positions -our soldiers repel all enemy attacks in this area,” she said.Moscow regards its assault on Bakhmut as an important part of a campaign to capture the rest of the Donbas region.Russia and Cuba ink deals to revitalize communist-run island's ailing economyFriday 19 May 2023 23:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian officials and business leaders have signed multiple deals with Cuban counterparts at a forum in Havana this week, agreeing to work together to boost sugar and rum output, assure wheat and crude oil supply to the communist-run island, and overhaul crumbling tourist facilities.The longtime political allies -both subject to U.S. sanctions -are seeking to cement economic ties by facilitating trade and investment.“(The deals) constitute a milestone in the history of our bilateral and business ties,” said Ricardo Cabrisas, Cuba’s foreign trade minister, in a speech closing the forum on Friday.The agreements include a contract for Russia‘s Prodintorg to supply wheat to Cuba’s state-owned Alimport, aimed at “guaranteeing the stability” of supply to the Cuban population, according to a document from the Cuban-Russian Business Committee viewed by Reuters.Another deal will create a Cuba-based marketplace for Russian goods, including food and home goods, called Rusmarket, which will also help spur development of more direct and fluid shipping routes between the two countries, the document said.A third deal states Russian and Cuban intention to revive the decrepit residential beach community of Tarara, whose white sand beaches just minutes from Havana, the document says, are “ideal for enjoying the ocean, fishing and diving.”Russian deputy prime minister for tourism, sport, culture and communications Dmitry Chernyshenko announced separately on Friday a presidential order to reinstate by July regular flights between Russia and Cuba, suspended since March 2022 due to the conflict in Ukraine.Other agreements announced this week include one aimed at developing a Russian-Cuban rum company, which would seek to boost exports of Cuba’s prized rum. Russia also provided funds, know-how and technology to restart a steel mill in Cuba to supply construction materials on the island, according to Cuba state-run media reports.Top Russian business leaders lauded Cuba earlier this week for opening the door to Russian investors and for providing them with “preferential treatment,” including tariff exemptions, long-term land concessions and ease in repatriating profits.More than 150 Russian businesspeople attended the forum in Havana, according to Cuban officials.US to provide F-16 fighter jets in battle against PutinFriday 19 May 2023 21:47 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain President Joe Biden told G7 leaders on Friday that Washington supports joint allied training programs for Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets, senior U.S. officials said, a significant endorsement as Kyiv seeks to boost its air power against Russia.Training on the U.S.-made jets will take place in Europe and will require months to complete, one of the officials said. U.S. officials have estimated the most expeditious time needed for training and delivery of F-16s at 18 months.“As the training takes place over the coming months, our coalition of countries participating in this effort will decide when to actually provide jets, how many we will provide, and who will provide them,” the official said.Ukraine’s Volodymr Zelensky tweeted: “I welcome the historic decision of the United States and [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS) to support an international fighter jet coalition. This will greatly enhance our army in the sky. I count on discussing the practical implementation of this decision at the [*#G7*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/G7?src=hashtag_click) summit in Hiroshima.”Britain says Russia will ‘pay the price’ for invasion as fresh sanctions unveiledFriday 19 May 2023 21:02 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Rishi Sunak has issued a warning to Vladimir Putin that he and other Western leaders are “not going away”, at the start of the G7 summit in Japan.The prime minister said Russia’s president must understand that Western allies of Ukraine are “steadfast” in their support for the country’s resistance against his invasion.Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky will attend the summit in Japan on Sunday, as Mr Sunak and other leaders dial up the pressure on Russia. The prime minister said Russia will “pay a price”, as he launched a new wave of sanctions targeting the country, which include a ban on importing Russian diamonds, copper, aluminium and nickel.[*Britain says Russia will ‘pay the price’ for invasion as fresh sanctions unveiled*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/putin-sanctions-ukraine-war-sunak-b2341918.html) Russia branded ‘terrorist state’ as flights with Georgia resumeFriday 19 May 2023 20:56 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Anti-[*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) [*protestors*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/protestors) branded [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) a “terrorist state” as they clashed with [*police*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/police) in [*Georgia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/georgia) after flights resumed today.The protestors descended en masse to Tbilisi Airport at around 13.20pm local time to meet Azimuth Airlines flight A4851 after it arrived from [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow). The flight is the first tourist plane to touch down in Georgia from Russia in four years.Many protestors held placards emblazoned with statements such as “Russian airship – go f\*\*\* yourself”, “you are not welcome” and “Russia is a terrorist state”.[*Russia branded ‘terrorist state’ as flights with Georgia resume*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-flights-georgia-ukraine-b2342220.html) Russia targets Greenpeace in crackdown on dissent but Kremlin critic Roizman avoids prisonFriday 19 May 2023 20:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) on Friday declared the global environmental group [*Greenpeace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/greenpeace) to be an undesirable organization, effectively banning it from operating in the country, its latest move to muzzle critical voices.A statement from the national prosecutor-general’s office said it had determined that Greepeace posed “a threat to the foundations of the constitutional order and security of the Russian Federation” and pointed in particular to the conflict in Ukraine.“Since the beginning of the special military operation of the Russian Federation to demilitarize and denazify Ukraine, Greenpeace activists have been engaged in anti-Russian propaganda, calling for further economic isolation of our country and tougher sanctions,” it said.[*Russia targets Greenpeace in crackdown on dissent but Kremlin critic Roizman avoids prison*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-greenpeace-russia-moscow-kremlin-b2342272.html) Russia adds ICC prosecutor who sought Putin's arrest to wanted listFriday 19 May 2023 20:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russia has issued an arrest warrant for the International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutor who in March prepared a warrant for President Vladimir Putin on war crimes charges, Russian media reported on Friday.The British prosecutor, Karim Khan, was added to the Interior Ministry’s wanted list, state-owned news agency TASS said, citing the ministry’s database.Moscow opened cases against Khan and three ICC judges on March 20, days after the order for Putin’s arrest.The ICC and its office of the prosecutor had no immediate comment.The ICC warrant orders the arrest of Putin and Russia‘s ombudsman for children’s rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, on war crimes charges related to the abduction of Ukrainian children.Russia has not concealed a programme under which it has brought thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia but presents it as a humanitarian campaign to protect those abandoned in the conflict zone.Russia and Putin deny committing war crimes offences during what the Kremlin calls its special military operation in Ukraine, saying they are victims of Western aggression and lies.Putin claims West is trying to break up Russia into different statesFriday 19 May 2023 19:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Vladimir [*Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/putin) has said the West is trying to drive a wedge between different ethnic and national groups in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). The Russian President said on Friday the West wants to break the country into lots of different states, according to Reuters.He added that the more sanctions the West hits Russia with, the greater the level of cohesion within Russian society.[*Putin claims West is trying to break up Russia into different states*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/putin-west-break-up-russia-b2342313.html) ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** living in EU forced to travel back for abortions, study warnsFriday 19 May 2023 19:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) women who sought refuge in [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) countries are being forced to travel through dangerous conflict zones to access [*abortions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/abortion) and [*contraception*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/contraception) in their native country, a study has warned.Research found some women from Ukraine now living in [*Poland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/poland) , [*Romania*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/romania) , [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) and [*Slovakia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/slovakia) are having to temporarily return home as it is “easier” to access reproductive healthcare there, despite the stress of travelling back into the wartorn country.The study, by the Center for Reproductive Rights and eight human rights organisations, warned refugees are being put “at risk” as they grapple with issues such as legal restrictions and cost barriers when trying to access the right care.[***Ukrainian******refugees*** *living in EU forced to travel back for abortions, study warns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-refugees-abortions-contraception-eu-b2339974.html) Russia says 500 Americans to be banned, list includes ObamaFriday 19 May 2023 18:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russia‘s foreign ministry on Friday said former President Barack Obama was among 500 U.S. citizens who would be banned in response to the latest round of sanctions announced by Washington.The ministry also said Russia had refused the latest U.S. request for consular access to detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich, who was arrested in March on suspicion of spying.This move was triggered by the U.S. refusal last month to give visas to media traveling with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to the United Nations, it said in a statement.“Washington should have learned a long time ago that not a single hostile attack on Russia will go unpunished,” it added.Earlier on Friday the United States announced punitive measures against more than 300 targets, aiming to punish Russia for its invasion of Ukraine and intensifying one of the harshest sanctions efforts ever implemented.The secret network of tunnels under ‘paranoid’ Putin’s bunkerFriday 19 May 2023 17:52 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian president Vladimir Putin has a secret network of underground tunnels that run beneath his palace hideaway by the Black Sea, unearthed plans suggest.Mr Putin had a huge underground bunker built beneath Gelendzhik Palace, according to plans posted online by the engineering firm in charge of the project, with a network of tunnels lying around 50 metres under the surface.The complex, first reported by Business Insider, is thought to have been constructed for protection in the event of a revolution or war and was built before Russia took over [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) in 2014.[*The secret network of tunnels under ‘paranoid’ Putin’s bunker*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-bunker-secret-tunnels-russia-b2341957.html) WhatsApp faces first fine in Russia for failure to delete ‘banned’ contentFriday 19 May 2023 16:01 , Martha Mchardy Messenger service WhatsApp faces a maximum fine of 4 million roubles (51,500) after Russia accused it of failing to delete banned content, state-owned news agency RIA reported on Friday, citing a Moscow court.Although WhatsApp’s parent company Meta Platforms Inc was last year banned in Russia as an “extremist” organisation, the messenger app -which is widely popular in Russia -has not previously been threatened with legal proceedings for failing to remove prohibited information.The RIA report did not specify what information WhatsApp had allegedly failed to delete. It said the administrative case was filed by communications regulator Roskomnadzor.At the outset of its military campaign in Ukraine, Russia introduced harsh new military censorship laws under which technology companies including Google, Wikipedia and Discord have been fined.Russia’s nuclear weapons rhetoric “dangerous and unacceptable” -G7Friday 19 May 2023 15:45 , Martha Mchardy Russia’s nuclear rhetoric and stated intent to deploy nuclear weapons in Belarus “are dangerous and unacceptable,” leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) nations said in a statement.The G7 nations called on Friday for a “world without nuclear weapons,” urging Russia, Iran, China and North Korea to cease nuclear escalation and embrace non-proliferation, a statement released by the White House showed.The leaders also said Russia should return to full implementation of New START treaty.U.S. will back training Ukrainian pilots on F-16s, Biden tells G7 leadersFriday 19 May 2023 15:39 , Martha Mchardy U.S. president Joe Biden informed G7 leaders at their summit in Japan that Washington will support a joint effort with allies to train Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets, CNN reported on Friday, citing a senior U.S. administration official.U.S. sanctions on Russia hit 300 targetsFriday 19 May 2023 15:32 , Martha Mchardy The United States on Friday unveiled a raft of new Russia sanctions, targeting hundreds of individuals and entities, the U.S. Treasury Department notice posted online.Russia adds ICC judge who issued Putin warrant to wanted listFriday 19 May 2023 15:17 , Martha Mchardy Russia’s interior ministry has issued an arrest warrant for the International Criminal Court judge who in March issued a warrant for the arrest of president Vladimir Putin on war crimes charges, state-owned news agency TASS reported on Friday, citing the ministry’s database.Polish official says object that entered airspace was Russian-made rocketFriday 19 May 2023 15:14 , Martha Mchardy An aide to Polish President Andrzej Duda said on Friday that the object that entered Poland’s airspace last year and was found in April was a Russian-made rocket.The aide, Pawel Szrot, said on Radio RMF FM that the nose of the rocket had been found and that it’s “peculiar” because it’s made of concrete. It’s being examined by experts.Szrot said it was “Russian technology” and most probably intended to give weight to the nose and allow the projectile to try to confuse Ukraine’s air defence systems in trying to repel Russian attacks.The nose of the rocket contained no explosives, Szrot said.Poland’s defence officials had been facing questions about an object that crash-landed on Polish territory in December and whose parts were found by a civilian in the woods near the city of Bydgoszcz in April.The matter of air security, while there is a war in neighbouring Ukraine, became especially sensitive in Poland after two Polish men were killed when a missile landed in eastern Poland in November. Western officials said they believed a Ukrainian air defence missile went astray as Ukraine tried to repel a large-scale attack by Russia.Ukraine would only allow Russian ammonia exports if gets expanded grain dealFriday 19 May 2023 15:11 , Martha Mchardy Kyiv would consider allowing Russian ammonia to transit its territory for export on condition the newly-renewed Black Sea grain deal is expanded to include more Ukrainian ports and a wider range of commodities, a government source told Reuters.The comments are the first time Kyiv has publicly laid out its stance on Russian ammonia, which Moscow wants shipped via the Black Sea under the agreement.The Black Sea Grain Initiative brokered by Turkey and the United Nations in July last year facilitates “the safe navigation for the export of grain and related foodstuffs and fertilisers, including ammonia” from three Ukrainian ports.The Ukrainian government source, who asked not to be named, told Reuters the language of the deal does not cover the transit of Russian ammonia across Ukraine.Russia, which used to export 4.4 million tonnes of ammonia a year before it invaded Ukraine, has pressed for ammonia supplies to resume through a pipeline from Russia’s Togliati to the Black Sea port of Pivdennyi, near Odesa, which is designed to pump up to 2.5 million tonnes of ammonia annually.Despite Russian threats to pull out of the deal, the Black Sea deal was extended for two months on Wednesday a day before it was due to expire.The government source said the text agreed on Wednesday made no mention of the Togliati-Odesa ammonia pipeline and transit and a further agreement would be needed if the Ukraine route is to be covered. In return, Ukraine would make demands.“We say the following -if it (the deal) includes an ammonia pipeline, then Ukraine should get some additional things which will serve our national interests,” the source said.“That is the expansion of the agreement’s geography and the list of goods (for export via corridor). Then that could serve the interests of our country.”The source did not clarify the additional commodities Ukraine wanted included.Russia trying to disrupt Ukraine’s preparations for counterattack -KyivFriday 19 May 2023 14:54 , Martha Mchardy Russia has shifted the focus of its missile strikes to target Ukrainian military facilities and supplies in order to disrupt preparations for a Ukrainian counterattack, a senior Ukrainian military intelligence official said.After months of attacks on Ukrainian energy infrastructure, Russian forces are now increasingly targeting military facilities and supplies, said Vadym Skibitskyi, deputy head of the defence ministry’s main intelligence directorate.He said the Russians were striking decision-making centres, supply routes and places where large quantities of ammunition, equipment, fuel or troops were concentrated.“Previously, they failed to knock out our energy system, and now they have completely different priorities -to disrupt our plans and preparations for active (military) action during the spring-summer campaign,” he told the RBK-Ukraine news portal.“The enemy began to pay special attention to the areas where our air defence equipment is located,” Skibitskyi added.He also said Russian aviation was now targeting areas on or near the front line more often than before.Russia, whose air strikes have also often hit residential areas across Ukraine, did not immediately comment on Skibitskyi’s remarks.Ukraine has said it is planning a counteroffensive to try retake territory occupied by Russian forces, but that recent advances around the eastern city of Bakhmut do mean the assault has started.Zelensky thanks Saudi Arabia for helping secure release of prisoners of warFriday 19 May 2023 14:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukraine’s Volodymr Zelensky thanked Saudi Arabia for helping secure the release of some prisoners of war, and called for moves to protect the Ukrainian Muslim community --a reference to Crimean Tatars in the Crimea peninsula annexed by Russia in 2014.“Even if there are people here at the summit who have a different view on the war on our land in calling it a conflict, I am sure we can all be united in saving people from the cages of Russian prisons,” he said.Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman told the summit his kingdom was ready to mediate between Russia and Ukraine.Zelensky seeks support for peace plan at Arab League summitFriday 19 May 2023 14:14 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Volodymyr Zelensky urged countries attending an Arab League summit on Friday to support his peace initiative for ending Russia‘s war in Ukraine.Zelensky, making his first trip as president to Saudi Arabia, said in an address that delegates would each receive the text of the 10-point peace plan, and asked them to work with Ukraine directly without intermediaries.“I invite all of you who respect peace to join the implementation of the peace formula and thus, to reduce enmity, wars, suffering, and evil,” Zelensky said in English. “Russia is weak, we beat it when it had more weapons in their hands. Its aggressiveness does not come from strength but from the understanding that the time of empires has passed.”Why Ukraine's spring offensive still hasn't begun — with summer just weeks awayFriday 19 May 2023 14:00 , Martha Mchardy For months, Western allies have shipped billions of dollars worth of weapons systems and ammunition to Ukraine with an urgency to get the supplies to Kyiv in time for an anticipated spring counteroffensive.Now summer is just weeks away. While Russia and Ukraine are focused on an intense battle for Bakhmut, the Ukrainian spring offensive has yet to begin.Here are some of the factors that may be delaying the counteroffensive.WEATHERA big part of the delay is the weather. It’s taken longer than expected for Ukraine’s frozen ground to thaw and dry, due to an extended, wet, cold spring, which has made it difficult to transition into an offensive.Instead, the ground has retained a deep mud that makes it more difficult for non-tracked vehicles to operate.The mud is like a soup, the official said. “You just sort of sink in it.”TRAININGIn the past few months, tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have been trained by the U.S. and allies for the fight. But the final Ukrainian battalion the U.S. is currently training is just finishing its course now.This final class brings the total number of Ukrainians the U.S. has trained for this fight to more than 10,700. Those forces have learned not only field and medical skills but advanced combined arms tactics with the Stryker and Bradley armoured fighting vehicles and Paladin self-propelled howitzers. It also includes highly skilled forces who were trained to operate the Patriot missile defence system.According to U.S. Army Europe-Africa, as many as 11,000 additional Ukrainian troops a day are in other training programs run by more than 30 partner nations.Soon a new phase will begin: The U.S. will start training Ukrainians on Abrams tanks at the Grafenwoehr Training Area in Germany. But the Ukrainians won’t wait for the tank training to be finished before they launch their counteroffensive, Ukrainian defense minister Oleksii Reznikov told reporters in late April.WEAPONS ARRIVALSIn just the past five months alone, the U.S. has announced it would send more than $14 billion in weapons and ammunition to Kyiv, most of which is being pulled from existing stockpiles in order to get the supplies to Ukraine faster. NATO and Western allies have responded too, pledging billions in tanks, armoured vehicles and air defence systems.But a lot of that gear still hasn’t arrived, said Ben Barry, a former British intelligence official who is now the senior land warfare fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies.For example, of the approximately 300 tank systems pledged — such as the Leopard 2 tanks promised by countries including Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and Germany — only about 100 have arrived. Of the 700 or so pledged fighting vehicles, such as British Marauders and U.S. Bradley infantry fighting vehicles, only about 300 have arrived, he said.Ukraine will also need enough ammunition on hand to sustain a higher tempo fight once the counteroffensive begins, When it comes to the ammunition needed, Ukraine’s chief military logistician will also have a strong say in when the army is ready to launch, Barry said.In just one munition — the 155mm howitzer round — Ukraine is firing between 6,000 and 8,000 rounds per day, Ukrainian parliamentary member Oleksandra Ustinova told reporters in April.Putin claims West is trying to break Russia up into dozens of different statesFriday 19 May 2023 13:45 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian president Vladimir Putin said on Friday the West was trying to drive a wedge between different ethnic and national groups in Russia, and break the country up into dozens of different states.He said the more sanctions the West hits Russia with, the greater the level of cohesion within Russian society.Zelensky urges Arab League to help protect Ukraine’s Muslim communityFriday 19 May 2023 13:32 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Addressing the Arab League leaders in Jeddah, Ukraine’s Volodymr Zelensky said: “Ukrainians has never chosen the war. Our troops didn’t go to other lands. We do not engage in annexation and plunder of other nation’s resources. But we will never submit to any foreigners or colonisers. That’s why we fight.“I am sure you will understand our main emotion, the main call I want to leave in Jeddah, a noble call to all of you to help protect our people including Ukrainian Muslim community.”In pictures: Zelensky arrives in Saudi ArabiaFriday 19 May 2023 13:22 , Martha MchardySaudi Crown Prince says kingdom ready to mediate between Russia and UkraineFriday 19 May 2023 13:20 , Martha Mchardy Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman said in the Arab League summit on Friday that his kingdom is ready to mediate between Russia and Ukraine.He also added that he hopes Syria’s return to the Arab League will end its crisis.Friday 19 May 2023 13:10 , Martha Mchardy “I’m here so that everyone can take an honest look no matter how hard the Russians try to influence, there must still be independence,” president Zelensky said during an address to the Arab league in Saudi Arabia.President Zelensky adresses Arab LeagueFriday 19 May 2023 13:08 , Martha Mchardy “None of you would turn a blind eye and allow your country to be invaded,” president Zelensky said during an address to the Arab League in Saudi Arabia.Zelensky arrives in Saudi Arabia for talks with Arab League leadersFriday 19 May 2023 12:43 , Martha McHardy President Zelensky has arrived in Jeddah for his first-ever trip to Saudi Arabia.The Ukrainian president will meet with Arab League leaders, including Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.Ahead of the meeting, he tweeted: “Beginning my first-ever visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance bilateral relations and Ukraine’s ties with the Arab world. Political prisoners in Crimea and temporarily occupied territories, the return of our people, Peace Formula, energy cooperation. KSA plays a significant role and we are ready to take our cooperation to a new level.”Beginning my first-ever visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to enhance bilateral relations and Ukraine’s ties with the Arab world. Political prisoners in Crimea and temporarily occupied territories, the return of our people, Peace Formula, energy cooperation. KSA plays a…— Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*May 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1659498127634702338?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

NATO is boosting capacity on Russia’s borders, Russia’s Patrushev says

Russian security council secretary Nikolai Patrushev said on Friday that NATO was increasing its military capacity on Russia’s borders, the TASS news agency reported.

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: ‘Powerful explosion’ rocks central Moscow as Ukrainian drone downed near Kremlin*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68YK-8PJ1-JBNF-W4XP-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:34

**Length:** 8932 words

**Byline:** Maanya Sachdeva,Arpan Rai and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Attack damages city’s Expo Center less than 5km from Kremlin

**Body**

A building in central [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) has been damaged in a drone attack in the early hours today, causing a “powerful explosion” heard across the business district of the Russian capital.

Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the drone was shot down by Russian air defence systems but that debris from the exploded drone fell on the city’s Expo Center, less than 5km (3.1 miles) from the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin). A video published by Russian media outlets showed thick smoke rising next to skyscrapers.

The Russian defence ministry blamed the “[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) regime” for carrying out the “terrorist attack” but added that there were no casualties in the strike.

“The UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle), after being targeted by air defence weapons, changed its flight path and fell on a non-residential building in the Krasnopresnenskaya Embankment area of Moscow,” the ministry said.

It comes as the United States approved sending F-16 fighter jets to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) from Denmark and the Netherlands to defend against [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s invading forces, as soon as pilot training is completed.

Key Points

Moscow building damaged in drone attack Russian ‘convict’ assault squads straining Ukraine’s northeastern front Putin scrambles to convene currency control meeting over tumbling rouble Russian troops flee cluster bombs as Ukraine says recaptures settlement Ukraine hits out at ‘ridiculous’ suggestion it could give up land to Russia Captured Ukrainian soldiers ‘tortured’ in Russian prison US warns Russia and North Korea against military ties

Moscow flights halted as ‘downed drone smashes into city centre building'

Flights were suspended at four major airports around Moscow as officials claimed to have shot down a Ukrainian drone which smashed into a building in the centre of the Russian capital.

A witness with the Reuters news agency described hearing “a powerful explosion”, while images showed workers and emergency workers inspecting the damaged roof of a non-residential building which the drone appeared to have hit.

The Russian defence ministry and Moscow’s mayor Sergei Sobyanin said there were no casualties after air defences destroyed a drone which then fell on a non-residential building of Moscow’s Expo Center complex – some three miles from the Kremlin – in the early hours of Friday.

Air-traffic was briefly suspended at four major airports around the capital -Vnukovo, Domodedovo, Sheremetyevo and Zhukovsky -though later they reopened, and Russia’s air transport agency said seven flights had been redirected to alternative airports.

First ship to use Black Sea corridor ‘crosses Bosphorous Strait'

The first vessel that used Ukraine’s Black Sea corridor is crossing through Turkey’s Bosphorus Strait, a witness has told Reuters.

The Hong-Kong-flagged Joseph Schulte container ship that left the Russian-blocked Ukrainian Black Sea port of Odesa earlier this week had been in the port since the day before the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine last February.

Ukraine last week announced a “humanitarian corridor” in the Black Sea to release cargo ships that have been trapped in its ports after the termination of the main grain exports deal last month.

Moscow has not indicated whether it would respect the shipping corridor, and shipping and insurance sources have expressed concerns about safety.

Ukraine said the corridor will be primarily used to evacuate ships that were stuck in Ukrainian ports. Local broadcasters have said the ship will anchor at Ambarli port in the south of Istanbul.

Russia creating pro-Kremlin information space with own books and journalists, says UK MoD

Russian officials in illegally occupied areas of Ukraine are creating pro-Kremlin information space with own books, education system and journalists parachuted from Moscow, the British Ministry of Defence said.

“On 15 August, First Deputy Head of the Russian Presidential Administration Sergey Kiriyenko travelled to Donetsk in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine to visit schools and check their integration into the Russian education system,” the ministry said.

It pointed to the occupation administration in Zaporizhzhia Oblast receiving instructions from Russia regarding the introduction of new standards for the accreditation of educational institutions.

“Journalists from Russia are also being employed in media outlets in the occupied regions. A new textbook on the history of Russia will be issued to schools in the occupied regions of Ukraine and throughout the Russian Federation from 1 September,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update.

It added that the book “praises the so-called special military operation and describes Ukraine as an ultra-terrorist state”.

“Russia’s aim is to create a pro-Kremlin information space in the occupied regions in order to erode Ukrainian national identity,” the MoD said.

Ukraine’s pushback may fail in reaching Melitopol and Crimea this year – report

Officials in the US intelligence community are forecasting failure in Ukraine’s counteroffensive goal of reaching the southeastern city of Melitopol, a blow to Kyiv’s aim of severing Russia’s land bridge to Crimea, officials said.

The officials have said they expect Ukraine’s forces to remain several miles outside of the city, reported The Washington Post.

At present, Kyiv’s troops are fighting back Russian forces in their push toward Melitopol from the town of Robotyne more than 50 miles away.

Russia’s tactics of defending occupied regions by mining swathes of lands and trenches, thereby blowing up expensive Western-supplied war vehicles and tanks, is one of the key factors behind the assessment.

The forecast is likely to spark internal questioning in Kyiv and Western capitals on the counteroffensive’s shortcomings despite seeing tens of billions of dollars poured in by Ukraine’s allies in the West.

Four Russian airports briefly suspend flights after attack in Moscow

Authorities in Russia briefly suspended air traffic at four major airports around the capital – Vnukovo, Domodedovo, Sheremetyevo and Zhukovsky – though later they reopened.

At least seven flights were redirected to alternative airports, Russia’s air transport agency said.

This comes in the wake of a Ukrainian drone attack after the aerial target smashed into a building in central Moscow in early hours today after Russian air defences shot it down, disrupting air traffic at all the civilian airports of the Russian capital.

Both Ukraine and Russia deny targeting civilians and civilians infrastructure in the nearly 18-month war.

Ukraine does not comment on who is behind attacks on Russian territory, although officials, including president Volodymyr Zelensky, have publicly expressed satisfaction over them.

The warfare has seen drone air strikes deep inside Russia increase since a drone was destroyed over the Kremlin in early May. Civilian areas of the capital were hit later in May and a Moscow business district was targeted twice in three days earlier this month.

British-led coalition to provide Ukraine with anti-drone systems

A British-led group of European countries will provide about £90m ($115m) of air defence equipment to help Ukraine defend itself against Russian attacks, officials said.

The package will include a £56m contract with the Norwegian defence company Kongsberg to provide vehicle-mounted Cortex Typhon systems, which are used to detect and destroy drones.

“These air defence systems have the capability and flexibility to be rapidly deployed to either protect Ukraine’s civilian population and infrastructure, or be put to use on the frontline,” said Britain’s defence minister Ben Wallace.

The coalition International Fund for Ukraine – a group of countries including Britain, Norway, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden – has also agreed two other contracts for air defence equipment, which will be revealed at a later date.

This comes amid rising numbers of attacks from both Ukraine and Russia as Ukraine seeks to dislodge Russian forces that have dug in across southern and eastern Ukraine since their invasion last year.

What each of the Republican candidates have said about the war in Ukraine

As president Joe Biden likes to remind anyone who’ll listen, “This is not your grandfather’s Republican Party”.

One of the issues where that’s becoming more evident by the day is Ukraine.

John McCain, the late Arizona Senator and 2008 GOP presidential candidate, sounded the alarm about Russia for years, making him one of President Vladimir Putin’s “greatest antagonists,” the Arizona Republic noted in February 2022, days after the Russian invasion began.

During the last year of his presidency in 2008, George W Bush said he “strongly supported” eventual Nato membership for Ukraine and Georgia. Last year, in a viral gaffe, he mistakenly said Iraq when he meant to call the war in Ukraine “unjustified and brutal”.

His younger brother, Jeb Bush, a former Florida Governor, went to Europe in 2015 shortly before announcing his presidential campaign.

Gustaf Kilander reports from Washington, DC:

[*What each of the Republican candidates have said about the war in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/republican-presidential-candidates-ukraine-trump-b2395008.html)

US approves sending F-16s to Ukraine from Denmark and Netherlands

The United States has approved sending F-16 fighter jets to Ukraine from Denmark and the Netherlands as soon as pilot training is completed, a US official said.

Washington gave Denmark and the Netherlands official assurances that the United States will expedite approval of transfer requests for F-16s to go to Ukraine when the pilots are trained, the official said.

Denmark and the Netherlands had recently asked for those assurances. The US must approve the transfer of the military jets from its allies to Ukraine.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken sent letters to his Danish and Dutch counterparts assuring them that the requests would be approved, the US official said.

“I am writing to express the United States’ full support for both the transfer of F-16 fighter aircraft to Ukraine and for the training of Ukrainian pilots by qualified F-16 instructors,” Mr Blinken said in a letter to the two officials.

He added: “It remains critical that Ukraine is able to defend itself against ongoing Russian aggression and violation of its sovereignty.”

He said the approval of the requests would allow Ukraine to take “full advantage of its new capabilities as soon as the first set of pilots complete their training.”

Ukraine has actively sought the US-made F-16 fighter jets to help it counter Russian air superiority.

China’s defense minister promises to boost cooperation with Belarus

Chinese defence minister Li Shangfu on Thursday visited Belarus and said his country would increase military cooperation with Russia‘s neighbour and ally, where Moscow is deploying tactical nuclear weapons.

Shangfu met with strongman president Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk and said “the purpose of my visit to Belarus is precisely the implementation of important agreements at the level of heads of state and the further strengthening of bilateral military cooperation.”

Full story here:

[*China's defense minister promises to boost cooperation with Russian ally Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-china-belarus-alexander-lukashenko-moscow-b2394989.html)

Moscow building damaged in drone attack

A building in central Moscow has been damaged in a drone attack in the early hours today causing a blast heard across the business district of the Russian capital, officials said.

A witness in the area described it as “a powerful explosion”.

Moscow mayor Sergei Sobyanin said the drone was shot down by Russian air defence system but the debris from the exploded drone fell on the city’s Expo Center, less than 5 kilometres (3.1 miles) from the Kremlin.

A video published by Russian media outlets showed thick smoke rising next to skyscrapers.

The Russian defence ministry said that Ukraine was behind the drone attack.

No immediate comment was issued from Kyiv.

Ukraine has rarely claimed responsibility for attacks inside Russia and territories held by Russia.

ICYMI: How Ukraine’s first lady struck a hammer blow against Putin via the UK

Sitting with Olena Zelenska in the fortified presidential complex in Kyiv, her understated delivery belied a strong defiance of Russia’s invasion.

Britain’s sanctions against Moscow’s war machine were quickly expanded in the wake of her interview with The Independent’s International Correspondent Bel Trew.

Watch it here:

[*How Ukraine’s first lady struck a hammer blow against Putin via the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/olena-zelenska-ukraine-putin-uk-b2391505.html)

Ukrainian accounts of torture ‘go way beyond rogue Russian troops’, UN warns

Allegations of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s civilians being snatched from their homes and abused in makeshift detention centres go “way beyond” the actions of rogue Russian soldiers, the [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) ’s special rapporteur on [*torture*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/torture) has warned.

Dr Alice Jill Edwards has written to Russian authorities detailing the accounts she has received of harrowing and widespread human rights abuses by Moscow’s troops in Ukraine since [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion – including electrocutions, mock executions and threats of genital mutilation.

Read Andy Gregory’s report here:

[*Ukrainian accounts of torture ‘go way beyond rogue Russian troops’, UN warns*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-torture-ukraine-united-nations-b2391542.html)

How many casualties has Russia suffered in Ukraine?

Local independent media group Mediazone, branded a “foreign agent” by the Kremlin, work hard, operating within a tightly-controlled environment, to offer its own running total of Russian casualties in Ukraine based on what its journalists can corroborate from publicly available information, which currently puts the total at just 28, 652 as of its latest update of 28 July.

But there’s more to that story.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*How many casualties has Russia suffered in Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-losses-update-b2391513.html)

Wagner tracker: Charting Yevgeny Prigozhin’s mercenary group through the Ukraine war

From Bucha to the battle for Bakhmut, we track Wagner’s bloody role in Vladimir Putin’s invasion:

[*Charting Yevgeny Prigozhin’s Wagner mercenary group through the Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-group-prigozhin-putin-russia-b2391515.html)

Prague cancels performance by Russian soprano Anna Netrebko

A scheduled performance by Russian opera singer Anna Netrebko in the Czech capital has been cancelled over political pressures as Russia wages war on Ukraine, Czech officials said.

The announcement came days after the Prague government said that all its coalition parties “unequivocally” opposed the concert, calling it “insensitive”.

Prague’s Municipal House, where Netrebko’s 16 October performance was to take place, and the Nachtigall Artists Management, an agency that organised it, have agreed on the cancellation.

The soprano will not demand compensation, the organising agency confirmed.

The Czech Republic has been a staunch supporter of Ukraine during the war.

The governing coalition in Prague is made up of the same political parties that comprise the Czech government.

Netrebko sued the Metropolitan Opera in New York City over its decision to cut ties with her last year for refusing to repudiate her support for Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Her 2023-24 season includes engagements with Berlin’s Staatsoper unter den Linden, the Vienna State Opera, Milan’s Teatro alla Scala and the Paris Opera.

ICYMI: Why tensions have been growing along NATO’s eastern border with Belarus

Poland is deploying thousands of troops to its border with [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) , calling it a deterrent move as tensions between the two neighbors ratchet up.

Those tensions between Poland — a NATO and European Union country — and Belarus, which is Russia’s ally in its war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , have been building up in recent months on the border.

Here is why:

[*Why tensions have been growing along NATO’s eastern border with Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ap-belarus-russia-nato-alexander-lukashenko-b2393297.html)

Russia opens a criminal investigation into a leader of a prominent election watchdog

The [*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) authorities have opened a criminal investigation into one of the leaders of a prominent independent election monitoring group, his lawyer said Thursday.

The case against Grigory Melkonyants, co-chair of Russia’s leading election watchdog Golos, is the latest step in the months-long crackdown on [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) critics and rights activists that the government ratcheted up after sending troops into [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Read more here:

[*Russia opens a criminal investigation into a leader of a prominent election watchdog*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-moscow-ukraine-kremlin-b2394762.html)

Lukashenko says Zelenskiy halted direct contacts between Ukraine and Belarus

There have been direct contacts between Ukraine and Belarus but Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky put a halt to them, Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said during an online interview broadcast on Thursday.

The last such contact occurred a few months ago, he said during in the interview with Diana Panchenko, a pro-Russian Ukrainian journalist.

According to Mr Lukashenko, the topics discussed included a potential Belarus involvement in the war on Russian side, potential use of nuclear weapons and Wagner Group mercenaries, now stationed in Belarus.

“These questions accumulated. But we had these contacts, we talked. We don’t mind. And there are still proposals to continue this dialogue.”

Turkey ‘warned Russia after cargo ship incident’ in Black Sea

Turkish authorities warned Russian counterparts after an incident involving a cargo ship in the Black sea which took place within international waters, Turkish presidency said in a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, on Thursday.

“Following the incident with the ship counterparts from Russia are warned in an appropriate way to avoid these kinds of attempts that will escalate tensions in the Black Sea,” the presidency said.

On Sunday, Russia said in a statement its Vasily Bykov patrol ship had fired automatic weapons on the Palau-flagged Sukru Okan vessel after the ship’s captain failed to respond to a request to halt for an inspection.

Ukraine tells military-age citizens to 'overcome their fear' in recruitment campaign

Ukraine‘s defence ministry urged military-age citizens to update their data at army enlistment offices and “overcome their fear” in a campaign launched on Thursday as a summer counter-offensive grinds through its third month.

The campaign, which draws on slickly-produced videos and photo testimonials of prominent soldiers describing their fears, aims to break down a major obstacle in army recruitment, deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said.

“We’re all living people and we all overcome this fear in order to win,” she said, noting that military-age citizens are duty-bound to keep their personal data at draft offices up-to-date.

As she outlined the campaign, Ms Maliar was careful to say that not all those who updated their personal data would automatically be mobilised into the army and that not all those who are mobilised would end up in a combat zone.

President Volodymyr Zelensky announced a general mobilization after Russia‘s February 2022 full-scale invasion and military reservists between the ages of 18 and 60 are eligible for conscription.

“Bravery conquers fear,” ran one of the campaign’s slogans. “Everyone has fears in a war. I do too,” a Ukrainian soldier who fought in Bakhmut was quoted as saying.

Putin not pushing Belarus to enter war with Ukraine, says Lukashenko

Russian president Vladimir Putin is not trying to push Belarus into joining the war in Ukraine, Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko said in an online interview published on Thursday.

“To involve Belarus... what will that give? Nothing,” said Mr Lukashenko, one of Putin’s closest allies, whose country borders Ukraine, Russia and three NATO countries including Poland.

“If you Ukrainians do not cross our border, we will never participate in this war. In this hot war. But we will always help Russia -they are our allies,” he said in the interview with Diana Panchenko, a pro-Russian Ukrainian journalist.

Mr Lukashenko warned that Belarus would respond in the event of external aggression, including through the use of nuclear weapons that Moscow has stationed on its territory.

“There can be only one threat -aggression against our country. If aggression against our country starts from Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, we will respond instantly with everything we have,” he said.

What are hypersonic missiles and how powerful are they?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is in the process of equipping its new [*nuclear submarines*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nuclear-submarines) with hypersonic Zircon [*missiles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/missiles) , the head of Russia’s largest shipbuilder has said.

Here’s everything to know about “the next generation of arms”:

[*What are hypersonic missiles and how powerful are they?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hypersonic-missiles-russia-submarines-yasen-class-explained-b2394595.html)

Latest update on Ukraine fuel stockpiles from UK Ministry of Defence

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is already stockpiling fuel ahead of another [*challenging winter under siege*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-live-putin-news-b2394437.html) from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) ’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) said on Thursday.

Read the full report by Maroosha Muzaffar here:

[*Latest update on Ukraine fuel stockpiles from UK Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-fuel-stockpile-uk-defence-ministry-latest-b2394664.html)

China to increase military cooperation with Belarus

China will increase military co-operation with Belarus, Beijing’s defence minister Li Shangfu has said during a meeting with dictatorial leader Alexander Lukashenko in Minsk.

Mr Li said “the purpose of my visit to Belarus is precisely the implementation of important agreements at the level of heads of state and the further strengthening of bilateral military co-operation”.

Neither side gave details of what the co-operation will entail, but the two countries have agreed to hold joint military exercises next year.

Mr Lukashenko said on Thursday that China’s military assistance would not be directed against third countries, adding: “We need to secure our states and our peoples. We are absolute supporters of a multipolar world, territorial integrity and unity of the borders and territories established after the Second World War.”

Belarusian analyst Valery Karbalevich told Reuters that the visit of the Chinese defence minister is “an important signal not only to the EU and the US, but also to Ukraine”.

“With this visit, China marks the scope of its military interests and shows that it is interested in building up ties with Minsk and Moscow, including military co-operation, despite the dissatisfaction of Western countries,” he told The Associated Press.

“This is also a signal to Ukraine that the prolongation of the war can force China to take one side.”

US sanctions four FSB-linked individuals over Alexei Navalny poisoning

The United States has imposed sanctions on four Russian individuals it accused of being involved in the 2020 poisoning of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

The US Treasury Department in a statement said the four hit with sanctions are linked to Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB), with the State Department also set to announce visa restrictions.

“Today we remind Vladimir Putin and his regime that there are consequences not only for waging a brutal and unprovoked war against Ukraine, but also for violating the human rights of the Russian people,” said the department’s under secretary for terrorism and financial intelligence, Brian Nelson.

“The assassination attempt against Aleksey Navalny in 2020 represents the Kremlin’s contempt for human rights, and we will continue to use the authorities at our disposal to hold the Kremlin’s willing would-be executioners to account.”

Navalny, who in the 2010s brought tens of thousands of people onto the streets, was detained in January 2021 after returning to Moscow from Germany where he had been treated for what Western doctors said was poisoning by a Soviet-era nerve agent.

The Kremlin, which at one point accused him of working with the CIA to undermine Russia, denied any involvement in what happened to him and denies persecuting Navalny.

Russia aiming to mass produce copy of Iranian attack drone, report suggests

Russia is making steady progress toward its goal of mass producing a type of Iranian attack drone that could travel more than 1,000 miles and target Ukrainian cities, the Washington Post has reported, citing leaked documents about the plan.

Moscow is working on its own version of the Shahed-136, despite delays and sanctions that impact components needed from other countries, according to the documents obtained by a source involved in the work at the Russian Republic of Tatarstan’s Alabuga Special Economic Zone.

The report highlights Russia’s efforts to build its own drone factory, where it aims to manufacture 6,000 drones capable of launching coordinated “swarm attacks” by the summer of 2025. The documents suggest the Russian facility is about a month behind schedule.

Sunak praises ‘Saudi leadership on Ukraine’

Rishi Sunak has highlighted Saudi Arabia’s “positive leadership on Ukraine” in a phone call with Mohammed bin Salman, Downing Street has said.

The prime minister “highlighted Saudi Arabia’s constructive and positive leadership on Ukraine following the recent talks in Jeddah and the leaders agreed on the importance of allies working together to end the bloodshed in Ukraine and support a just and lasting peace”, a No 10 spokesperson said.

She added: “The prime minister welcomed progress on the conflict in Yemen, where the UK will continue to back efforts to extend the ceasefire and alleviate the humanitarian crisis.

“The prime minister and crown prince said they would continue working closely together to progress UK-Saudi co-operation and looked forward to meeting in person at the earliest opportunity.”

In Anne Frank’s Amsterdam, Ukrainian children’s war diaries go on show in City Hall

The city where Anne Frank wrote her World War II diary while hiding with her family from the brutal Nazi occupation is hosting an exhibition about the Ukraine war with grim echoes of her plight more than three quarters of a century later.

The exhibition that opened at Amsterdam City Hall on Thursday offers a vision of the war in Ukraine as experienced by children caught in the devastating conflict.

“This exhibition is about the pain through the children’s eyes,” Khrystyna Khranovska, who developed the idea, said at the opening. “It strikes into the very heart of every adult to be aware of the suffering and grief that the Russian war has brought our children,” she added.

“War Diaries,” includes writings like those that Anne Frank penned in the hidden annex behind an Amsterdam canal-side house, but also modern ways Ukrainian children have recorded and processed the traumatic experience of life during wartime, including photos and video.

The Killers booed after bringing Russian fan on stage during Georgia concert

Israel clinches largest-ever defence deal with Germany

Israel has secured its largest-ever defense deal selling a sophisticated missile defense system to Germany for £2.75bn after the United States approved the deal, the Israeli defence ministry has said.

Although Israel has long had close economic and military links with western European countries, the deal with Germany could draw the attention of Russia, which Israel has maintained working relations with throughout the war in Ukraine.

Israel has repeatedly rebuffed requests to sell arms to Ukraine for fear of antagonising Russia.

Germany will buy the advanced defense system, coined Arrow 3, which is designed to intercept long-range ballistic missiles. Israel sought approval for the deal from the US State Department because the system was jointly developed by the two countries.

Ukraine having ‘real successes’ in degrading Russia’s military, says expert

Ukraine is having “real successes” in degrading Russia’s military capabilities, which is “going to matter in the long-term a lot more than taking a village here or a town there”, an expert has said.

“We tend to fixate on territorial movements of the battle lines, because it’s something we can track,” Mark Galeotti, director of the Mayak Intelligence consultancy, told The Independent. “But really if you think about it, the goal of war is to deprive the enemy of the will and capacity to keep fighting.

“ If you think of it in these terms, actually the Ukrainians are making real successes in degrading Russian capabilities, in terms of blasting supply lines and depots, destroying artillery pieces at a much quicker rate than they can replenish.”

“If we of this in the context of a war that’s going to last at least another year and quite possibly even longer, actually what Ukraine’s doing is going to matter in the long term a lot more than taking a village here or a town there,” he added.

While winter should give Russia a chance to replenish its stocks, Moscow is “increasingly relying on older artillery pieces that have been pulled out of stockpiles, rather than cutting-edge new systems, whereas the Ukrainians are getting cutting-edge new systems” such as the British AS90 self-propelled howitzer, Mr Galeotti said.

“So although one can be disappointed about the counteroffensive in the short term, in the long-term it’s leading to a situation where, come next spring, the Ukrainians are going to increasingly be fielding a competent 21st century army, while the Russians are fielding a 20th century army.”

Attacks on Russian soil could be ‘playing into Russia’s hands’, expert warns

As it broadens its focus away from the fronline, Ukraine appears to have been adopting asymmetric tactics, such as the use of cheap drones to hit the Black Sea fleet and targets within Russia, such as Moscow and Belgorod.

While Ukraine rarely claims responsibility for such attacks, officials are happy to play up the impact on the Kremlin and say that more attacks will be forthcoming.

“It’s not just about taking territory, it’s about the psychological impact, it’s about degrading Russia’s logistic capabilities,” Dr Marina Miron, of King’s College London’s war studies department, told The Independent.

However, Dr Miron cautioned that attacks on Russian soil “might well be playing into Russia’s hands” by seemingly “reinforcing” Mr Putin’s narrative of the war, and lending him justification for a further mobilisation of citizens, while alienating Western allies fearful of escalation.

“From the information war perspective, it’s a double edged sword,” Dr Miron added.

[*Experts warn Ukraine’s frontline push is being damaged by West*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-ukraine-bombers-putin-b2392966.html)

Carlsberg boss ‘shocked’ by seizure of Russian business

The chief executive of brewing giant Carlsberg has said he was “shocked” when Vladimir Putin seized its business there.

Cees ’t Hart said the company had agreed a deal to sell its Russian operations in late June, but just weeks later a presidential decree transferred the business to the Russian Federal Agency for State Property Management.

August Grahamhas the full story:

[*Carlsberg boss ‘shocked’ by seizure of Russian business*](https://www.independent.co.uk/business/carlsberg-boss-shocked-by-seizure-of-russian-business-b2393993.html)

ICYMI: Ukraine’s intelligence service claims responsibility for Crimean Bridge drone attack

Ukraine’s security services have claimed responsibility for an attack on the vital bridge connecting Crimea to Russia last month.

The country’s intelligence bureau, the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU), said it used remotely controlled sea drones carrying 850kg of explosives to target the Crimean Bridge, a critical supply link built by Vladimir Putin in 2018.

The drone strike on 17 July damaged the bridge and killed two civilians, according to Russian officials.

Ukraine does not usually claim responsibility for such attacks, but spy chief Vasyl Maliuk confirmed the security services’ involvement in an interview with CNN and warned the Russian president that more similar strikes will follow.

Mr Maliuk said the drones called “Sea Baby” were developed internally by the SBU, which has now released footage to CNN showing the pilot’s screen moments before the attack alongside CCTV of the immediate aftermath.

My colleagueMaanya Sachdevahas the full report:

[*Ukraine’s intelligence service claims responsibility for Crimean Bridge drone attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-crimea-sea-drones-kerch-bridge-b2394150.html)

Up to Ukraine to decide when conditions are right for negotiations, says Nato chief

It is up to Ukraine to decide when the conditions are right to join any peace negotiations, Nato chief Jens Stoltenberg has said, emphasising the alliance’s unchanged stance in the wake of recent comments by a senior colleague.

“It is the Ukrainians, and only the Ukrainians, who can decide when there are conditions in place for negotiations, and who can decide at the negotiating table what is an acceptable solution,” Mr Stoltenberg said at a conference in Norway.

The statement followed remarks by Mr Stoltenberg’s chief of staff, Stian Jenssen, who said on Tuesday that Ukraine may ultimately give up territory to Russia as part of a deal to end the war. Mr Jenssen subsequently said he regretted his comments.

“His message, and which is my main message, and which is Nato’s main message, is, firstly, that Nato’s policy is unchanged – we support Ukraine,” Mr Stoltenberg said.

What are hypersonic missiles and how powerful are they?

Russia is in the process of equipping its new nuclear submarines with hypersonic Zircon missiles, the head of Russia’s largest shipbuilder has said.

“Multi-purpose nuclear submarines of the Yasen-M project will... be equipped with the Zircon missile system on a regular basis,” Alexei Rakhmanov, chief executive officer of the United Shipbuilding Corporation, told RIA. “Work in this direction is already underway.”

Yasen-class submarines, also known as Project 885M, are nuclear-powered cruise missile submarines built to replace Soviet-era nuclear attack submarines as part of a programme to modernise the Russian navy’s fleet.

Sea-based Zircon hypersonic missiles have a range of 560 miles and can travel at several times the speed of sound, making them extremely difficult to defend against them.

My colleaguesJoe SommerladandMatt Mathershave more details here:

[*What are hypersonic missiles and how powerful are they?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/hypersonic-missiles-russia-submarines-yasen-class-explained-b2394595.html)

Ukrainian artist paints group portraits for refugees to gift to UK hosts

A Ukrainian artist who paints family portraits for refugees to give to their UK hosts said she feels she is “doing something important” by “immortalising” Britons’ generosity and the impact of the war, reportsAisling Grace.

Olha Son, 35, fled Ukraine and moved in with a host family in Cornwall, before beginning to accept commissions from ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** who wanted to thank their British host families with a painting.

Ms Son has created numerous artworks showing Britons sheltering ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** with an umbrella decorated with a Union flag, which she said makes “almost 100% of the Brits cry”.

She said: “It’s like immortalising this phenomena of a British family who made a decision to open their doors to strangers from a different country, a different culture, in order to help in such a devastating situation as the war.”

[*Ukrainian artist paints group portraits for refugees to gift to UK hosts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/brits-union-cornwall-britons-sheffield-b2394524.html)

No change seen in Russia’s nuclear posture, says Nato chief

Nato has not detected any changes to Russia's nuclear forces and has seen no reason to reconsider its own corresponding setup, the military alliance’s chief Jens Stoltenberg has said.

“We haven’t seen any changes in their nuclear forces that trigger us to change our forces and the way those are arranged. So far we haven’t seen anything that demands that from our side,” Mr Stoltenberg told reporters in Norway.

Russia fines Google for refusing to delete content about Ukraine war

Russia has fined Google the equivalent of £25,000 for refusing to delete content Moscow claimed was fake information about its war in Ukraine, state news agencies reported.

It is merely the latest effort by Russia in its crackdown on information about its 16-month war in Ukraine, with social media site Reddit also fined for the first time on Tuesday.

Watch: Russian navy officers point guns at crew after ordering cargo ship in Black Sea to halt

Pressure on Ukraine to achieve ‘Hollywood’-style breakthrough against Russia ‘unrealistic’, say experts

Western pressure on Ukraine’s counteroffensive to achieve a “Hollywood”-style breakthrough against Russia’s forces is “unrealistic” and Kyiv’s allies must be prepared for the war to “drag on far longer” than they imagined, experts have said.

With rains expected to muddy the battlefield in areas of the south and east of the country – including Zaporizhzhia – as soon as September, the “odds are getting longer” on the “triumphant breakthrough” many in the West were hoping for, analysts have told The Independent.

While Kyiv has made some advances and reclaimed a number of towns and villages, progress has been slow. However, Ukrainian forces are having “real successes” in degrading Russia’s military capabilities and zapping the morale of its increasingly stretched forces.

Those efforts to hit supply lines, and destroy weapons depots and artillery pieces, are “going to matter in the long-term a lot more than taking a village here or a town there”, said Mark Galeotti, director of the Mayak Intelligence consultancy – who still did not rule out a surprise breakthrough by Kyiv’s forces.

“Although one can be disappointed about the counteroffensive in the short term, in the long term it’s leading to a situation where, come next spring, the Ukrainians are going to increasingly be fielding a competent 21st-century army – while the Russians are fielding a 20th-century army,” he added.

You can read the full report here:

[*Experts warn Ukraine’s frontline push is being damaged by West*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-ukraine-bombers-putin-b2392966.html)

FSB 'thwarts attack' on comms station at uranium-enriching town in Siberia

Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) claims to have thwarted a planned attack on communications stations in a uranium-enriching town in Siberia, Russian state news agencies reported.

The FSB claimed to have detained two members of the “Citizens of the USRR” collective, who supposedly planned to blow up communications stations of the state-controlled telecoms operator Rostelecom and the TransTelecom telecommunications company.

The “Citizens of the USRR,” a collective name for disparate groups, was deemed extremist by Russia’s justice ministry in 2022.

The purported attack is claimed to have been targeting Zelenogorsk, a town of around 65,000 people in the Siberian region of Krasnoyarsk, which has been involved since Soviet times in enriching uranium for Russia’s nuclear programme. It still remains a closed town, requiring a special entry permit to enter.

EU diverts funds aimed at Russia and Belarus towards Ukraine and Moldova

The EU has transferred €135m (£115m) initially allocated for programmes with Russia and Belarus towards strengthening cooperation with Ukraine and Moldova, Brussels has announced.

“The decision ... is the result of the brutal war of Russia against Ukraine”, said the EU’s commissioner for cohesion and reforms, Elisa Ferreira.

The EU also decided that regions in Finland, Estonia, Latvia and Poland which were supposed to participate in cooperation programs with Russia and Belarus may participate in other existing programs.

Wagner mercenaries issue chilling message on Poland’s doorstep: ‘We are here’

Our world affairs editor Kim Sengupta reports from the Suwalki Gap:

Thousands of battled-hardened Wagner fighters arrived in Belarus under a deal ending the attempted coup against Vladimir Putin by the group’s chief Yevgeny Prigozhin. No one thought that we had seen the last of them.

The mercenaries have moved towards the city of Grdno, according to the Polish military, and set up camp in the Brestsky area around six miles (10km) from Poland’s border.

And now, in a menacing turn, posters have begun to appear stuck next to Polish border posts with pictures of the fighters holding up signs in English saying “We are here. PMC [private military company] Wagner Group: Join us” with a QR code for would-be recruits. They have also appeared in Warsaw and Krakow. Poland’s interior minister Mariusz Kaminski said two Russians have been arrested over the matter.

Krakow is popular with British and other Western holidaymakers. Videos are circulating on social media of the poster being torn down by local people. Lukasz Wantuch, a councillor in Krakow, who published one of the photos said: “This is a provocation and this is happening here in Krakow”. Pyotr Komorowski, a student, said: “The aim is obvious, to scare tourists. That’s why they need to be removed quickly”.

[*Wagner mercenaries issue chilling message on Poland’s doorstep: ‘We are here’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-wagner-belarus-border-russia-war-b2394090.html)

Russia claims to shoot down drone over Belgorod

Russia’s defence ministry claims to have thwarted a Ukrainian drone attack on Russian territory, the state-backed RIA news agency reported.

Interfax also said a drone had been downed over Russia’s southern Belgorod region, citing the defence ministry.

Ukraine has exported 820,000 tonnes of grain via Danube ports this month

Ukraine exported 820,000 metric tonnes of grain in the first half of August via its ports on the Danube River, which is currently its main export route, the APK-Inform consultancy has said.

No comparative figures for previous periods were offered, but the data provides some insight into the extent to which Kyiv has been forced to adapt its export business in the face of Russia’s war.

Ukraine traditionally uses the Black Sea ports of Odesa and Mykolaiv to export most of its grain, but it was forced to switch to the Danube after Russia pulled out of the UN-brokered deal to keep those routes open in mid-July.

However, the exports through Danube could be affected by the recent Russian attacks on port infrastructure.

Kyiv said on Wednesday that Russian drone strikes damaged grain silos and warehouses at the river port of Reni on the Danube. Earlier this month, Russia attacked the Danube port of Izmail.

Ukraine’s first deputy farm minister Taras Vysotskiy told Kyiv’s national broadcaster that up to 5,000 tonnes of grain was destroyed in the attack on Reni.

Ukraine gearing up for winter with stockpiling fuel reserves – UK MoD

Ukrainian efforts to build up fuel stockpiles will likely be successful in ensuring that it will have sufficient fuel reserves during the approaching winter period despite the consistent pressures of war, the British Ministry of Defence said.

The war-hit nation has been “effective in mobilising its mining sector to maintain output, ensuring a continuous supply of coal is available for thermal power and heating plants in the winter, with substantial gas stocks providing a further reserve,” it said in its intelligence update.

It credited Ukraine’s endurance last winter where the country weathered Russian attacks on Ukraine’s energy infrastructure with the help of skilled workforce and “expertise needed to operate and maintain the power network, even in wartime conditions”.

The attacks will likely continue this winter, the MoD said.

Sweden to explore whether Russia sanctions are complied with

Officials in the Swedish government have instructed the National Board of Trade to explore whether a rise in exports to countries bordering Russia was triggered by attempts to circumvent sanctions imposed over the war in Ukraine.

“The increase (in exports) has given rise to suspicions that the sanctions are not fully complied with,” the Swedish foreign ministry said in a statement.

Ukraine struggling to defend northeast against Putin’s forces – 'mostly convicts' – says general

The situation on the Kupiansk front in the northeastern region of Kharkiv is growing more difficult for Ukraine, says senior general Oleksandr Syrskyi, with Putin’s forces led by Russian assault squads “consisting mainly of convicts”.

“Due to the complication of the situation in the Kupiansk direction, I worked most of the day with units that lead the defence on the approaches to the city,” General Syrskyi was quoted as saying by Ukraine’s Military Media Centre.

“The enemy is trying to break through the defences of our troops every day, in different directions, with assault squads consisting mainly of convicts, with the aim of blockading and then capturing Kupiansk,” he said.

Kupiansk, a town with a pre-war population of around 27,000, was seized by Russia in the early days of the February 2022 invasion before Ukrainian troops recaptured it in a lightning offensive last September that embarrassed Moscow.

Losing Kupiansk a second time would be a major blow to Kyiv’s battlefield momentum at a time when its summer counter-offensive has so far failed to deliver significant territorial gains, except for a few villages such as Urozhaine in Luhansk.

Russia controls nearly a fifth of Ukraine, including the peninsula of Crimea, most of the Luhansk region and large tracts of the regions of Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.

Putin scrambles to convene currency control meeting over economic fears

Vladimir Putin was expected to speak to Russian policy makers yesterday over currency controls as the rouble continued to slide despite an extraordinary 3.5 percentage point interest rates hike, in signs of Moscow’s full-scale war weighing down its own economy.

The Russian president was expected to hear proposals from the finance ministry to require exporters to convert a chunk of the country’s foreign earnings into roubles, two people aware of the developments told the Financial Times.

Proposals drawn up by the Russian finance ministry would require exporters to sell up to 80 per cent of their foreign currency revenue within 90 days after delivery, the newspapers reported. It also sought a ban on companies that refused to comply from receiving government subsidies.

This is the first such proposal on increased currency control being debated in the Kremlin since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine was launched in February last year.

In recent months, Russia’s rouble has become one of the world’s worst-performing currencies and the country’s central bank has stepped in to try to halt the slide.

The rouble’s decline is “not very welcome” to the Kremlin, said Janis Kluge, a Russian economy expert at the German Institute for International and Security Affairs.

While not a full-blown crisis, “this is the closest we came to a real economic problem since the start of the war,” he said.

The chaos at the start of sanctions was far worse, but since then, the rouble’s decline “is the first time that something seems to be not so much under control,” he said.

US condemns Russia’s attacks on grain infrastructure: ‘Putin doesn’t care'

The United States has slammed Russia’s continued attacks on Ukraine’s grain infrastructure and called on Moscow to return immediately to the grain deal.

Russian president Vladimir Putin does not care about global food security, State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel told reporters after Ukraine earlier yesterday said Russia had attacked its grain storage facilities overnight.

Ukraine loses hope of using F-16 fighter jets this year

A Ukrainian air force spokesperson has said Ukraine will not be able to defend itself using F-16 fighter jets during this autumn and winter against the continuing Russian invasion.

“It’s already obvious we won’t be able to defend Ukraine with F-16 fighter jets during this autumn and winter,” spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said at a joint telethon broadcast by Ukrainian channels.

“We had big hopes for this plane, that it will become part of air defence, able to protect us from Russia’s missiles and drones terrorism,” Mr Ihnat said, confirming Kyiv’s awareness of delays in receiving the warplanes it has been seeking from its Western allies.

Earlier in August, Mr Zelensky had announced training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16 fighter jets this month and said that the “delivery and combat use of F-16s by our pilots should take place as soon as possible”.

The supply of top-tier warplanes to the war-hit nation would be a signal that Russia’s invasion would end in defeat, Mr Zelensky had said. However, a former Nato commander has said the West’s promised assistance with F-16s for Ukrainian pilots has been slowed down as the war-hit nations’ allies do not wish to provoke Russia and launch a direct confrontation between nuclear powers.

US says working to identify alternative paths for Ukraine grain exports

The United States on Wednesday condemned Russia‘s continued attacks on Ukraine‘s grain infrastructure and said it was working with partners to identify alternative options to ensure Ukrainian grain exports.

“The United States ... calls for Russia to immediately return to the Black Sea Grain Initiative,” State Department deputy spokesperson Vedant Patel said in a briefing, referring to a pact that had allowed export of Ukraine grain by the Black Sea.

Russia quit the deal on 17 July.

Patel said the US was seeking “to possibly find ways and corridors in which we can continue to get grain to the places it needs to go,” without providing details. He added that Washington has not seen any indication from the Russians that they wanted to go back to the deal.

Why tensions have been growing along NATO’s eastern border with Belarus

Poland is deploying thousands of troops to its border with [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) , calling it a deterrent move as tensions between the two neighbors ratchet up.

Those tensions between Poland — a NATO and European Union country — and Belarus, which is Russia’s ally in its war on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , have been building up in recent months on the border.

Here is why:

[*Why tensions have been growing along NATO’s eastern border with Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/ap-belarus-russia-nato-alexander-lukashenko-b2393297.html)

Putin accuses West of ‘adding fuel to fire’ with conflict in Ukraine

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has accused Western countries of adding ‘fuel to the fire’ by funding the conflict in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Addressing participants of an international security forum, the Russian president shifted the blame for Russia’s ongoing invasion.

Putin said countries that were “pumping billions of dollars into the neo-Nazi regime” were “igniting the conflict even more, to draw other states into it.”

It comes as [*experts told The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-ukraine-bombers-putin-b2392966.html) that Western pressure on Ukraine’s counteroffensive to achieve a “Hollywood”-style breakthrough against Russia’s forces is “unrealistic.”

Watch the video here;

ICYMI: Warning as unexploded Russian mines wash up on Europe’s tourist beaches

Russian [*mines*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mines) are washing up on busy [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) tourist [*beaches*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beaches) , frequently exploding, and sometimes even killing holidaymakers.

As recently as Monday, a Russian mine exploded in the Romanian Black Sea resort of Costinesti, although it caused no injuries or damage, according to local reports. Meanwhile, another mine was also discovered in the water there.

My colleague Tara Cobham reports:

[*Warning as unexploded Russian mines wash up on Europe’s tourist beaches*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-mines-black-sea-beaches-b2393868.html)

Wagner mercenaries issue a chilling message on Poland’s doorstep: ‘We are here’

Warsaw is sending 10,000 troops to its border with Belarus, with the mercenary group setting up camp and recruitment posters appearing announcing their presence. [*Kim Sengupta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/kim-sengupta) reports from the Suwalki Gap in Poland, a key spot in Nato’s defence of Europe, as provocations from Russia and Belarus also ramp up.

Full story for Premium subscribers here:

[*Wagner mercenaries issue chilling message on Poland’s doorstep: ‘We are here’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/poland-wagner-belarus-border-russia-war-b2394090.html)

Sweden to explore whether Russia sanctions are complied with

Sweden’s government said on Wednesday it had instructed the National Board of Trade to explore whether a rise in exports to countries bordering Russia was triggered by attempts to circumvent sanctions imposed over the war in Ukraine.

“The increase (in exports) has given rise to suspicions that the sanctions are not fully complied with,” the Swedish foreign ministry said in a statement.

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**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on nuclear weapons*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67Y9-08V1-JBNF-W4H5-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:2

**Length:** 8498 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Two leaders agree in Beijing talks to ‘work hard’ to bring war to an end, says French diplomatic source

**Body**

France’s president [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) has urged his Chinese counterpart [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) to bring [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) “back to its senses” over its war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The conflict – and need to avoid a nuclear escalation – was notable on the agenda as Mr Macron and European Commission chief [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) visited Beijing, days after Moscow vowed to station part of its arsenal in Belarus. The United States has nuclear weapons stationed with several European Nato partners.

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) ’s leader agreed that all countries should abide by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, with a French diplomatic source claiming that Mr Macron and Mr Xi had agreed to “work hard” to bring both parties to the negotiating table.

Meanwhile, Britain’s Ministry of Defence said it believed that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has fired Colonel-General Rustam Muradov as commander of the Eastern Group of Forces (EGF) in Ukraine, marking the most senior Russian military dismissal of 2023 so far.

The group has “suffered exceptionally heavy casualties in recent months as its poorly conceived assaults repeatedly failed to capture” the Donetsk town of Vuhledar, the ministry said.

Key Points

Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on war and nuclear threats ... ... As Chinese president says all countries should respect nuclear non-proliferation Putin claims West helped Kyiv mount acts of ‘terror and sabotage’ Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled 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

Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on war and nuclear threats

Emmanuel Macron has urged Xi Jinping to bring Russia “to its senses”, during a visit to Beijing, which is claimed to have seen the two presidents agree to ‘work hard’ to end the war in Ukraine.

Referring to the UN Charter on respecting countries’ sovereignty and an international nuclear weapons treaty, the French president said: “I know I can count on you, under the two principles I just mentioned, to bring Russia to its senses and bring everyone back to the negotiating table.”

Mr Xi responded that China was willing to “jointly appeal with France to the international community to remain rational and calm”, adding: “Peace talks should be resumed as soon as possible, taking into account the reasonable security concerns of all sides with reference to the UN Charter … seeking political resolution and constructing a balanced, effective and sustainable European security framework.”

A French diplomatic source did not say whether China had indicated any change in its position during the 90-minute meeting, but told Reuters that “the President and Xi agreed to ‘work hard’ in order to accelerate the end of the war and to obtain that a negotiation opens in the full respect of international law”.

Kremlin voices possibility of Russian security guarantees for Belarus

Russia should consider providing security guarantees for Belarus, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has said, according to the Interfax news agency.

“The Russian Federation, of course, should consider the possibility of providing security guarantees for Belarus as an ally and as a country with which we are in the most advanced form of integration,” Mr Peskov told reporters, as he answered questions on president Alexander Lukashenko’s visit to Moscow.

Putin and Lukashenko ‘did not discuss' moving nuclear weapons to Belarus in today’s talks

Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko did not discuss plans to place Russian strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus in their talks on Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said.

“I can’t tell you to what extent this was discussed in yesterday’s conversation. The conversation was really very long, it went well after midnight. But today there was no talk of this,” Mr Peskov told reporters, according to the Interfax news agency.

The plans mark the first time Russia has said it would station nuclear weapons on the territory of another country since the end of the Cold War three decades ago.

Mr Peskov said the deployment of American nuclear weapons at bases in Europe is of concern to the Russian Federation, adding that Russia would respond “appropriately” to these challenges.

Lukashenko threatens that ‘ if necessary’ Belarus and Russia will ‘use all we have to protect our countries’

On the second day of the Belarusian president’s visit to Moscow, Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko discussed expanding their economic cooperation and boosting their defence links, which include a plan to station Russia’s nuclear weapons in Belarus.

In opening remarks at Thursday’s talks at the Kremlin, which involved senior officials, following Wednesday’s one-on-one meeting between the two presidents, Mr Lukashenko warned that “if necessary, we will use all we have to protect our countries and peoples.”

“We aren’t blackmailing anyone. It will be so,” he added.

The Belarusian leader cited the importance of close cooperation on defence and asserted that Belarusian factories have developed the expertise to replace Western companies as a source of electronic components for Russian weapons.

“We oriented ourselves toward the West in the past, but now we have come to realise that they aren’t our friends and we need to produce all that ourselves,” Mr Lukashenko said.

Von der Leyen says she encouraged Xi to contact Zelensky

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen has said that she encouraged China’s Xi Jinping to reach out to Volodymyr Zelensky, during their talks as part of her visit to Beijing.

Ms Von der Leyen was responding to a question from reporters on whether it was realistic that China might pressure Vladimir Putin to end the war in Ukraine.

Full report: Macron tells Xi world is counting on China ‘to bring Russia to reason’

French president Emmanuel Macron has said he can “count on China” to reason with Russia and bring everyone to the negotiating table, after a meeting between the two leaders in Beijing.

“The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to (international) stability,” Mr Macron told Chinese president Xi Jinping. “I know I can count on you to bring back Russia to reason and everyone back to the negotiating table,” he said.

The French president is currently on a three-day joint trip to Beijing, accompanied by Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission.

My colleagueStuti Mishrahas the full report:

[*Macron tells Xi world is counting on China ‘to bring Russia to reason’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/macron-china-visit-russia-putin-war-b2315271.html)

Wagner chief says no sign Ukraine leaving Bakhmut

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of Russia’s private Wagner militia, has warned that Ukrainian forces are not abandoning the city of Bakhmut and that his army needed more support from Moscow before trying to advance further.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has raised the prospect of a withdrawal from the city, saying on Wednesday that Kyiv would take the “corresponding” decisions if its forces risked being encircled by Russian troops.

Wagner forces are leading the battle for the city, which has become the bloodiest of the 13-month war, and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has said its capture would open up the battlefield and allow Russia to advance further into eastern Ukraine.

But Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has accused Russian military chiefs of ineffectiveness bordering on treason in recent months, said this was still some way off. “It must be said clearly that the enemy is not going anywhere,” he said on his Telegram channel.

Ukrainian troops had organised staunch defences inside the city, particularly along railway lines and in high-rise buildings in the west of the city, and if they fell back would take up new positions in the outskirts and in Chasiv Yar to the west, he said. “That’s why, in my opinion, there’s no talk for now of any offensive.”

Eyes turn to Crimea as Ukraine plans counter-offensive

Dmitry Suslov, an adviser to Vladimir Putin has said that Ukraine’s looming counter-offensive is likely to focus on the Sea of Azov and cutting off the illegally annexed peninsula of Crimea.

“If the Kiev offensive fails, the West will be short of weapons and at that point Russia will be able to mobilise 400,000 men for the final attack,” the Russian presidential aide told Italy’s Corriere della Sera newspaper.

In comments that seemed to confirm the importance of Crimea in any Ukrainian counter-offensive, an adviser to Volodymyr Zelensky told the Financial Times that Kyiv would be willing to discuss the future of the Black Sea peninsula if its forces reached the boundary of Crimea.

“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 said.

State actor involvement in Nord Stream blasts is ‘absolute main scenario’, prosecutor says

The “absolute main scenario” in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines is that a state actor was involved, the Swedish prosecutor investigating the explosions has said.

The blast in the Swedish zone occurred at a depth of 80 meters, which the Swedish prosecutor said made it complicated to investigate.

“We believe it will be rather difficult to determine who did this,” prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist told Reuters, pointing to the fact that the blast in the Swedish zone of the Baltic Sea occurred 80 metres below sea level.

“The people who did this have probably been aware that they would leave clues behind and probably took care so that the evidence would not point in one direction, but in several directions,” he added. “That makes it difficult to clearly point to one actor.”

Xi Jinping says all countries should respect nuclear non-proliferation

China’s president Xi Jinping has urged all countries to respect international agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as he met with France’s Emmanuel Macron in Beijing.

China, France, Russia, the UK and the US have all made commitments under the United Nations treaty which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, established in 1970.

Russia’s defence minister Sergei Ryabkov was reported as saying on Tuesday that suspending participation in the New START nuclear arms control treaty with the United States had given Moscow new opportunities to guarantee its security.

Meeting on Thursday, Mr Xi and Mr Macron both agreed that nuclear weapons should not be used in the war in Ukraine, as the French president urged his Chinese counterpart to bring Russia “back to reason”.

The UN treaty demands that all signatories should pursue negotiations in good faith on disarmament measures, and that states which do not have nuclear weapons should not acquire them.

Russia has announced plans to station nuclear weapons in neighbouring Belarus, a move the Kremlin claimed on Tuesday was in response to a growing Nato presence on its borders, after Finland joined the military alliance.

Watch: Smoke pours from fire at Russian defence ministry in Moscow

Here is footage of the fire which broke out at the Moscow headquarters of Russia's defence ministry yesterday evening. The blaze was put out shortly after it started with no casualties, the TASS news agency reported.

Nuclear deployment to Belarus is response to Nato expansion, claims Kremlin

Russia has defended its decision to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, rejecting criticism of the move by Nato’s secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday that Nato was the one expanding towards Russia, not the other way round, and therefore Moscow had to take steps to defend its own security.

Macron says he 'can count on China to bring Russia back to reason’

French president Emmanuel Macron has told China’s president Xi Jinping that he knows he can count on Beijing to reason with Russia and bring everyone back to the negotiating table.

“The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to [international] stability,” Mr Macron told Mr Xi during a state visit to China. “I know I can count on you to bring back Russia to reason and everyone back to the negotiating table.”

Hungary says relations with Sweden are at a low point, as it holds up Nato bid

Relations between Sweden and Hungary are at a low point, Viktor Orban’s chief of staff has said, calling on Stockholm to take steps to boost confidence.

Finland and its neighbour Sweden applied together last year to join Nato, but Sweden’s application has been held up by Turkey and Hungary. Hungary cites grievances over Swedish criticism of Mr Orban’s record on democracy and rule of law.

Gergely Gulyas told reporters that it is not good if disputes between countries are imported into Nato, local media reported.

Russian media mocks Trump over arrest days after he defended Putin: ‘We’re getting lots of popcorn!’

Donald Trump’s indictment in New York City has been met with ridicule by state TV in Russia, where hosts have enjoyed themselves by showcasing artwork depicting the former president wearing an orange prison jumpsuit and speculating about future jail time.

My colleagueJoe Sommerladhas the full report:

[*Russian media mocks Trump over arrest: ‘We’re getting lots of popcorn!’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-mocked-russia-tv-putin-b2315215.html)

Swedish prosecutors temper expectations over Nord Stream blast

It will likely be difficult to determine who blew up the Nord Stream pipelines, Sweden’s prosecution authority has warned.

Theexplosions at the pipelines connecting Russia and Germany occurred in the economic zones of Sweden and Denmark on 26 September. The blast in the Swedish zone happened at a depth of 80 meters and the prosecutor stressed that investigating it was complicated.

“Our hope is to be able to confirm who has committed this crime, but it should be noted that it likely will be difficult given the circumstances,” prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist said in a statement. “We are working unconditionally and turning over every stone and leaving nothing to chance,” he added.

While no conclusion has been drawn there have been a number of theories as to who blew up the pipelines and how. Germany has confirmed its investigators raided a ship in January

that may have been used to transport the explosives used to blow up the pipelines. German media reported that the boat could have been used by a Ukrainian or pro-Ukrainian group.

“There is a variety of information and reports about the sabotage against the gas pipes. The incident has obviously become an open arena for different influence attempts,” Mr Ljungqvist said in the statement.

“These speculations do not have an impact on the ongoing investigation, which is grounded in facts and the information which has emerged from analyses, crime scene investigations and collaboration with authorities in Sweden and other countries.”

Here is the latest in politics surrounding the Ukraine war

\* Any Chinese supply of lethal aid to Russia for the war in Ukraine would be a “historic mistake with profound implications”, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said.

\* French President Macron said earlier in Beijing it was not in China’s interest to send weapons to Russia. China says it has no such plans and condemns Western arms supplies to Ukraine.

\* The United States, Britain, Albania and Malta walked out on Russia‘s envoy for children’s rights -whom the International Criminal Court wants to arrest on war crimes charges -as she spoke by video to U.N. Security Council members.

\* Russian President Putin told the new US and EU ambassadors in blunt language that their countries were responsible for a dramatic deterioration in relations since Russia sent its armed forces into Ukraine last year.

\* Putin welcomed Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko to Moscow for two days of talks, but in opening public remarks both men steered clear of the war in Ukraine.

\* U.S. President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada called on Wednesday for the immediate release of a Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia on spying charges.

Macron meets China's Li as EU leaders begin Beijing talks

French President Emmanuel Macron began a series of meetings with Chinese leaders in Beijing on Thursday on a visit with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen that could set a course for the bloc’s future relations with China after years of strained ties.

Newly-appointed Premier Li Qiang greeted Macron at the Great Hall of the People, a cavernous building west of Tiananmen Square commonly used for ceremonial events, ahead of a summit with President Xi Jinping due later in the day.

After his arrival late Wednesday, Macron said Europe must resist reducing trade and diplomatic ties with Beijing, which is at odds with the West over issues including Taiwan, sensitive technologies and China’s close ties with Russia.

European Commission President von der Leyen, on her first visit to China since taking office in 2019, has said Europe must “de-risk” its relations with Beijing, as China had shifted from an era of reform and opening to one of security and control.

During her tenure, Europe’s relations with China have soured, mainly because of tit-for-tat sanctions that stalled an investment pact in 2021 and Beijing’s refusal to condemn Russia over its invasion of Ukraine that has claimed thousands of lives since it started last year.

But emerging from years of sparse diplomatic activity as pandemic border controls largely shut the country off from the rest of the world, China is eager to ensure Europe does not follow what it sees as U.S.-led efforts to contain its rise.

For Macron’s visit at least, there are high expectations in Beijing.

“Macron’s visit is expected to produce concrete results in furthering economic and trade cooperation between China and France, as well as to increase political mutual trust,” state media outlet Global Times wrote in an editorial on Thursday.

“It is worth noting that various forces in Europe and the U.S. are paying close attention to Macron’s visit and exerting influence in different directions,” the Global Times wrote. “In other words, not everyone wants to see Macron’s visit to China go smoothly and successfully.”

Russian girl who drew anti-war picture collected from orphanage by her mother

A Russian girl who was sent to a children’s home after drawing an anti-war picture and the conviction of her father for discrediting the armed forces has been taken out of the orphanage by her mother.

Just hours before a court was due to hold hearing over the parental rights of the girl’s father, Russia‘s children’s rights commissioner said that she had spoken to the girl’s mother who had collected her from social care.

Her father, single parent Alexei Moskalyov, was convicted of discrediting the armed forces and given a two year jail term, leaving his daughter Maria, or Masha in the diminutive, in the hands of the state as her mother had not lived with the family for years.

Children’s Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova said she had spoken to the girl and to her mother, named Olga.

“Masha did not want to go to her mother at first, and her opinion is legally required to be taken into account. Now her position has changed Ã¢Â€Â“ she told me this herself on the phone,” Lvova-Belova said.

“Olga has already taken Masha from the social rehabilitation center,” she said. “Let’s hope that everything will work out for mom and daughter.”

Lvova-Belova posted a picture of the girl and her mother together.

No Russians or Belarusians expected at swimming worlds in July

No Russian or Belarusian athletes are expected to compete at this year’s swimming world championships in [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) because the sport’s governing body isn’t expected to rule on their eligibility until it’s too late for them to enter.

World Aquatics said Wednesday it will create a task force to look at how Russia and Belarus could return to swimming, diving and water polo as neutral athletes. The update is expected in July, the same month of the world championships in Fukuoka.

Read more on this here:

[*No Russians, Belarusians expected at swimming worlds in July*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-lausanne-switzerland-japan-budapest-b2314787.html)

Putin fires most senior commander of 2023 so far – MoD

The Russian ministry of defence has highly likely fired Colonel-General Rustam Muradov as commander of the Eastern Group of Forces (EGF) in Ukraine, the British defence ministry said today.

“The EGF under Muradov has suffered exceptionally heavy casualties in recent months as its poorly conceived assaults repeatedly failed to capture the Donetsk Oblast town of Vuhledar,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update.

It added that the operations led by commander Muradov “attracted intense public criticism from across the spectrum of Russian commentators -including Muradov’s own troops”.

“Muradov took over the EGF after its disastrous attempt to assault Kyiv from the north-west during the initial full-scale invasion,” the MoD said.

This is the most senior Russian military dismissal of 2023 so far, but more are likely as Russia continues to fail to achieve its objectives in the Donbas, it added.

ICYMI | Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin ‘war criminal’

Zelensky denies Russia’s hold over Bakhmut

On the frontlines, Volodymyr Zelensky has said that while Ukrainian troops faced a difficult situation in the battle for Bakhmut, Russian forces do not control the salt-mining city.

The Ukrainian military would take “corresponding” decisions to protect them if they risked being encircled by Russian forces, Mr Zelensky said.

“We are in Bakhmut and the enemy does not control it,” the Ukrainian president said, refuting claims by Russian forces that they had captured the city, in ruins after enduring months of attritional warfare and bombardment.

“For me, the most important is not to lose our soldiers and of course if there is a moment of even hotter events and the danger we could lose our personnel because of encirclement -of course the corresponding correct decisions will be taken by generals there,” Mr Zelensky said, apparently referring to withdrawal.

One of the biggest and bloodiest grounds of battle between Russia and Ukraine in the 14-month long invasion, the Bakhmut city is one of the last urban centres yet to fall to Russia in eastern Donetsk province.

According to th eUkrainian military commanders, the importance of holding Bakhmut and other cities is paramount along with inflicting losses on Russian troops before an anticipated counter-offensive against them in the coming weeks or months.

“Bakhmut is performing the key task of inflicting as many losses on Russia as possible and, most importantly, to prepare for a counter-attack to take place in late April-May,” military analyst Pavel Narozhniy told NV Radio in Ukraine.

Ukraine saw 1,800 Russian attacks in March – official

Ukraine witnessed 1,800 Russian attacks last month with more than 900 clashes seen between Ukrainian border guards and Russian forces, spokesperson for the state border guard service of Ukraine said.

The 900 clashes represent an 11 per cent increase compared to the month before, the spokesperson Andriy Demchenko told Ukrainian state news outlet Ukrinform yesterday.

Finland’s Nato membership poses ‘real dilemma’ for Putin, western officials warn

Finland’s new [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) membership poses a “real dilemma” for Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , western officials have warned.

The latest addition to the alliance will be able to make a “significant” contribution to its armament, officials said on Wednesday.

[*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) , which has an 830-mile border with Russia, formally became the 31st member of the bloc in a ceremony at Nato’s Brussels headquarters on Tuesday.

More on this story here:

[*Finland’s Nato membership poses ‘real dilemma’ for Putin, western officials warn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/finland-vladimir-putin-nato-moscow-rishi-sunak-b2314678.html)

Bakhmut situation can change with more military aid, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has said that the situation in the city of Bakhmut and other frontline cities depends on the speed and volume of military aid received from international partners, and not just the heroism on display by the Ukrainian military.

“The most difficult situation on the territory of our state is in Bakhmut. The greatest use of various weapons and artillery is there. There is a very, very difficult story,” he said during a meeting with reporters after talks with Polish president Andrzej Duda in Warsaw.

He added: “And there is a shortage every day: sometimes there is artillery and enough shells on our side, sometimes there are less of them. This happens every day. Sometimes there is success in some parts of Bakhmut, we go forward, then there is no success, and we retreat to our positions again. But we are in Bakhmut, and the enemy does not control the city. This is the situation as of today.”

“...The more and faster weapons and ammunition will arrive in Ukraine, the faster the armed forces will change the situation not only in Bakhmut, but also in other areas of the front on the territory of our country,” the war-time president said.

Latest images from the frontline in Ukraine

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 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.”

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.

**Load-Date:** April 6, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on nuclear weapons*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67Y7-5D31-JBNF-W318-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Arpan Rai,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** Two leaders agree in Beijing talks to ‘work hard’ to bring war to an end, says French diplomatic source

**Body**

France’s president [*Emmanuel Macron*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/emmanuel-macron) has urged his Chinese counterpart [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) to bring [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) “back to its senses” over its war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The conflict – and need to avoid a nuclear escalation – was notable on the agenda as Mr Macron and European Commission chief [*Ursula von der Leyen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ursula-von-der-leyen) visited Beijing, days after Moscow vowed to station part of its arsenal in Belarus. The United States has nuclear weapons stationed with several European Nato partners.

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) ’s leader agreed that all countries should abide by the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, with a French diplomatic source claiming that Mr Macron and Mr Xi had agreed to “work hard” to bring both parties to the negotiating table.

Meanwhile, Britain’s Ministry of Defence said it believed that [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has fired Colonel-General Rustam Muradov as commander of the Eastern Group of Forces (EGF) in Ukraine, marking the most senior Russian military dismissal of 2023 so far.

The group has “suffered exceptionally heavy casualties in recent months as its poorly conceived assaults repeatedly failed to capture” the Donetsk town of Vuhledar, the ministry said.

Key Points

Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on war and nuclear threats ... ... As Chinese president says all countries should respect nuclear non-proliferation Putin claims West helped Kyiv mount acts of ‘terror and sabotage’ Bakhmut epicentre of fight with ‘no let-up’, 20 attacks repelled 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

Macron urges Xi to ‘bring Putin to his senses’ on war and nuclear threats

Emmanuel Macron has urged Xi Jinping to bring Russia “to its senses”, during a visit to Beijing, which is claimed to have seen the two presidents agree to ‘work hard’ to end the war in Ukraine.

Referring to the UN Charter on respecting countries’ sovereignty and an international nuclear weapons treaty, the French president said: “I know I can count on you, under the two principles I just mentioned, to bring Russia to its senses and bring everyone back to the negotiating table.”

Mr Xi responded that China was willing to “jointly appeal with France to the international community to remain rational and calm”, adding: “Peace talks should be resumed as soon as possible, taking into account the reasonable security concerns of all sides with reference to the UN Charter … seeking political resolution and constructing a balanced, effective and sustainable European security framework.”

A French diplomatic source did not say whether China had indicated any change in its position during the 90-minute meeting, but told Reuters that “the President and Xi agreed to ‘work hard’ in order to accelerate the end of the war and to obtain that a negotiation opens in the full respect of international law”.

Kremlin voices possibility of Russian security guarantees for Belarus

Russia should consider providing security guarantees for Belarus, Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov has said, according to the Interfax news agency.

“The Russian Federation, of course, should consider the possibility of providing security guarantees for Belarus as an ally and as a country with which we are in the most advanced form of integration,” Mr Peskov told reporters, as he answered questions on president Alexander Lukashenko’s visit to Moscow.

Putin and Lukashenko ‘did not discuss' moving nuclear weapons to Belarus in today’s talks

Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko did not discuss plans to place Russian strategic nuclear weapons in Belarus in their talks on Thursday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov has said.

“I can’t tell you to what extent this was discussed in yesterday’s conversation. The conversation was really very long, it went well after midnight. But today there was no talk of this,” Mr Peskov told reporters, according to the Interfax news agency.

The plans mark the first time Russia has said it would station nuclear weapons on the territory of another country since the end of the Cold War three decades ago.

Mr Peskov said the deployment of American nuclear weapons at bases in Europe is of concern to the Russian Federation, adding that Russia would respond “appropriately” to these challenges.

Lukashenko threatens that ‘ if necessary’ Belarus and Russia will ‘use all we have to protect our countries’

On the second day of the Belarusian president’s visit to Moscow, Vladimir Putin and Alexander Lukashenko discussed expanding their economic cooperation and boosting their defence links, which include a plan to station Russia’s nuclear weapons in Belarus.

In opening remarks at Thursday’s talks at the Kremlin, which involved senior officials, following Wednesday’s one-on-one meeting between the two presidents, Mr Lukashenko warned that “if necessary, we will use all we have to protect our countries and peoples.”

“We aren’t blackmailing anyone. It will be so,” he added.

The Belarusian leader cited the importance of close cooperation on defence and asserted that Belarusian factories have developed the expertise to replace Western companies as a source of electronic components for Russian weapons.

“We oriented ourselves toward the West in the past, but now we have come to realise that they aren’t our friends and we need to produce all that ourselves,” Mr Lukashenko said.

Von der Leyen says she encouraged Xi to contact Zelensky

European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen has said that she encouraged China’s Xi Jinping to reach out to Volodymyr Zelensky, during their talks as part of her visit to Beijing.

Ms Von der Leyen was responding to a question from reporters on whether it was realistic that China might pressure Vladimir Putin to end the war in Ukraine.

Full report: Macron tells Xi world is counting on China ‘to bring Russia to reason’

French president Emmanuel Macron has said he can “count on China” to reason with Russia and bring everyone to the negotiating table, after a meeting between the two leaders in Beijing.

“The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to (international) stability,” Mr Macron told Chinese president Xi Jinping. “I know I can count on you to bring back Russia to reason and everyone back to the negotiating table,” he said.

The French president is currently on a three-day joint trip to Beijing, accompanied by Ursula von der Leyen, the head of the European Commission.

My colleagueStuti Mishrahas the full report:

[*Macron tells Xi world is counting on China ‘to bring Russia to reason’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/macron-china-visit-russia-putin-war-b2315271.html)

Wagner chief says no sign Ukraine leaving Bakhmut

Yevgeny Prigozhin, the head of Russia’s private Wagner militia, has warned that Ukrainian forces are not abandoning the city of Bakhmut and that his army needed more support from Moscow before trying to advance further.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has raised the prospect of a withdrawal from the city, saying on Wednesday that Kyiv would take the “corresponding” decisions if its forces risked being encircled by Russian troops.

Wagner forces are leading the battle for the city, which has become the bloodiest of the 13-month war, and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu has said its capture would open up the battlefield and allow Russia to advance further into eastern Ukraine.

But Yevgeny Prigozhin, who has accused Russian military chiefs of ineffectiveness bordering on treason in recent months, said this was still some way off. “It must be said clearly that the enemy is not going anywhere,” he said on his Telegram channel.

Ukrainian troops had organised staunch defences inside the city, particularly along railway lines and in high-rise buildings in the west of the city, and if they fell back would take up new positions in the outskirts and in Chasiv Yar to the west, he said. “That’s why, in my opinion, there’s no talk for now of any offensive.”

Eyes turn to Crimea as Ukraine plans counter-offensive

Dmitry Suslov, an adviser to Vladimir Putin has said that Ukraine’s looming counter-offensive is likely to focus on the Sea of Azov and cutting off the illegally annexed peninsula of Crimea.

“If the Kiev offensive fails, the West will be short of weapons and at that point Russia will be able to mobilise 400,000 men for the final attack,” the Russian presidential aide told Italy’s Corriere della Sera newspaper.

In comments that seemed to confirm the importance of Crimea in any Ukrainian counter-offensive, an adviser to Volodymyr Zelensky told the Financial Times that Kyiv would be willing to discuss the future of the Black Sea peninsula if its forces reached the boundary of Crimea.

“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 said.

State actor involvement in Nord Stream blasts is ‘absolute main scenario’, prosecutor says

The “absolute main scenario” in the sabotage of the Nord Stream pipelines is that a state actor was involved, the Swedish prosecutor investigating the explosions has said.

The blast in the Swedish zone occurred at a depth of 80 meters, which the Swedish prosecutor said made it complicated to investigate.

“We believe it will be rather difficult to determine who did this,” prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist told Reuters, pointing to the fact that the blast in the Swedish zone of the Baltic Sea occurred 80 metres below sea level.

“The people who did this have probably been aware that they would leave clues behind and probably took care so that the evidence would not point in one direction, but in several directions,” he added. “That makes it difficult to clearly point to one actor.”

Xi Jinping says all countries should respect nuclear non-proliferation

China’s president Xi Jinping has urged all countries to respect international agreements on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons, as he met with France’s Emmanuel Macron in Beijing.

China, France, Russia, the UK and the US have all made commitments under the United Nations treaty which aims to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, established in 1970.

Russia’s defence minister Sergei Ryabkov was reported as saying on Tuesday that suspending participation in the New START nuclear arms control treaty with the United States had given Moscow new opportunities to guarantee its security.

Meeting on Thursday, Mr Xi and Mr Macron both agreed that nuclear weapons should not be used in the war in Ukraine, as the French president urged his Chinese counterpart to bring Russia “back to reason”.

The UN treaty demands that all signatories should pursue negotiations in good faith on disarmament measures, and that states which do not have nuclear weapons should not acquire them.

Russia has announced plans to station nuclear weapons in neighbouring Belarus, a move the Kremlin claimed on Tuesday was in response to a growing Nato presence on its borders, after Finland joined the military alliance.

Watch: Smoke pours from fire at Russian defence ministry in Moscow

Here is footage of the fire which broke out at the Moscow headquarters of Russia's defence ministry yesterday evening. The blaze was put out shortly after it started with no casualties, the TASS news agency reported.

Nuclear deployment to Belarus is response to Nato expansion, claims Kremlin

Russia has defended its decision to station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, rejecting criticism of the move by Nato’s secretary-general Jens Stoltenberg.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters on Tuesday that Nato was the one expanding towards Russia, not the other way round, and therefore Moscow had to take steps to defend its own security.

Macron says he 'can count on China to bring Russia back to reason’

French president Emmanuel Macron has told China’s president Xi Jinping that he knows he can count on Beijing to reason with Russia and bring everyone back to the negotiating table.

“The Russian aggression in Ukraine has dealt a blow to [international] stability,” Mr Macron told Mr Xi during a state visit to China. “I know I can count on you to bring back Russia to reason and everyone back to the negotiating table.”

Hungary says relations with Sweden are at a low point, as it holds up Nato bid

Relations between Sweden and Hungary are at a low point, Viktor Orban’s chief of staff has said, calling on Stockholm to take steps to boost confidence.

Finland and its neighbour Sweden applied together last year to join Nato, but Sweden’s application has been held up by Turkey and Hungary. Hungary cites grievances over Swedish criticism of Mr Orban’s record on democracy and rule of law.

Gergely Gulyas told reporters that it is not good if disputes between countries are imported into Nato, local media reported.

Russian media mocks Trump over arrest days after he defended Putin: ‘We’re getting lots of popcorn!’

Donald Trump’s indictment in New York City has been met with ridicule by state TV in Russia, where hosts have enjoyed themselves by showcasing artwork depicting the former president wearing an orange prison jumpsuit and speculating about future jail time.

My colleagueJoe Sommerladhas the full report:

[*Russian media mocks Trump over arrest: ‘We’re getting lots of popcorn!’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/trump-mocked-russia-tv-putin-b2315215.html)

Swedish prosecutors temper expectations over Nord Stream blast

It will likely be difficult to determine who blew up the Nord Stream pipelines, Sweden’s prosecution authority has warned.

Theexplosions at the pipelines connecting Russia and Germany occurred in the economic zones of Sweden and Denmark on 26 September. The blast in the Swedish zone happened at a depth of 80 meters and the prosecutor stressed that investigating it was complicated.

“Our hope is to be able to confirm who has committed this crime, but it should be noted that it likely will be difficult given the circumstances,” prosecutor Mats Ljungqvist said in a statement. “We are working unconditionally and turning over every stone and leaving nothing to chance,” he added.

While no conclusion has been drawn there have been a number of theories as to who blew up the pipelines and how. Germany has confirmed its investigators raided a ship in January

that may have been used to transport the explosives used to blow up the pipelines. German media reported that the boat could have been used by a Ukrainian or pro-Ukrainian group.

“There is a variety of information and reports about the sabotage against the gas pipes. The incident has obviously become an open arena for different influence attempts,” Mr Ljungqvist said in the statement.

“These speculations do not have an impact on the ongoing investigation, which is grounded in facts and the information which has emerged from analyses, crime scene investigations and collaboration with authorities in Sweden and other countries.”

Here is the latest in politics surrounding the Ukraine war

\* Any Chinese supply of lethal aid to Russia for the war in Ukraine would be a “historic mistake with profound implications”, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said.

\* French President Macron said earlier in Beijing it was not in China’s interest to send weapons to Russia. China says it has no such plans and condemns Western arms supplies to Ukraine.

\* The United States, Britain, Albania and Malta walked out on Russia‘s envoy for children’s rights -whom the International Criminal Court wants to arrest on war crimes charges -as she spoke by video to U.N. Security Council members.

\* Russian President Putin told the new US and EU ambassadors in blunt language that their countries were responsible for a dramatic deterioration in relations since Russia sent its armed forces into Ukraine last year.

\* Putin welcomed Belarus counterpart Alexander Lukashenko to Moscow for two days of talks, but in opening public remarks both men steered clear of the war in Ukraine.

\* U.S. President Joe Biden and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau of Canada called on Wednesday for the immediate release of a Wall Street Journal reporter arrested in Russia on spying charges.

Macron meets China's Li as EU leaders begin Beijing talks

French President Emmanuel Macron began a series of meetings with Chinese leaders in Beijing on Thursday on a visit with EU chief Ursula von der Leyen that could set a course for the bloc’s future relations with China after years of strained ties.

Newly-appointed Premier Li Qiang greeted Macron at the Great Hall of the People, a cavernous building west of Tiananmen Square commonly used for ceremonial events, ahead of a summit with President Xi Jinping due later in the day.

After his arrival late Wednesday, Macron said Europe must resist reducing trade and diplomatic ties with Beijing, which is at odds with the West over issues including Taiwan, sensitive technologies and China’s close ties with Russia.

European Commission President von der Leyen, on her first visit to China since taking office in 2019, has said Europe must “de-risk” its relations with Beijing, as China had shifted from an era of reform and opening to one of security and control.

During her tenure, Europe’s relations with China have soured, mainly because of tit-for-tat sanctions that stalled an investment pact in 2021 and Beijing’s refusal to condemn Russia over its invasion of Ukraine that has claimed thousands of lives since it started last year.

But emerging from years of sparse diplomatic activity as pandemic border controls largely shut the country off from the rest of the world, China is eager to ensure Europe does not follow what it sees as U.S.-led efforts to contain its rise.

For Macron’s visit at least, there are high expectations in Beijing.

“Macron’s visit is expected to produce concrete results in furthering economic and trade cooperation between China and France, as well as to increase political mutual trust,” state media outlet Global Times wrote in an editorial on Thursday.

“It is worth noting that various forces in Europe and the U.S. are paying close attention to Macron’s visit and exerting influence in different directions,” the Global Times wrote. “In other words, not everyone wants to see Macron’s visit to China go smoothly and successfully.”

Russian girl who drew anti-war picture collected from orphanage by her mother

A Russian girl who was sent to a children’s home after drawing an anti-war picture and the conviction of her father for discrediting the armed forces has been taken out of the orphanage by her mother.

Just hours before a court was due to hold hearing over the parental rights of the girl’s father, Russia‘s children’s rights commissioner said that she had spoken to the girl’s mother who had collected her from social care.

Her father, single parent Alexei Moskalyov, was convicted of discrediting the armed forces and given a two year jail term, leaving his daughter Maria, or Masha in the diminutive, in the hands of the state as her mother had not lived with the family for years.

Children’s Commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova said she had spoken to the girl and to her mother, named Olga.

“Masha did not want to go to her mother at first, and her opinion is legally required to be taken into account. Now her position has changed Ã¢Â€Â“ she told me this herself on the phone,” Lvova-Belova said.

“Olga has already taken Masha from the social rehabilitation center,” she said. “Let’s hope that everything will work out for mom and daughter.”

Lvova-Belova posted a picture of the girl and her mother together.

No Russians or Belarusians expected at swimming worlds in July

No Russian or Belarusian athletes are expected to compete at this year’s swimming world championships in [*Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/japan) because the sport’s governing body isn’t expected to rule on their eligibility until it’s too late for them to enter.

World Aquatics said Wednesday it will create a task force to look at how Russia and Belarus could return to swimming, diving and water polo as neutral athletes. The update is expected in July, the same month of the world championships in Fukuoka.

Read more on this here:

[*No Russians, Belarusians expected at swimming worlds in July*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-lausanne-switzerland-japan-budapest-b2314787.html)

Putin fires most senior commander of 2023 so far – MoD

The Russian ministry of defence has highly likely fired Colonel-General Rustam Muradov as commander of the Eastern Group of Forces (EGF) in Ukraine, the British defence ministry said today.

“The EGF under Muradov has suffered exceptionally heavy casualties in recent months as its poorly conceived assaults repeatedly failed to capture the Donetsk Oblast town of Vuhledar,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update.

It added that the operations led by commander Muradov “attracted intense public criticism from across the spectrum of Russian commentators -including Muradov’s own troops”.

“Muradov took over the EGF after its disastrous attempt to assault Kyiv from the north-west during the initial full-scale invasion,” the MoD said.

This is the most senior Russian military dismissal of 2023 so far, but more are likely as Russia continues to fail to achieve its objectives in the Donbas, it added.

ICYMI | Defecting Russian protection officer labels Vladimir Putin ‘war criminal’

Zelensky denies Russia’s hold over Bakhmut

On the frontlines, Volodymyr Zelensky has said that while Ukrainian troops faced a difficult situation in the battle for Bakhmut, Russian forces do not control the salt-mining city.

The Ukrainian military would take “corresponding” decisions to protect them if they risked being encircled by Russian forces, Mr Zelensky said.

“We are in Bakhmut and the enemy does not control it,” the Ukrainian president said, refuting claims by Russian forces that they had captured the city, in ruins after enduring months of attritional warfare and bombardment.

“For me, the most important is not to lose our soldiers and of course if there is a moment of even hotter events and the danger we could lose our personnel because of encirclement -of course the corresponding correct decisions will be taken by generals there,” Mr Zelensky said, apparently referring to withdrawal.

One of the biggest and bloodiest grounds of battle between Russia and Ukraine in the 14-month long invasion, the Bakhmut city is one of the last urban centres yet to fall to Russia in eastern Donetsk province.

According to th eUkrainian military commanders, the importance of holding Bakhmut and other cities is paramount along with inflicting losses on Russian troops before an anticipated counter-offensive against them in the coming weeks or months.

“Bakhmut is performing the key task of inflicting as many losses on Russia as possible and, most importantly, to prepare for a counter-attack to take place in late April-May,” military analyst Pavel Narozhniy told NV Radio in Ukraine.

Ukraine saw 1,800 Russian attacks in March – official

Ukraine witnessed 1,800 Russian attacks last month with more than 900 clashes seen between Ukrainian border guards and Russian forces, spokesperson for the state border guard service of Ukraine said.

The 900 clashes represent an 11 per cent increase compared to the month before, the spokesperson Andriy Demchenko told Ukrainian state news outlet Ukrinform yesterday.

Finland’s Nato membership poses ‘real dilemma’ for Putin, western officials warn

Finland’s new [*Nato*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nato) membership poses a “real dilemma” for Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , western officials have warned.

The latest addition to the alliance will be able to make a “significant” contribution to its armament, officials said on Wednesday.

[*Finland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/finland) , which has an 830-mile border with Russia, formally became the 31st member of the bloc in a ceremony at Nato’s Brussels headquarters on Tuesday.

More on this story here:

[*Finland’s Nato membership poses ‘real dilemma’ for Putin, western officials warn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/finland-vladimir-putin-nato-moscow-rishi-sunak-b2314678.html)

Bakhmut situation can change with more military aid, says Zelensky

Volodymyr Zelensky has said that the situation in the city of Bakhmut and other frontline cities depends on the speed and volume of military aid received from international partners, and not just the heroism on display by the Ukrainian military.

“The most difficult situation on the territory of our state is in Bakhmut. The greatest use of various weapons and artillery is there. There is a very, very difficult story,” he said during a meeting with reporters after talks with Polish president Andrzej Duda in Warsaw.

He added: “And there is a shortage every day: sometimes there is artillery and enough shells on our side, sometimes there are less of them. This happens every day. Sometimes there is success in some parts of Bakhmut, we go forward, then there is no success, and we retreat to our positions again. But we are in Bakhmut, and the enemy does not control the city. This is the situation as of today.”

“...The more and faster weapons and ammunition will arrive in Ukraine, the faster the armed forces will change the situation not only in Bakhmut, but also in other areas of the front on the territory of our country,” the war-time president said.

Latest images from the frontline in Ukraine

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 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.”

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.

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[*Coronation live updates: King Charles and Queen Camilla route and carriage details revealed*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6803-PHK1-JBNF-W353-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:5

**Length:** 4195 words

**Byline:** Ellie Muir and Kate Ng

**Highlight:** Charles and Camilla have opted to use a different carriage as they travel from Buckingham Palace to Westminster Abbey

**Body**

Buckingham Palace has unveiled official plans for the coronation, [*ahead of the ceremony on 6 May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/when-coronation-king-charles-united-kingdom-b2303759.html).

The procession route has been revealed and[*will be noticeably different from the late Queen Elizabeth II’s coronation day in 1953.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-procession-route-b2316840.html)

In comparison to his mother, [*King Charles and Queen Camilla’s procession is set to stretch just 1.3 miles, a quarter of the length of Elizabeth’s*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-procession-route-b2316840.html).

It has also been confirmed that[*Queen Camilla will use an ivory sceptre during the ceremony, despite reports suggesting it might be avoided*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-coronation-ivory-sceptre-b2316812.html).

Meanwhile, the first emoji has been created for a British coronation. The colourful cartoon motif depicts the 17th century jewelled solid gold St Edward’s Crown with purple velvet cap – [*the regalia which will be used to crown the King next month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-twitter-emoji-b2316848.html).

To mark the Easter weekend, Prince George and Prince William attended an Aston Villa football match against Nottingham Forest on Saturday (8 April) [*and delighted fans with their identical reactions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-william-george-aston-villa-b2316719.html).

Royals news -latest updates

King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’ Queen Camilla will hold ivory sceptre during coronation ceremony Camilla Queen Consort to be crowned Queen Camilla at coronation Prince George will have special role in King Charles’ coronation

Queen Camilla will hold ivory sceptre during coronation ceremony

Queen [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) will use an [*ivory*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ivory) sceptre during her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) ceremony in May, despite reports suggesting it might be avoided.

The ceremony traditionally features deeply symbolic objects that represent the royal duties and responsibilities of the new monarch and his wife.

It is understood that Camilla will hold a gold sceptre surmounted by a cross and a second staff made of ivory and topped by a dove during the coronation at Westminster Abbey on 6 May.

The ivory sceptre, which has been used by every Queen Consort at previous coronations since 1685, is part of the crown jewels and regalia held in trust by the monarch for the nation.

Read the full story below:

[*Queen Camilla will hold ivory sceptre during coronation ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-coronation-ivory-sceptre-b2316812.html)

Camilla to be crowned Queen at coronation next month, King Charles confirms

Queen Consort Camilla will officially be named Queen Camilla at King Charles III’s coronation next month.

The newly-released invitations for the British monarch’s forthcoming coronation revealed Camilla Parker-Bowles’ new title. She was referred to as Queen Consort following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year.

Meredith Clarkhas the story:

[*Camilla to be crowned Queen at coronation next month, King Charles confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html)

Who is attending King Charles’ coronation?

King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla will be crowned at their coronation on Saturday 6 May. The couple will be joined by hundreds of guests at Westminster Abbey, including senior members of the royal family, politicians and celebrities. The Archbishop of Canterbury will conduct the ceremony.

While the venue can seat up to 2,200 guests, it is unknown how many invites Buckingham Palace has sent out, and many attendees won’t be confirmed until the actual day of the event.

Here’s who we think might make the list:

[*All of the celebrities and royals attending King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-attending-harry-meghan-b2312636.html)

Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

Sarah Ferguson has admitted she doesn’t know how King Charles III is coping with his new role as monarch.

In an interview with The Independent, published on Wednesday 5 April, the Duchess of York, 63, shared her thoughts on King Charles’s reign.

[*Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-king-charles-coronation-b2313855.html)

William, Prince of Wales: A timeline of the heir’s life ahead of King Charles’s coronation

As the coronation draws closer, many may be wanting to know more about the Prince of Wales, who will be present as his father is crowned King.

Ellie Muirtells you everything you need to know about Prince William:

[*A timeline of Prince William’s life ahead of King Charles’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-william-life-king-charles-timeline-b2314005.html)

Jill Biden to attend King Charles’ coronation without president

Joe Biden has revealed that he will not be attending King Charles III’s coronation and that his wife Jill Biden will be going without him.

The White House confirmed in a readout of Biden’s call with the King, shared on 4 April, that the first lady will be going to the coronation in May to represent the US.

Amber Raiken reports:

[*Jill Biden to attend King Charles’ coronation without president*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-king-charles-coronation-jill-b2314290.html)

Harry and Meghan ‘to confirm coronation plans soon’ following Biden decision

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will soon make their decision about attending the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, it has been reported.

With only a month to go before the coronation ceremony takes place in Westminster Abbey, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are facing a “time crunch” to confirm their attendance.

Get the full story:

[*Harry and Meghan ‘to confirm coronation plans soon’ following Biden decision*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-meghan-attend-coronation-king-b2315552.html)

Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave

The Duchess of York has said that members of the royal family who choose to leave the fold “can’t sit on the fence” and must decide whether they want to be “in or out”.

Her comments come amid ongoing tensions between the royal family and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who have repeatedly aired their grievances over Buckingham Palace’s relationship with the tabloid press since they stepped down as senior royals in 2020.

Read her comments below:

[*Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ after Meghan and Harry exit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-meghan-sarah-ferguson-york-b2315351.html)

Artist who painted invitation for King’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’

The artist who painted the invitation for King Charles III’s coronation has revealed that he was sworn to secrecy as he made the design.

Andrew Jamieson, 61, didn’t even tell his mother or children that he had been chosen to create the artwork for the reported 2,000 guests who will arrive at Westminster Abbey on 6 May.

Ellie Muirreports:

[*Artist who painted invitation for King Charles III’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-coronation-invitation-westminster-abbey-b2314474.html)

Prince George will have special role in King Charles’ coronation

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will each have four Pages of Honour supporting them on the day of the coronation, with the monarch’s nine-year-old grandson Prince George expected to take on one of the official roles.

On Tuesday 4 April, Buckingham Palace announced that George, who is second-in-line to the throne and the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, would join three other pages for the King.

Find out more:

[*The special role Prince George will have in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-cambridge-coronation-b2314694.html)

Prince Harry set to give evidence in court case against Mirror newspaper publisher

The Duke of Sussex is to return to the High Court in London in June to give evidence in his claim against a tabloid newspaper publisher over phone-hacking allegations.

Harry is one of a number of high-profile figures bringing damages claims against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) over alleged unlawful information gathering at its titles.

Read more:

[*Prince Harry set to give evidence in court case against Mirror newspaper publisher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-mirror-b2314753.html)

White House says Biden’s decision to skip King Charles’s coronation is not a snub

The White House has defended President Joe Biden’s decision not to attend the coronation of King Charles III next month after it was announced First Lady Jill Biden would be attending “on behalf of the United States”.

On 5 April, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was asked about Mr Biden’s decision as head of state not to attend the upcoming coronation of the King and Queen on 6 May during a press conference, and whether it would be construed as a “snub”.

Chelsea Ritschelreports:

[*White House says Biden’s decision to skip King Charles’s coronation is not a snub*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-king-charles-coronation-jill-b2314945.html)

IN PICTURES: King Charles and Queen Camilla step out for Maundy Thursday

King Charles III and Queen Camilla were out and about on Thursday morning (6 April) as they attended a church service for Maundy Thursday at York Minster.

The royal couple, who are exactly a month away from their coronation, also distributed Maundy Money to select members of the community.

Queen Camilla appears in public for first time since title change

Queen Camilla has made her first public appearance since her title was confirmed as Queen, instead of Queen Consort.

She attended the Royal Maundy Service at York Minster on Thursday morning (6 April) and accompanied King Charles III as he distributed Maundy Money for the first time as Britain’s new monarch.

[*Queen Camilla appears in public for first time since title change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-change-maundy-thursday-b2315448.html)

King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’

On Saturday 6 May,[*after King Charles III and Queen Camilla’s coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-camilla-meghan-harry-latest-b2315187.html) the monarch will appear on the famous [*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) balcony to wave at the crowds.

In the past, the royal balcony appearances have featured many members of the royal family as the late Queen Elizabeth II would often have her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren joining her.

But as King Charles has long been an advocate of a slimmed-down monarchy and it is understood that, as he commences his reign, the balcony will hold a much smaller number of royals.

It has been reported that [*only working members of the royal family will appear on the balcony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-camilla-meghan-harry-latest-b2315187.html) on the day of the coronation.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-balcony-buckingham-palace-b2315263.html)

Take a closer look at the coronation invitations

Take a closer look at the coronation invitations below:

New photograph of the King and Queen Consort released ahead of coronation

Maundy Thursday 2023: What is the meaning of the Christian holy day?

Following the arrival of Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week, Christians around the world will prepare to celebrate [*Easter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/easter) weekend.

Before Good Friday, there is another significant date that is observed on the [*Christian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christian) calendar: [*Maundy Thursday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maundy-thursday).

While the day may not warrant a day off work, it is still a crucial occasion for those that observe Christian teachings in Western and Orthodox churches.

In the UK, the late Queen Elizabeth II would usually give Maundy money to pensioners as an act of charity and to mark the occasion.

This year, King Charles will present 74 men and 74 women, with the number chosen to signify his age, with a Maundy gift.

[*What is the meaning of Maundy Thursday?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/maundy-thursday-meaning-2023-b2315229.html)

The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation

During the crowning and anointing parts of the coronation ceremony, which are said to be the most sacred parts, King Charles will sit upon the 700-year-old Coronation Chair.

The throne has been at the centre of English coronations since it was made by order of King Edward I between 1300 and 1301. Westminster Abbey, where it is located, describes the chair as “one of the most precious and famous pieces of furniture in the world”.

Read the full story below:

[*The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-crown-b2308270.html)

King Charles III ‘to break from tradition’ with specific outfit choice for coronation

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has been advised to wear an outfit for his [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) that goes against previous royal tradition, according to reports.

The monarch acceded to the throne upon the death of his mother, Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) , in September.

His coronation is set to take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6 May, in an event that has been teased to “reflect the monarch’s role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in long-standing traditions and pageantry”.

In previous ceremonies, the King or Queen has traditionally worn silk stockings and breeches. However, recent reports have claimed that King Charles will opt to wear his military uniform instead.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles III ‘to break from tradition’ with coronation outfit choice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-costume-westminster-b2266537.html)

Artist who painted invitation for King’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’

The artist who painted the invitation for [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) has revealed that he was sworn to secrecy as he made the design.

Andrew Jamieson, 61, didn’t even tell his mother or children that he had been chosen to create the artwork for the reported 2,000 guests who will arrive at [*Westminster Abbey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/westminster-abbey) on 6 May.

His design, [*which was revealed to the public on Tuesday night (4 April),*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html) was painted in watercolour and gouache and recalls the coronation emblem, accompanied by illustrations of wildflowers. The artwork[*will be printed on recycled card with gold foil detailing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/green-man-coronation-invitation-charles-camilla-b2314113.html).

[*Artist who painted invitation for King Charles III’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-coronation-invitation-westminster-abbey-b2314474.html)

‘No one can break the York family’: Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Diana and Prince Harry, and her new Mills & Boon whodunit

The Duchess of York talks to [*Charlotte Cripps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/charlotte-cripps) about feeling broken, living through her heroines and plastic surgery

[*Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Harry and her new Mills & Boon whodunit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-interview-fergie-andrew-books-b2313061.html)

The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design

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Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

[*Sarah Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-ferguson) has admitted she doesn’t know how [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) is coping with his new role as monarch.

In an interview with The Independent, published on Wednesday 5 April, the Duchess of York, 63, shared her thoughts on King Charles’s reign.

“I don’t know how he’s managing. I really don’t,” she said, addressing Charles’s workload [*ahead of the coronation on 6 May.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html)

“We used to go skiing together,” she said. “And I honestly have no idea how he’s managing with the amount of paperwork and all the overwhelming things he must have to deal with.”

Her comments come after [*King Charles reportedly asked Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to vacate their property at Frogmore Cottage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-frogmore-cottage-prince-harry-meghan-b2292109.html) and offered it to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, instead.

[*Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-king-charles-coronation-b2313855.html)

Coronation invitations confirm Camilla to be crowned Queen next month

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) will officially be named Queen Camilla at [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) next month.

The newly-released invitations for the British monarch’s forthcoming coronation revealed Camilla Parker-Bowles’ new title. She was referred to as Queen Consort following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles III confirms what Camilla will be called in coronation invitations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html)

King Charles’s new decision could rule Harry, Meghan and Andrew out of balcony appearance at coronation

A coronation “rule” could see the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, and the Duke of York, snubbed from an appearance on the Buckingham Palace balcony with other members of the royal family.

In keeping with plans for a “slimmed-down” ceremony, King Charles III has reportedly decided that he will appear only with working members of the royal family, those he is closest to.

According to [*The Mirror*](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/only-working-royals-allowed-balcony-29641046) , plans for the balcony appearance will involve a “select few royals” who have “dedicated their lives to public service”, while also showing “the heartbeat and future of his family”.

Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Diana and Prince Harry, and her new Mills & Boon whodunit

Hello, do you like the background? Is it too bright, or not bright enough?” Sarah, the Duchess of York asks excitably. “Are you happy with the windows, or do you want me to close the curtains?” The duchess, who was affectionately nicknamed Fergie when she married into the royal family in 1986, is sitting in the study at Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park, her ex-husband Prince Andrew’s residence. It’s a home she has shared with the Duke of York on and off for many years, despite the fact they separated in 1992 and divorced in 1996, but it’s a sprawling pad that she clearly doesn’t call home sweet home, any more than she does the Mayfair mews she bought last year. For years now, she has lived a peripatetic, transatlantic life between the US and the UK.

Read the full interview with the Duchess of York:

[*Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Harry and her new Mills & Boon whodunit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-interview-fergie-andrew-books-b2313061.html)

Everything we know about the coronation

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) will take [*place on Saturday 6 May, 2023*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-harry-meghan-latest-b2303455.html).

Here’s everything we know about the ceremony so far:

[*When is the coronation of King Charles III?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html)

King Charles praises Germany's generosity in hosting millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design

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Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

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“We used to go skiing together,” she said. “And I honestly have no idea how he’s managing with the amount of paperwork and all the overwhelming things he must have to deal with.”

Her comments come after [*King Charles reportedly asked Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to vacate their property at Frogmore Cottage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-frogmore-cottage-prince-harry-meghan-b2292109.html) and offered it to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, instead.

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The newly-released invitations for the British monarch’s forthcoming coronation revealed Camilla Parker-Bowles’ new title. She was referred to as Queen Consort following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year.

Full story:

[*Coronation invitations confirm Camilla to be crowned Queen next month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html)

King Charles hosts Gareth Southgate and Keir Starmer at first ‘dine and sleep’ of reign

England football manager [*Gareth Southgate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gareth-southgate) and [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) leader Sir Keir Starmer were entertained by the King at his first “dine and sleep” evening at Windsor Castle.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) , who is almost [*a month away from his coronation,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-queen-camilla-updates-b2314479.html) invited a host of well-known guests to his Berkshire residence for the dinner party on Tuesday.

[*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) confirmed it was the first “dine and sleep” soiree of the King’s reign.

Charles is following in the footsteps of his mother, the late Queen, who traditionally hosted such events at Windsor around Easter, with guests given a bed in the famous castle for the night.

Full story:

[*https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-keir-starmer-gareth-southgate-b2314597.html*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-keir-starmer-gareth-southgate-b2314597.html)

Artist who painted invitation for King’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’

The artist who painted the invitation for [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) has revealed that he was sworn to secrecy as he made the design.

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His design, [*which was revealed to the public on Tuesday night (4 April),*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html) was painted in watercolour and gouache and recalls the coronation emblem, accompanied by illustrations of wildflowers. The artwork[*will be printed on recycled card with gold foil detailing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/green-man-coronation-invitation-charles-camilla-b2314113.html).

[*Artist who painted invitation for King Charles III’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-coronation-invitation-westminster-abbey-b2314474.html)

New photograph of the King and Queen Consort released ahead of coronation

Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation

[*Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-coronation-king-pages-b2314318.html)

Joe Biden tells King Charles coronation plan as invites sent out

US First Lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) will attend the coronation of the King on behalf of the country, [*President*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has told the monarch in a phone call.

Mr Biden congratulated Charles on Tuesday ahead of his coronation in May, and told him his wife would be attending the ceremony, the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) said.

The president also expressed his desire to meet Charles in the UK.

A White House statement read: “President Joseph R Biden Jr spoke today with King [*Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles-iii) , underscoring the strength of the relationship between our countries and the friendship between our peoples.

“The president congratulated the King on his upcoming coronation and informed him that First Lady Jill Biden looks forward to attending on behalf of the United States.”

[*Joe Biden announces coronation plan as invites sent out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-jill-coronation-guestlist-king-charles-b2314587.html)

Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will each have four Pages of Honour supporting them on the day of the [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) , with the monarch’s nine-year-old grandson [*Prince George*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-george) expected to take on one of the official roles.

On Tuesday 4 April, Buckingham Palace announced that George, who is second-in-line to the throne and the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, would join three other pages for the King.

As the procession of the King and Queen makes its way through the Nave of Westminster Abbey on 6 May, the pages will hold the robes of some of the leading individuals taking part.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Prince and Princess of Wales said the couple was “very excited and delighted” about George’s upcoming role. “His parents are very excited and delighted that he is a page,” the spokesperson told [*People*](https://people.com/royals/prince-george-camilla-grandsons-roles-king-charles-coronation-revealed/). “It’s something that his parents have thought long and hard about and are very much looking forward to -and I’m sure George is, too.”

Read the full story below:

[*Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-coronation-king-pages-b2314318.html)

The ancient symbolism behind the coronation invitation’s design

[*The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html)

Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave

The Duchess of York has said that members of the [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) who choose to leave the fold “can’t sit on the fence” and must decide whether they want to be “in or out”.

Her comments come amid ongoing tensions between the royal family and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who have repeatedly aired their grievances over Buckingham Palace’s relationship with the tabloid press since[*they stepped down as senior royals in 2020*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-meghan-markle-buckingham-palace-charity-sussex-royal-office-megxit-a9344986.html).

[*Sarah Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-ferguson) , who was married to the Duke of York until their separation in 1992 and divorce four years later, did not refer directly to [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) and [*Meghan Markle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meghan-markle) while talking about her own departure from the royal family.

[*In a new interview with The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-interview-fergie-andrew-books-b2313061.html) , she reflected on her career as an author, having spent 12 years in the US writing children’s books and starring in several reality television shows.

The 63-year-old duchess said: “Well, you can’t have it both ways. You can’t sit on the fence and keep one foot in and one foot out. You’re either in or out.

Read the full story below:

[*Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-harry-meghan-royals-b2313946.html)

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[*King Charles – latest: Queen Camilla makes first public appearance since title change announcement*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67Y7-GHY1-JBNF-W284-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Length:** 4092 words

**Byline:** Ellie Muir and Kate Ng

**Highlight:** The King and Queen attended a Maundy Thursday service at York Minster

**Body**

Queen [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) has[*stepped out in public for the first time since it was announced that her title will change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-change-maundy-thursday-b2315448.html) from Queen Consort to Queen for her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s coronation.

The royal couple attended a [*Maundy Thursday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/maundy-thursday-meaning-2023-b2315229.html) service at York Minster ahead of Good Friday and Easter Sunday, where they also handed out traditional Maundy Money to select members of the community.

It comes after it was reported that the monarch will keep the [*Buckingham Palace balcony appearance on the day of his coronation exclusive to working members*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-balcony-buckingham-palace-b2315263.html) of the royal family, those he is closest to.

This means the Duke and Duchess of Sussex and the Duke of York will not be invited to appear on the balcony with other family members. [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) and [*Meghan Markle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meghan-markle) [*have yet to disclose their decision over whether or not they will attend*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-meghan-markle-king-charles-coronation-b2294749.html) the coronation.

The[*official invitations for the King and Queen’s coronation were unveiled*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html) on Wednesday (5 April), designed by Andrew Jamieson. They referred to Camilla as Queen Camilla instead of Queen Consort, confirming reports that her title would change.

Royals news -latest updates

King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’ Exclusive: Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave Camilla Queen Consort to be crowned Queen Camilla at coronation Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation Queen Camilla appears in public for first time since title change

Queen Camilla appears in public for first time since title change

Queen Camilla has made her first public appearance since her title was confirmed as Queen, instead of Queen Consort.

She attended the Royal Maundy Service at York Minster on Thursday morning (6 April) and accompanied King Charles III as he distributed Maundy Money for the first time as Britain’s new monarch.

[*Queen Camilla appears in public for first time since title change*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-change-maundy-thursday-b2315448.html)

Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Diana and Prince Harry, and her new Mills & Boon whodunit

Hello, do you like the background? Is it too bright, or not bright enough?” Sarah, the Duchess of York asks excitably. “Are you happy with the windows, or do you want me to close the curtains?” The duchess, who was affectionately nicknamed Fergie when she married into the royal family in 1986, is sitting in the study at Royal Lodge in Windsor Great Park, her ex-husband Prince Andrew’s residence. It’s a home she has shared with the Duke of York on and off for many years, despite the fact they separated in 1992 and divorced in 1996, but it’s a sprawling pad that she clearly doesn’t call home sweet home, any more than she does the Mayfair mews she bought last year. For years now, she has lived a peripatetic, transatlantic life between the US and the UK.

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Camilla to be crowned Queen at coronation next month, King Charles confirms

Queen Consort Camilla will officially be named Queen Camilla at King Charles III’s coronation next month.

The newly-released invitations for the British monarch’s forthcoming coronation revealed Camilla Parker-Bowles’ new title. She was referred to as Queen Consort following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year.

Meredith Clarkhas the story:

[*Camilla to be crowned Queen at coronation next month, King Charles confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html)

Who is attending King Charles’ coronation?

King Charles III and Queen Consort Camilla will be crowned at their coronation on Saturday 6 May. The couple will be joined by hundreds of guests at Westminster Abbey, including senior members of the royal family, politicians and celebrities. The Archbishop of Canterbury will conduct the ceremony.

While the venue can seat up to 2,200 guests, it is unknown how many invites Buckingham Palace has sent out, and many attendees won’t be confirmed until the actual day of the event.

Here’s who we think might make the list:

[*All of the celebrities and royals attending King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-attending-harry-meghan-b2312636.html)

Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

Sarah Ferguson has admitted she doesn’t know how King Charles III is coping with his new role as monarch.

In an interview with The Independent, published on Wednesday 5 April, the Duchess of York, 63, shared her thoughts on King Charles’s reign.

[*Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-king-charles-coronation-b2313855.html)

William, Prince of Wales: A timeline of the heir’s life ahead of King Charles’s coronation

As the coronation draws closer, many may be wanting to know more about the Prince of Wales, who will be present as his father is crowned King.

Ellie Muirtells you everything you need to know about Prince William:

[*A timeline of Prince William’s life ahead of King Charles’s coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-william-life-king-charles-timeline-b2314005.html)

Jill Biden to attend King Charles’ coronation without president

Joe Biden has revealed that he will not be attending King Charles III’s coronation and that his wife Jill Biden will be going without him.

The White House confirmed in a readout of Biden’s call with the King, shared on 4 April, that the first lady will be going to the coronation in May to represent the US.

Amber Raiken reports:

[*Jill Biden to attend King Charles’ coronation without president*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-king-charles-coronation-jill-b2314290.html)

Harry and Meghan ‘to confirm coronation plans soon’ following Biden decision

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex will soon make their decision about attending the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla, it has been reported.

With only a month to go before the coronation ceremony takes place in Westminster Abbey, Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are facing a “time crunch” to confirm their attendance.

Get the full story:

[*Harry and Meghan ‘to confirm coronation plans soon’ following Biden decision*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-meghan-attend-coronation-king-b2315552.html)

Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave

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Read her comments below:

[*Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ after Meghan and Harry exit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-meghan-sarah-ferguson-york-b2315351.html)

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The artist who painted the invitation for King Charles III’s coronation has revealed that he was sworn to secrecy as he made the design.

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Prince George will have special role in King Charles’ coronation

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will each have four Pages of Honour supporting them on the day of the coronation, with the monarch’s nine-year-old grandson Prince George expected to take on one of the official roles.

On Tuesday 4 April, Buckingham Palace announced that George, who is second-in-line to the throne and the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, would join three other pages for the King.

Find out more:

[*The special role Prince George will have in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-cambridge-coronation-b2314694.html)

Prince Harry set to give evidence in court case against Mirror newspaper publisher

The Duke of Sussex is to return to the High Court in London in June to give evidence in his claim against a tabloid newspaper publisher over phone-hacking allegations.

Harry is one of a number of high-profile figures bringing damages claims against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) over alleged unlawful information gathering at its titles.

Read more:

[*Prince Harry set to give evidence in court case against Mirror newspaper publisher*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-mirror-b2314753.html)

White House says Biden’s decision to skip King Charles’s coronation is not a snub

The White House has defended President Joe Biden’s decision not to attend the coronation of King Charles III next month after it was announced First Lady Jill Biden would be attending “on behalf of the United States”.

On 5 April, White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre was asked about Mr Biden’s decision as head of state not to attend the upcoming coronation of the King and Queen on 6 May during a press conference, and whether it would be construed as a “snub”.

Chelsea Ritschelreports:

[*White House says Biden’s decision to skip King Charles’s coronation is not a snub*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-king-charles-coronation-jill-b2314945.html)

IN PICTURES: King Charles and Queen Camilla step out for Maundy Thursday

King Charles III and Queen Camilla were out and about on Thursday morning (6 April) as they attended a church service for Maundy Thursday at York Minster.

The royal couple, who are exactly a month away from their coronation, also distributed Maundy Money to select members of the community.

King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’

On Saturday 6 May,[*after King Charles III and Queen Camilla’s coronation ceremony at Westminster Abbey,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-camilla-meghan-harry-latest-b2315187.html) the monarch will appear on the famous [*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) balcony to wave at the crowds.

In the past, the royal balcony appearances have featured many members of the royal family as the late Queen Elizabeth II would often have her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren joining her.

But as King Charles has long been an advocate of a slimmed-down monarchy and it is understood that, as he commences his reign, the balcony will hold a much smaller number of royals.

It has been reported that [*only working members of the royal family will appear on the balcony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-camilla-meghan-harry-latest-b2315187.html) on the day of the coronation.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles’ coronation balcony appearance to include ‘working royals only’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-balcony-buckingham-palace-b2315263.html)

Take a closer look at the coronation invitations

Take a closer look at the coronation invitations below:

New photograph of the King and Queen Consort released ahead of coronation

Maundy Thursday 2023: What is the meaning of the Christian holy day?

Following the arrival of Palm Sunday and the start of Holy Week, Christians around the world will prepare to celebrate [*Easter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/easter) weekend.

Before Good Friday, there is another significant date that is observed on the [*Christian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christian) calendar: [*Maundy Thursday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/maundy-thursday).

While the day may not warrant a day off work, it is still a crucial occasion for those that observe Christian teachings in Western and Orthodox churches.

In the UK, the late Queen Elizabeth II would usually give Maundy money to pensioners as an act of charity and to mark the occasion.

This year, King Charles will present 74 men and 74 women, with the number chosen to signify his age, with a Maundy gift.

[*What is the meaning of Maundy Thursday?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/maundy-thursday-meaning-2023-b2315229.html)

The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation

During the crowning and anointing parts of the coronation ceremony, which are said to be the most sacred parts, King Charles will sit upon the 700-year-old Coronation Chair.

The throne has been at the centre of English coronations since it was made by order of King Edward I between 1300 and 1301. Westminster Abbey, where it is located, describes the chair as “one of the most precious and famous pieces of furniture in the world”.

Read the full story below:

[*The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-crown-b2308270.html)

King Charles III ‘to break from tradition’ with specific outfit choice for coronation

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has been advised to wear an outfit for his [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) that goes against previous royal tradition, according to reports.

The monarch acceded to the throne upon the death of his mother, Queen [*Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elizabeth-ii) , in September.

His coronation is set to take place at Westminster Abbey on Saturday 6 May, in an event that has been teased to “reflect the monarch’s role today and look towards the future, while being rooted in long-standing traditions and pageantry”.

In previous ceremonies, the King or Queen has traditionally worn silk stockings and breeches. However, recent reports have claimed that King Charles will opt to wear his military uniform instead.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles III ‘to break from tradition’ with coronation outfit choice*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-costume-westminster-b2266537.html)

Artist who painted invitation for King’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’

The artist who painted the invitation for [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) has revealed that he was sworn to secrecy as he made the design.

Andrew Jamieson, 61, didn’t even tell his mother or children that he had been chosen to create the artwork for the reported 2,000 guests who will arrive at [*Westminster Abbey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/westminster-abbey) on 6 May.

His design, [*which was revealed to the public on Tuesday night (4 April),*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html) was painted in watercolour and gouache and recalls the coronation emblem, accompanied by illustrations of wildflowers. The artwork[*will be printed on recycled card with gold foil detailing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/green-man-coronation-invitation-charles-camilla-b2314113.html).

[*Artist who painted invitation for King Charles III’s coronation ‘sworn to secrecy’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-coronation-invitation-westminster-abbey-b2314474.html)

‘No one can break the York family’: Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Diana and Prince Harry, and her new Mills & Boon whodunit

The Duchess of York talks to [*Charlotte Cripps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/charlotte-cripps) about feeling broken, living through her heroines and plastic surgery

[*Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Harry and her new Mills & Boon whodunit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-interview-fergie-andrew-books-b2313061.html)

The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design

[*The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html)

Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

[*Sarah Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-ferguson) has admitted she doesn’t know how [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) is coping with his new role as monarch.

In an interview with The Independent, published on Wednesday 5 April, the Duchess of York, 63, shared her thoughts on King Charles’s reign.

“I don’t know how he’s managing. I really don’t,” she said, addressing Charles’s workload [*ahead of the coronation on 6 May.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html)

“We used to go skiing together,” she said. “And I honestly have no idea how he’s managing with the amount of paperwork and all the overwhelming things he must have to deal with.”

Her comments come after [*King Charles reportedly asked Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to vacate their property at Frogmore Cottage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-frogmore-cottage-prince-harry-meghan-b2292109.html) and offered it to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, instead.

[*Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-king-charles-coronation-b2313855.html)

Coronation invitations confirm Camilla to be crowned Queen next month

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) will officially be named Queen Camilla at [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) next month.

The newly-released invitations for the British monarch’s forthcoming coronation revealed Camilla Parker-Bowles’ new title. She was referred to as Queen Consort following the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September last year.

Read the full story below:

[*King Charles III confirms what Camilla will be called in coronation invitations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-camilla-title-coronation-consort-charles-b2314424.html)

King Charles’s new decision could rule Harry, Meghan and Andrew out of balcony appearance at coronation

A coronation “rule” could see the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, and the Duke of York, snubbed from an appearance on the Buckingham Palace balcony with other members of the royal family.

In keeping with plans for a “slimmed-down” ceremony, King Charles III has reportedly decided that he will appear only with working members of the royal family, those he is closest to.

According to [*The Mirror*](https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/only-working-royals-allowed-balcony-29641046) , plans for the balcony appearance will involve a “select few royals” who have “dedicated their lives to public service”, while also showing “the heartbeat and future of his family”.

Everything we know about the coronation

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) will take [*place on Saturday 6 May, 2023*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-harry-meghan-latest-b2303455.html).

Here’s everything we know about the ceremony so far:

[*When is the coronation of King Charles III?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html)

King Charles praises Germany's generosity in hosting millions of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***

The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design

[*The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html)

Sarah Ferguson ‘doesn’t know’ how King Charles is coping ahead of coronation

[*Sarah Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-ferguson) has admitted she doesn’t know how [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) is coping with his new role as monarch.

In an interview with The Independent, published on Wednesday 5 April, the Duchess of York, 63, shared her thoughts on King Charles’s reign.

“I don’t know how he’s managing. I really don’t,” she said, addressing Charles’s workload [*ahead of the coronation on 6 May.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html)

“We used to go skiing together,” she said. “And I honestly have no idea how he’s managing with the amount of paperwork and all the overwhelming things he must have to deal with.”

Her comments come after [*King Charles reportedly asked Prince Harry and his wife Meghan Markle to vacate their property at Frogmore Cottage*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-frogmore-cottage-prince-harry-meghan-b2292109.html) and offered it to her ex-husband, Prince Andrew, instead.

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‘No one can break the York family’: Sarah Ferguson on Andrew, Diana and Prince Harry, and her new Mills & Boon whodunit

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King Charles hosts Gareth Southgate and Keir Starmer at first ‘dine and sleep’ of reign

England football manager [*Gareth Southgate*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gareth-southgate) and [*Labour*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/labour) leader Sir Keir Starmer were entertained by the King at his first “dine and sleep” evening at Windsor Castle.

[*Charles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles) , who is almost [*a month away from his coronation,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-queen-camilla-updates-b2314479.html) invited a host of well-known guests to his Berkshire residence for the dinner party on Tuesday.

[*Buckingham Palace*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/buckingham-palace) confirmed it was the first “dine and sleep” soiree of the King’s reign.

Charles is following in the footsteps of his mother, the late Queen, who traditionally hosted such events at Windsor around Easter, with guests given a bed in the famous castle for the night.

Full story:

[*https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-keir-starmer-gareth-southgate-b2314597.html*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-keir-starmer-gareth-southgate-b2314597.html)

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New photograph of the King and Queen Consort released ahead of coronation

Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation

[*Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-coronation-king-pages-b2314318.html)

Joe Biden tells King Charles coronation plan as invites sent out

US First Lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) will attend the coronation of the King on behalf of the country, [*President*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/president) [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) has told the monarch in a phone call.

Mr Biden congratulated Charles on Tuesday ahead of his coronation in May, and told him his wife would be attending the ceremony, the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) said.

The president also expressed his desire to meet Charles in the UK.

A White House statement read: “President Joseph R Biden Jr spoke today with King [*Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles-iii) , underscoring the strength of the relationship between our countries and the friendship between our peoples.

“The president congratulated the King on his upcoming coronation and informed him that First Lady Jill Biden looks forward to attending on behalf of the United States.”

[*Joe Biden announces coronation plan as invites sent out*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-jill-coronation-guestlist-king-charles-b2314587.html)

Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will each have four Pages of Honour supporting them on the day of the [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) , with the monarch’s nine-year-old grandson [*Prince George*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-george) expected to take on one of the official roles.

On Tuesday 4 April, Buckingham Palace announced that George, who is second-in-line to the throne and the eldest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, would join three other pages for the King.

As the procession of the King and Queen makes its way through the Nave of Westminster Abbey on 6 May, the pages will hold the robes of some of the leading individuals taking part.

In a statement, a spokesperson for the Prince and Princess of Wales said the couple was “very excited and delighted” about George’s upcoming role. “His parents are very excited and delighted that he is a page,” the spokesperson told [*People*](https://people.com/royals/prince-george-camilla-grandsons-roles-king-charles-coronation-revealed/). “It’s something that his parents have thought long and hard about and are very much looking forward to -and I’m sure George is, too.”

Read the full story below:

[*Prince George will have official role in King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-coronation-king-pages-b2314318.html)

The ancient symbolism behind the coronation invitation’s design

[*The ancient symbolism behind King Charles’s coronation invite design*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-invite-design-green-man-meaning-b2314444.html)

Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave

The Duchess of York has said that members of the [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) who choose to leave the fold “can’t sit on the fence” and must decide whether they want to be “in or out”.

Her comments come amid ongoing tensions between the royal family and the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, who have repeatedly aired their grievances over Buckingham Palace’s relationship with the tabloid press since[*they stepped down as senior royals in 2020*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-meghan-markle-buckingham-palace-charity-sussex-royal-office-megxit-a9344986.html).

[*Sarah Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sarah-ferguson) , who was married to the Duke of York until their separation in 1992 and divorce four years later, did not refer directly to [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) and [*Meghan Markle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meghan-markle) while talking about her own departure from the royal family.

[*In a new interview with The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-interview-fergie-andrew-books-b2313061.html) , she reflected on her career as an author, having spent 12 years in the US writing children’s books and starring in several reality television shows.

The 63-year-old duchess said: “Well, you can’t have it both ways. You can’t sit on the fence and keep one foot in and one foot out. You’re either in or out.

Read the full story below:

[*Sarah Ferguson says royals ‘can’t have it both ways’ if they choose to leave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-harry-meghan-royals-b2313946.html)

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[*Royal news -latest: King tells Ukrainians who fled war to Germany ‘I’m praying for you’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WT-19F1-DY4H-K3D2-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:7

**Length:** 9298 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Noyce

**Highlight:** King Charles also met recently arrived Ukrainians at Tegel Airport

**Body**

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” on his visit to Germany after [*condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-nuclear-war-bakhmut-b2310626.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20news%20-live:%20Putin%20‘looking%20to%20trade%20food%20for%20North%20Korean%20weapons’) of their homeland.

[*Charles met families who escaped to Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html%22%20title=%22Prince%20Harry%20returns%20to%20court%20for%20phone-tapping%20fight%20as%20King%20Charles%20visits%20Germany) after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine, delivering the [*first speech by a British monarch to the German Bundestag.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/king-charles-state-visit-germany-b2311073.html%22%20title=%22Why%20the%20King’s%20address%20to%20the%20German%20parliament%20was%20so%20significant)

“The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people”, he told the chamber.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.”

Elsewhere at Tegel Airport, the King met recently arrived Ukrainians. To date, more than a million have sought refuge in Germany.

Key Points

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag King Charles and Queen Consort arrive in Berlin for first state visit Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking Daily Mail publisher claims privacy case uses files provided confidentially to Leveson Inquiry ...

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Meadows to be established at historic English sites to mark King’s coronation

One hundred wildflower meadows are to be created or enhanced at historic sites across England including Stonehenge and Westminster’s Jewel Tower in celebration of the King‘s coronation.

English Heritage said the project would leave a natural legacy by working to restore the country’s lost flower-rich glasslands, in tribute to Charles‘s love of the natural world.

Some 97% of the UK’s meadows have disappeared since the 1930s, with many remaining fragments left unprotected.

Seventy-five of the meadows will be brand new and 25 are existing ones which will be developed.

English Heritage’s chosen locations include 43 castles and forts, 22 abbeys and priories and 10 historic houses.

Whitby Abbey in Yorkshire, Queen Victoria’s former home Osborne on the Isle of Wight and Tintagel Castle in Cornwall are among them.

At the world-famous prehistoric stone circle Stonehenge in Wiltshire, a new field of wildflowers is planned for outside the visitor centre to greet people on arrival.

The banks of the monument are already a county wildlife site, with flowers such as orchids found in the outer grassland near the stones.

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

Tom Peck writes:

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) received a rousing standing ovation from [*German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/german) politicians after addressing the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) in both fluent German and [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english).

The monarch made history on Thursday 30 March, becoming the first member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) to speak in Germany’s federal [*parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) while it is in session.

During his address, Charles spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Camilla, Queen Consort, was watching his speech from the Bundestag floor.

Watch:

[*King Charles receives standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-germany-bundestag-speech-b2310877.html)

‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

In case you missed it...

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) suffered from “suspicion and paranoia” and lost friends because of newspaper articles, a court heard on Monday, [*as he launched his campaign to reform the media with a surprise appearance in London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html).

The [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) flew 5,500 miles from his new home in California to attend a High Court hearing [*as the Daily Mail’s publisher bids to throw out claims against its titles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html) , including accusations of phone-hacking.

Also in court were Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Sadie Frost, and [*Baroness Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , who are among the public figures suing [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) for alleged unlawful activity.

Alastair Jamieson reports:

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

The King has made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror – but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity – in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

King hails ‘special bond’ between UK and Germany in Bundestag address

The King has celebrated the “special bond” between the UK and Germany as he became the first British monarch to address the Bundestag during his historic state visit to the country.

Speaking in both German and English, Charles said he could “hardly begin to express the pride” he felt in the relationship between the two countries and spoke fondly of his “cherished” family ties to Germany.

He also thanked the country for its kindness following the death of his mother, the late Queen.

He said: “Today, it gives me particular pride to be with you ... and to renew the special bond between our two countries.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

With a quip about the Lionesses’ victory over Germany at Euro 2022, the monarch hailed it as “just one example of how our countries, together, can offer a compelling example to the world”.

“Faced with so many shared challenges, the United Kingdom and Germany are together providing leadership to secure our shared future,” he added.

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

[*Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/maryam-zakir-hussain)

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html)

I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

“I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard. [*I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/andrei-molodkin-prince-harry-taliban-afghanistan-b2308471.html) – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

“As Harry is in London, I have contacted him to set up a meeting, as an ex-militarist myself, to discuss my ideas for the computer game I am producing inspired by his time in Afghanistan. We have much to discuss.

“[*He is in court against Associated Newspapers Limited over allegations of criminality against him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-daily-mail-latest-news-b2309372.html) – “unlawful information gathering”. From what I have seen, he keeps himself in the spotlight, [*bringing attention to his personal life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html) , while going to extreme lengths to plead for privacy.

“[*Boasting about killing,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-killed-25-taliban-military-b2257584.html) whether for democracy or not, is something I do not accept. During military service in the Soviet Union, I saw a fellow soldier put a gun to his heart and shoot himself. Later, we were eating in the canteen and the guards pulled him through the room. His body and clothes were covered in blood, so he left a line like a signature behind him. A bloodline.”

[*Andrei Molodkin writes:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/andrei-molodkin)

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

“Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store.

“On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

“Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

King Charles ‘really showed interest in everyone’s stories’, refugee centre manager says

During his state visit to Germany with the Queen Consort, Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Thursday.

Stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: “Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?”

Charles took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre’s games room and joked: “I remember trying this when I was younger.”

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: “Amazing, two hands you are the experts.”

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: “I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives.

“He said that he was praying for us all. I’m the luckiest lady in the world.”

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That’s tour manager, said afterwards: “He really showed interest in everyone’s stories.

“He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide.

“There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to.”

Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) continues his visit to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany).

The monarch addressed the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) on Thursday 30 March during a high-profile trip that will attempt to rebuild some of the European ties damaged by [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit).

His remarks marked the first time that a member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) has spoken to members of Germany’s lower house of parliament while it is in session.

On Wednesday night, Charles pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the two nations while speaking at a banquet at Schloss Bellevue presidential palace in Berlin.

He also spoke in German to say he and Camilla were “deeply touched” by the warm welcome they had received and he praised the “very special” nation.

Oliver Browning reports:

[*Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-king-charles-visit-speech-b2310750.html)

Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) has paid tribute to the queens who came before her while attending a State Banquet in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) to honour her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s state visit to Germany.

Camilla pinned a brooch with a portrait of her late mother-in-law, [*Queen Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-elizabeth-ii) , onto her black evening dress for the occasion on Wednesday (29 March).

On her head, she wore a tiara that once belonged to the Queen Mother. Her dress, which was covered in silver embroidery, was designed by Bruce Oldfield, [*who is in charge of creating her coronation dress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-coronation-outfit-queen-consort-b2306836.html).

The glittering Boucheron tiara was gifted to the Queen Consort by the late Elizabeth. Camilla also wore a fringed necklace from the late Queen’s jewellery collection.

The brooch is the Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, and showcases a hand-painted miniature portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth.

Kate Ng reports:

[*Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html)

Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) meets with members of a German-British battalion during his first overseas trip as sovereign.

The King was greeted by [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) state premier Dietmar Woidke upon his arrival to the base in Finowfurt.

The head and deputy head of the battalion, Stefan Klein and Ian Higginbotham, also met with the monarch during his visit.

King Charles became the first monarch to address Germany’s parliament, the Bundestag, earlier on Thursday.

During his address, he stressed the close bonds between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Watch here:

[*Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-germany-military-battalion-b2310948.html)

Prince Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as King Charles visits Germany

Prince has returned to court for his ongoing case against the publisher of the Daily Mail, just as his father Charles visits Germany in his first overseas visit as king.

After missing the third day of the hearing, the Duke of Sussex reappeared at the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) on Thursday, as his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher to end the legal action.

Earlier in the day his father -who it was reported would not be seeing his US-based son during his surprise visit to the UK -[*gave a historic address to the German parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html).

[*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) and other high-profile individuals accuse Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) of having “concealed wrongdoing” over the alleged unlawful gathering of their private information.

ANL, which denies the allegations, says a judge should rule in its favour without a trial because the legal challenges against it are brought “far too late”.

Tom Pilgrim reports:

[*Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as father Charles visits Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html)

In pictures: King Charles and Queen Consort’s visit to Germany

The King and the Queen Consort are halfway through their first state visit to Germany, taking place in Berlin, Brandenburg and Hamburg from Wednesday, 29 March to Friday, 31 March, 2023.

Their visit to France, which was scheduled for 26-29 March, has been postponed due to ongoing mass strikes and protests.

Today, Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

Public says allegations “unfounded"

Adrian Beltrami KC, for the publisher, previously told the court: “The claims are rejected by the defendant in their entirety as are the unfounded allegations that are repeatedly made that the defendant either misled the Leveson Inquiry or concealed evidence from the Leveson Inquiry.”

The lawyer said the legal action against it has “no real prospects of succeeding” and is “barred” under a legal period of limitation.

The duke and others allege that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records, and access and record private phone conversations.

Six of those bringing cases against the publisher have referred to alleged confessions by private investigator Gavin Burrows in their claims, but ANL has highlighted a later contrasting witness statement from Mr Burrows in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

Court told of “systemic wrongdoing by the defendant”

In written arguments, Mr Sherborne added there were “vociferous and prolific denials of any wrongdoing by the defendant, made on oath to the Leveson Inquiry by its senior executives, and repeated ever since”, which the duke and others “were entitled to and did believe”, and which prevent the publisher from arguing that material could have been discovered earlier.

He said the group had since “uncovered concealed and systemic wrongdoing by the defendant” through information allegedly provided by private investigators and in new documents.

Mr Furnish, and later Baroness Lawrence, were also present in court again on Thursday, following visits this week from Sir Elton and Ms Frost.

Baroness Lawrence ‘was gaslit'

Mr Sherborne later read out extracts from Baroness Lawrence’s witness statement in which she said she felt “played for a fool” by the Daily Mail, believing the newspaper “really cared” about the injustice of the murder of her son Stephen Lawrence.

The baroness said she learned a journalist allegedly instructed a private investigator to target her, saying that she “never thought to blame” the newspaper.

“They were supposed to be our allies and friends, the good people, not the bad,” she said, adding that she had believed that information in articles about her came from the police.

Mr Sherborne told the court: “That is nothing short of gaslighting Baroness Lawrence, that’s the form of concealment we are talking about.”

Daily Mail publisher ‘ commissioned 19 different private investigators'

On the final day of a preliminary hearing in London on Thursday, David Sherborne, representing Harry and others, said ANL’s challenge to their legal action was as “ambitious as it is unattractive”.

He accused the publisher of seeking an “impermissible mini-trial or worse” before further documentation and evidence was secured in the cases.

The barrister said the group, which also includes actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley and ex-Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes, had a “compelling case”.

Mr Sherborne said ANL was alleged to have commissioned 19 different private investigators to carry out a series of unlawful acts from 1993 to 2011 and beyond, which in some instances informed articles.

He told the court the group was “thrown off the scent by the way in which the articles were written”.

Latest photos from Charles and Camilla’s Germany visit

Tom Peck: If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, (writesTom Peck).

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Prince Harry spotted wearing £800 Dior shirt, complete with 18-carat gold embroidery

Prince Harry donned an £800 Dior shirt as he reappeared at the High Court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in London.

The shirt, which the luxury designer describes as being “crafted in luxurious and soft white cotton poplin”, is emblazoned with an embroidered bee, sewn using 18-carat gold thread.

Dior recommends the shirt be worn either with a suit “for a timeless look” or with jeans “for more laid-back allure,” according to its description.

The Duke of Sussex opted for the former after his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher of the Daily Mail to end his legal action against it.

Baroness Doreen Lawrence arrives at High Court

Baroness Doreen Lawrence has arrived in the courtroom for the final day of the preliminary hearing involving Associated Newspapers Limited.

Harry pictured arriving at High Court

Harry arrives at High Court

Prince Harry has arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a set of privacy claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

He arrived through the building’s side entrance around 1:45pm.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Latest images of Charles and Camilla’s trip to Germany

UK’s friendship with Germany ‘meant so much to my beloved mother’, says Charles

King Charles spoke earnestly of late Queen Elizabeth II’s affection for Germany during his historic address to the Bundestag on Thursday.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits,” he said.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

Charles speaks affectionately of ‘close personal ties’ to Germany

King Charles is speaking to the Bundestag at length about “the pride” he feels in the “strength of the partnership” between Germany and Britain.

During the historic address, the King spoke of his first visit to Germany’s “remarkable land” at 13 years old. He also talked affectionately of his “close personal ties to the country”, made deeper by his “cherished family relationships”.

He noted that “with all of us, there are countless points of connection and common experience in the British-German story, which has unfolded over nearly two millennia.”

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-germany-camilla-harry-b2310756.html)

Watch live: King Charles continues Germany visit before historic Bundestag address

Camilla pays subtle tribute to Elizabeth II

The Queen Consort wore a tiara once owned by the Queen Mother and a brooch bearing the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II as she attended a state banquet in Berlin last night.

Camilla, sporting a black evening gown studded with silver embroidery, arrived at the Schloss Bellevue residence wearing the Boucheron tiara given to her by the late monarch. She also wore the Queen’s fringed diamond necklace, offered to her as a wedding present in November 1947.

The Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, was pinned to Camilla’s left shoulder. It features a hand-painted miniature of the young Queen set in platinum.

Harry not in court for final day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex is not in court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a group of privacy claims against the publisher of the Daily Mail.

Harry attended the hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Monday and Tuesday, but was not present on Wednesday or as the hearing continued on Thursday.

Some of the other people bringing the claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL), Sir Elton John, David Furnish, Baroness Lawrence and Sadie Frost, have also attended some of the hearing.

None of the group, which also includes Sir Simon Hughes and Liz Hurley, were seen in the courtroom as the hearing resumed on Thursday morning.

In pictures: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomes King Charles at the Chancellery in Berlin

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

The King will become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles will deliver a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

During the day the King will attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

Later, the King and the Queen Consort will visit Wittenbergplaztz Food Market and meet a range of local business owners who will discuss the history of the market.

Germany has welcomed more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary after Russia invaded their homeland and Charles will tour the Tegel Refugee Centre to meet some of the group.

Separately the Queen Consort will visit the Refugio House community centre, a meeting place for locals and new Berlin residents, including refugees.

In pictures: King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort attend a State Banquet at Schloss Bellevue in Germany

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, writesTom Peck.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

ICYMI: Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish reports he is planning to write memoir

Friends close to Prince Andrew have hit out at reports that he is planning to write a memoir.

On Sunday, a number of newspapers claimed that the Duke of York was in talks to produce a tell-all autobiography, following the success of Prince Harry’s book ‘Spare’.

However, friends of his family have taken the unusual step to make his views known following the reports.

[*Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish claims he is planning to write memoir*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-andrew-autobiography-harry-spare-b2308191.html)

King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin for first state visit as monarch

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with Harry, Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry leaves High Court after second day of case against Daily Mail publisher

ICYMI: ‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

Duke ‘deprived of important aspects of his teenage years’ by newspaper publisher, lawyer says.

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

King Charles shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait

A new portrait of King Charles III depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation edition, which is on sale from Thursday.

[*King shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-indigenous-amazon-bracelet-portrait-b2310135.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Prince Harry had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the High Court ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

In a witness statement, he accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him about the alleged phone hacking.

As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

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Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim should be rejected ‘in its entirety’, High Court hears

The Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim against the publisher of the Daily Mail is rejected “in its entirety”, brought “far too late”, and should be thrown out by a judge, the High Court has been told.

Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) says legal challenges brought by a number of high-profile individuals, including Sir Elton John and Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, have “no real prospects of succeeding” at a trial.

The publisher’s lawyers argued at the High Court in London on Wednesday that the cases should be dismissed or a judgment made in its favour without a trial.

But the legal team for Harry and others say ANL’s bid is “hopeless, plainly inappropriate and suggestive of a tactical gamble” to avoid a full trial.

King Charles plants tree with German president during Berlin visit

Voices: I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard, writesAndrei Molodkin.

I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

In a witness statement, he accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him about the alleged phone hacking.

As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store, Tom Peck writes.

On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

In pictures: Charles and Camilla visit Germany on first state visit

King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla visited the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin this afternoon, after being greeted by Germany’s president at Brandenburg Gate.

The royal tour is the King’s first state visit, having postponed a trip to France due to widespread political protests.

Germany’s president welcome Charles and Camilla in Berlin

In the shadow of Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate -a national symbol of peace and unity -Germany’s president Frank-Walter Steinmeier and wife Elke Budenbender formally welcomed the King and Queen Consort.

The foursome posed for the waiting photographers with the famous landmark in the background before the national anthems of Germany and the UK were played.

The King inspected a guard of honour, accompanied by the president, before Charles, Camilla, the German statesman and his wife went on a brief walkabout meeting people waiting behind nearby crash barriers.

Charles and Camilla touch down in Germany at start of first state visit

The King and Queen Consort have arrived in Germany for the start of their first state visit -a three-day tour of one of the EU’s leading nations.

Charles and Camilla said in a joint statement, released on their official Twitter account, it was a “great joy” to be able to develop the “longstanding friendship between our two nations”.

The couple were greeted by a 21-gun salute and a fly-past by two fighter jets after they emerged from the ministerial plane Voyager and paused at the top of the steps.

As a mark of respect two Typhoon jets escorted the plane carrying the King and Queen Consort, their entourage and a large number of media for a period as it approached Berlin-Brandenburg Government Airport.

The trip has been overshadowed by the postponement of the French leg of the European tour, which was shelved by President Emmanuel Macron last Friday after violent nationwide protests against the French leader’s retirement age reforms.

The decision was made amid reports the King may have been targeted during further demonstrations planned by protestors to coincide with the visit.

“Ahead of our first state visit to Germany, we are very much looking forward to meeting all of those who make this country so special,” the King and his wife said in their joint statement.

“It is a great joy to be able to continue the deepening of the longstanding friendship between our two nations.”

King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late

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.

[*King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-britain-elizabeth-ii-london-b2309938.html)

Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut

Watch live as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Consort, Camilla, arrive in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

The first leg of the King’s trip to France was cancelled due to ongoing protests over controversial pension reform.

German president [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) will welcome Charles and Camilla at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

On Thursday, the King is expected to deliver a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament, and meet with chancellor Olaf Scholz.

[*Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-camilla-berlin-germany-b2310155.html)

King arrives in Berlin

The King has arrived in Berlin for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

Their plane landed at the capital’s Brandenburg Airport.

Star line-up for Camilla’s first literary festival

The Queen Consort’s literary charity has revealed the line-up for its first ever festival.

Dame Judi Dench, Gyles Brandreth, Dame Harriet Walter, Philippa Gregory, David Olusoga, Ben Macintyre, Kate Mosse, David Harewood, Robert Harris and Ken Follett will be among the actors and authors appearing at Hampton Court Palace on June 11.

The one-day event will also see The Queen’s Reading Room join forces with The Royal Society of Literature to stage a memorial event for the late Wolf Hall trilogy author Dame Hilary Mantel, overlooked by Anne Boleyn’s Gateway.

And the cast of the West End show Austentatious will improvise a new Jane Austen novel inspired by a title dreamt up by Camilla.

Dame Judi will appear in conversation with Brandreth to discuss her life, career and love of Shakespeare.

Camilla’s reading room began as an Instagram book club inspired during lockdown, but was relaunched as a charity in February to work on advancing education by promoting the appreciation of literature among adults and children.

Vicki Perrin, chief executive of The Queen’s Reading Room, said: “There is a special kind of magic to be found in a book, and great wonder in listening to authors speak about their work.

“I have no doubt that visitors will find themselves inspired by these great minds, enjoy connecting with fellow readers, and I hope that they will come away transformed into lifelong literature lovers.”

The festival is a co-production between The Queen’s Reading Room and Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that cares for Hampton Court Palace.

Proceeds will go towards the ongoing work of both charities and tickets are available via thequeensreadingroom.co.uk

New portrait of Charles shows King wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader

A new portrait of the King depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation editio, which is on sale from Thursday.

Charles did not sit for the portrait, but Mr Barford attended a biodiversity reception at Buckingham Palace and spent around an hour and a half observing the King as he greeted guests.

He said of his work: “I wanted it to be more about the man and less about the role so I was trying to capture something of a warmth and an empathy which I saw in his interactions with those people when I was there.

“I felt that there was a sort of a sensitivity.”

Charles was presented with a necklace made from seeds -symbolic of an alliance between the King and indigenous people -and a bracelet by Domingo Peas, leader of the Achuar Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon, at the Palace reception in February.

Mr Barford said: “I thought it was really nice to leave the bracelet in as a nod to the event and a nod to his interest in environmental matters.”

The artist, from Bridport in Dorset, was also commissioned by Illustrated London News to paint the late Queen in 2015.

Watch: Prince Harry's two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Harry claims ANL journalists are ‘criminals with journalistic powers’

In a witness statement made public on Tuesday, Harry alleged that journalists at ANL “are criminals with journalistic powers which should concern every single one of us”.

“The British public deserve to know the full extent of this cover-up and I feel it is my duty to expose it,” he said.

However, in a statement, a spokesperson for ANL said Harry “has become a serial litigant against Mail newspapers with whom he seems obsessed”.

They continued: “Associated Newspapers profoundly regrets his untrue, inflammatory and deeply offensive remarks about the Mail’s journalists.

“If they were repeated outside court, they would be highly defamatory.”

Baroness Lawrence claims to have been the victim of the illegal interception of her voicemails, monitoring of her bank accounts and “corrupt payments to serving Metropolitan Police Service police officers, including on the Stephen Lawrence murder investigations, for confidential information”.

Sir Elton and Mr Furnish have alleged the landline phone of their Windsor home was tapped by investigators on ANL’s behalf and that the birth certificate of their first child was unlawfully obtained by the publisher.

But ANL argues that an alleged confession by private investigator Gavin Burrows “prompted the claims” -and highlighted a statement in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

The publisher says it “categorically denies” the allegations against it and it is “profoundly saddened” Baroness Lawrence is bringing her case.

ANL’s lawyers argue the claims are “stale” and “largely inferential”.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, with a ruling expected at a later date.

Prince Harry not at High Court for third day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex was not present at the High Court for the start of the third day of a hearing over multiple privacy claims against the Daily Mail’s publisher.

Proceedings in Court 76 at the Royal Court of Justice in London resumed on Wednesday morning without Harry.

The duke, who unexpectedly appeared at court earlier this week, is one of seven people bringing claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) over denied allegations it carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information gathering.

Those bringing claims include Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, Sir Elton John and his husband David Furnish and actress Sadie Frost -all of whom have made appearances during the ongoing preliminary hearing.

Mr Furnish and Ms Frost returned to the courtroom on Wednesday.

The group’s allegations, which are denied, include that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records and access and record private phone conversations over a period starting from 1993.

ANL is trying to have the claims dismissed without a trial at the hearing, which is due to end this week.

What are Prince Harry’s claims?

His lawyers claim he was “deprived of important aspects of his teenage years” by the “unlawful actions” of Associated Newspapers.

“In particular, suspicion and paranoia was caused by Associated’s publication of the unlawful articles: friends were lost or cut off as a result and everyone became a ‘suspect’, since he was misled by the way that the articles were written into believing that those close to him were the source of this information being provided to Associated’s newspapers,” they argue in a written submission.

They say the actions of Associated Newspapers amounted to “a major betrayal” of promises made by the media after the death of Harry’s mother, Diana, Princess of Wales.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, but Buckingham Palace said the King would be unable to meet his son because of prior commitments, including an official state visit to Germany on Wednesday

David Furnish arrives at High Court

Candian filmmaker David Furnish has arrived at the High Court in London.

Sadie Frost arrives at the High Court for third day of hearing

Actress Sadie Frost has arrived at the Royal Courts Of Justice, central London, ahead of a hearing claim over allegations of unlawful information gathering brought against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

In his witness statement, which was released on Tuesday, Mr Furnish wrote about the friendship he and Sir Elton have with Harry.

Read more here:

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

King and Queen Consort to visit Germany after France trip cancelled

The King and Queen Consort are expected to arrive in Germany today after the couple’s visit to France was postponed due to civil unrest in the country.

Charles and Camilla were due to begin the first state visit of the King’s reign on Sunday but the trip was shelved after a night of violent demonstrations across France that led to hundreds of arrests and police being injured.

President Emmanuel Macron said the four-day state visit was likely to be rescheduled for the beginning of summer, after Downing Street confirmed the French leader had asked the British Government to postpone the trip.

Charles and Camilla were due to travel from France to Germany for a state visit from Wednesday to Friday, and the visit to Berlin will proceed as planned.

France has faced an eruption of violent demonstrations over forced-through pension reforms.

Sylvie Bermann, who served as Paris’s ambassador to Britain between 2014 and 2017, said Mr Macron wanted the visit to go ahead “until the last minute” before realising the situation was untenable.

She said a planned state banquet at the Palace of Versailles for Charles and Camilla would “not have given a good image”.

Lord Ricketts, a former national security adviser, said the lavish Versailles dinner would have had “echoes” of the French revolution if it had gone ahead during a public outcry at Mr Macron’s decision to push back the national retirement age.

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2023

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[*Royal news -latest: King tells Ukrainians who fled war to Germany ‘I’m praying for you’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-NB91-JBNF-W54K-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:1

**Length:** 4532 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Noyce

**Highlight:** King Charles also met recently arrived Ukrainians at Tegel Airport

**Body**

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” on his visit to Germany after [*condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-nuclear-war-bakhmut-b2310626.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20news%20-live:%20Putin%20‘looking%20to%20trade%20food%20for%20North%20Korean%20weapons’) of their homeland.

[*Charles met families who escaped to Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html%22%20title=%22Prince%20Harry%20returns%20to%20court%20for%20phone-tapping%20fight%20as%20King%20Charles%20visits%20Germany) after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine, delivering the [*first speech by a British monarch to the German Bundestag.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/king-charles-state-visit-germany-b2311073.html%22%20title=%22Why%20the%20King’s%20address%20to%20the%20German%20parliament%20was%20so%20significant)

“The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people”, he told the chamber.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.”

Elsewhere at Tegel Airport, the King met recently arrived Ukrainians. To date, more than a million have sought refuge in Germany.

Key Points

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag King Charles and Queen Consort arrive in Berlin for first state visit Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking Daily Mail publisher claims privacy case uses files provided confidentially to Leveson Inquiry ...

Meadows to be established at historic English sites to mark King’s coronation

One hundred wildflower meadows are to be created or enhanced at historic sites across England including Stonehenge and Westminster’s Jewel Tower in celebration of the King‘s coronation.

English Heritage said the project would leave a natural legacy by working to restore the country’s lost flower-rich glasslands, in tribute to Charles‘s love of the natural world.

Some 97% of the UK’s meadows have disappeared since the 1930s, with many remaining fragments left unprotected.

Seventy-five of the meadows will be brand new and 25 are existing ones which will be developed.

English Heritage’s chosen locations include 43 castles and forts, 22 abbeys and priories and 10 historic houses.

Whitby Abbey in Yorkshire, Queen Victoria’s former home Osborne on the Isle of Wight and Tintagel Castle in Cornwall are among them.

At the world-famous prehistoric stone circle Stonehenge in Wiltshire, a new field of wildflowers is planned for outside the visitor centre to greet people on arrival.

The banks of the monument are already a county wildlife site, with flowers such as orchids found in the outer grassland near the stones.

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

Tom Peck writes:

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) received a rousing standing ovation from [*German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/german) politicians after addressing the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) in both fluent German and [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english).

The monarch made history on Thursday 30 March, becoming the first member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) to speak in Germany’s federal [*parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) while it is in session.

During his address, Charles spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Camilla, Queen Consort, was watching his speech from the Bundestag floor.

Watch:

[*King Charles receives standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-germany-bundestag-speech-b2310877.html)

‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

In case you missed it...

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) suffered from “suspicion and paranoia” and lost friends because of newspaper articles, a court heard on Monday, [*as he launched his campaign to reform the media with a surprise appearance in London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html).

The [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) flew 5,500 miles from his new home in California to attend a High Court hearing [*as the Daily Mail’s publisher bids to throw out claims against its titles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html) , including accusations of phone-hacking.

Also in court were Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Sadie Frost, and [*Baroness Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , who are among the public figures suing [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) for alleged unlawful activity.

Alastair Jamieson reports:

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

The King has made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror – but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity – in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

King hails ‘special bond’ between UK and Germany in Bundestag address

The King has celebrated the “special bond” between the UK and Germany as he became the first British monarch to address the Bundestag during his historic state visit to the country.

Speaking in both German and English, Charles said he could “hardly begin to express the pride” he felt in the relationship between the two countries and spoke fondly of his “cherished” family ties to Germany.

He also thanked the country for its kindness following the death of his mother, the late Queen.

He said: “Today, it gives me particular pride to be with you ... and to renew the special bond between our two countries.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

With a quip about the Lionesses’ victory over Germany at Euro 2022, the monarch hailed it as “just one example of how our countries, together, can offer a compelling example to the world”.

“Faced with so many shared challenges, the United Kingdom and Germany are together providing leadership to secure our shared future,” he added.

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

[*Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/maryam-zakir-hussain)

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html)

I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

“I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard. [*I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/andrei-molodkin-prince-harry-taliban-afghanistan-b2308471.html) – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

“As Harry is in London, I have contacted him to set up a meeting, as an ex-militarist myself, to discuss my ideas for the computer game I am producing inspired by his time in Afghanistan. We have much to discuss.

“[*He is in court against Associated Newspapers Limited over allegations of criminality against him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-daily-mail-latest-news-b2309372.html) – “unlawful information gathering”. From what I have seen, he keeps himself in the spotlight, [*bringing attention to his personal life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html) , while going to extreme lengths to plead for privacy.

“[*Boasting about killing,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-killed-25-taliban-military-b2257584.html) whether for democracy or not, is something I do not accept. During military service in the Soviet Union, I saw a fellow soldier put a gun to his heart and shoot himself. Later, we were eating in the canteen and the guards pulled him through the room. His body and clothes were covered in blood, so he left a line like a signature behind him. A bloodline.”

[*Andrei Molodkin writes:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/andrei-molodkin)

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

“Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store.

“On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

“Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

King Charles ‘really showed interest in everyone’s stories’, refugee centre manager says

During his state visit to Germany with the Queen Consort, Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Thursday.

Stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: “Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?”

Charles took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre’s games room and joked: “I remember trying this when I was younger.”

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: “Amazing, two hands you are the experts.”

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: “I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives.

“He said that he was praying for us all. I’m the luckiest lady in the world.”

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That’s tour manager, said afterwards: “He really showed interest in everyone’s stories.

“He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide.

“There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to.”

Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) continues his visit to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany).

The monarch addressed the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) on Thursday 30 March during a high-profile trip that will attempt to rebuild some of the European ties damaged by [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit).

His remarks marked the first time that a member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) has spoken to members of Germany’s lower house of parliament while it is in session.

On Wednesday night, Charles pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the two nations while speaking at a banquet at Schloss Bellevue presidential palace in Berlin.

He also spoke in German to say he and Camilla were “deeply touched” by the warm welcome they had received and he praised the “very special” nation.

Oliver Browning reports:

[*Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-king-charles-visit-speech-b2310750.html)

Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) has paid tribute to the queens who came before her while attending a State Banquet in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) to honour her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s state visit to Germany.

Camilla pinned a brooch with a portrait of her late mother-in-law, [*Queen Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-elizabeth-ii) , onto her black evening dress for the occasion on Wednesday (29 March).

On her head, she wore a tiara that once belonged to the Queen Mother. Her dress, which was covered in silver embroidery, was designed by Bruce Oldfield, [*who is in charge of creating her coronation dress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-coronation-outfit-queen-consort-b2306836.html).

The glittering Boucheron tiara was gifted to the Queen Consort by the late Elizabeth. Camilla also wore a fringed necklace from the late Queen’s jewellery collection.

The brooch is the Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, and showcases a hand-painted miniature portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth.

Kate Ng reports:

[*Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html)

Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) meets with members of a German-British battalion during his first overseas trip as sovereign.

The King was greeted by [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) state premier Dietmar Woidke upon his arrival to the base in Finowfurt.

The head and deputy head of the battalion, Stefan Klein and Ian Higginbotham, also met with the monarch during his visit.

King Charles became the first monarch to address Germany’s parliament, the Bundestag, earlier on Thursday.

During his address, he stressed the close bonds between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Watch here:

[*Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-germany-military-battalion-b2310948.html)

Prince Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as King Charles visits Germany

Prince has returned to court for his ongoing case against the publisher of the Daily Mail, just as his father Charles visits Germany in his first overseas visit as king.

After missing the third day of the hearing, the Duke of Sussex reappeared at the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) on Thursday, as his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher to end the legal action.

Earlier in the day his father -who it was reported would not be seeing his US-based son during his surprise visit to the UK -[*gave a historic address to the German parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html).

[*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) and other high-profile individuals accuse Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) of having “concealed wrongdoing” over the alleged unlawful gathering of their private information.

ANL, which denies the allegations, says a judge should rule in its favour without a trial because the legal challenges against it are brought “far too late”.

Tom Pilgrim reports:

[*Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as father Charles visits Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html)

In pictures: King Charles and Queen Consort’s visit to Germany

The King and the Queen Consort are halfway through their first state visit to Germany, taking place in Berlin, Brandenburg and Hamburg from Wednesday, 29 March to Friday, 31 March, 2023.

Their visit to France, which was scheduled for 26-29 March, has been postponed due to ongoing mass strikes and protests.

Today, Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

Public says allegations “unfounded"

Adrian Beltrami KC, for the publisher, previously told the court: “The claims are rejected by the defendant in their entirety as are the unfounded allegations that are repeatedly made that the defendant either misled the Leveson Inquiry or concealed evidence from the Leveson Inquiry.”

The lawyer said the legal action against it has “no real prospects of succeeding” and is “barred” under a legal period of limitation.

The duke and others allege that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records, and access and record private phone conversations.

Six of those bringing cases against the publisher have referred to alleged confessions by private investigator Gavin Burrows in their claims, but ANL has highlighted a later contrasting witness statement from Mr Burrows in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

Court told of “systemic wrongdoing by the defendant”

In written arguments, Mr Sherborne added there were “vociferous and prolific denials of any wrongdoing by the defendant, made on oath to the Leveson Inquiry by its senior executives, and repeated ever since”, which the duke and others “were entitled to and did believe”, and which prevent the publisher from arguing that material could have been discovered earlier.

He said the group had since “uncovered concealed and systemic wrongdoing by the defendant” through information allegedly provided by private investigators and in new documents.

Mr Furnish, and later Baroness Lawrence, were also present in court again on Thursday, following visits this week from Sir Elton and Ms Frost.

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Baroness Lawrence ‘was gaslit'

Mr Sherborne later read out extracts from Baroness Lawrence’s witness statement in which she said she felt “played for a fool” by the Daily Mail, believing the newspaper “really cared” about the injustice of the murder of her son Stephen Lawrence.

The baroness said she learned a journalist allegedly instructed a private investigator to target her, saying that she “never thought to blame” the newspaper.

“They were supposed to be our allies and friends, the good people, not the bad,” she said, adding that she had believed that information in articles about her came from the police.

Mr Sherborne told the court: “That is nothing short of gaslighting Baroness Lawrence, that’s the form of concealment we are talking about.”

Daily Mail publisher ‘ commissioned 19 different private investigators'

On the final day of a preliminary hearing in London on Thursday, David Sherborne, representing Harry and others, said ANL’s challenge to their legal action was as “ambitious as it is unattractive”.

He accused the publisher of seeking an “impermissible mini-trial or worse” before further documentation and evidence was secured in the cases.

The barrister said the group, which also includes actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley and ex-Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes, had a “compelling case”.

Mr Sherborne said ANL was alleged to have commissioned 19 different private investigators to carry out a series of unlawful acts from 1993 to 2011 and beyond, which in some instances informed articles.

He told the court the group was “thrown off the scent by the way in which the articles were written”.

Latest photos from Charles and Camilla’s Germany visit

Tom Peck: If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, (writesTom Peck).

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Prince Harry spotted wearing £800 Dior shirt, complete with 18-carat gold embroidery

Prince Harry donned an £800 Dior shirt as he reappeared at the High Court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in London.

The shirt, which the luxury designer describes as being “crafted in luxurious and soft white cotton poplin”, is emblazoned with an embroidered bee, sewn using 18-carat gold thread.

Dior recommends the shirt be worn either with a suit “for a timeless look” or with jeans “for more laid-back allure,” according to its description.

The Duke of Sussex opted for the former after his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher of the Daily Mail to end his legal action against it.

Baroness Doreen Lawrence arrives at High Court

Baroness Doreen Lawrence has arrived in the courtroom for the final day of the preliminary hearing involving Associated Newspapers Limited.

Harry pictured arriving at High Court

Harry arrives at High Court

Prince Harry has arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a set of privacy claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

He arrived through the building’s side entrance around 1:45pm.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Latest images of Charles and Camilla’s trip to Germany

UK’s friendship with Germany ‘meant so much to my beloved mother’, says Charles

King Charles spoke earnestly of late Queen Elizabeth II’s affection for Germany during his historic address to the Bundestag on Thursday.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits,” he said.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2023

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[*King Charles visit – latest: Monarch to address German parliament as Harry’s court case continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WR-HR01-DY4H-K52T-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** King to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

**Body**

[*The King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-king) will become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles will deliver a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

During the day the King will also attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

It comes as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) on Tuesday accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him “for a long time” about [*phone hacking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/phone-hacking) as they did not want to “open a can of worms”, the High Court heard.

The allegation – relating to News Group Newspapers – emerged in a witness statement submitted by the [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) in the high-profile privacy case against [*Daily Mail*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daily-mail) publisher [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) , which he is bringing alongside Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Baroness [*Doreen Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , and others.

Harry did not attend the third day of the hearing on Wednesday.

Key Points

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag King Charles and Queen Consort arrive in Berlin for first state visit Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking Daily Mail publisher claims privacy case uses files provided confidentially to Leveson Inquiry ... Doreen Lawrence feels ‘played for a fool’ after thinking Mail ‘really cared’ about son’s murder

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

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Later, the King and the Queen Consort will visit Wittenbergplaztz Food Market and meet a range of local business owners who will discuss the history of the market.

Germany has welcomed more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary after Russia invaded their homeland and Charles will tour the Tegel Refugee Centre to meet some of the group.

Separately the Queen Consort will visit the Refugio House community centre, a meeting place for locals and new Berlin residents, including refugees.

In pictures: King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort attend a State Banquet at Schloss Bellevue in Germany

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, writesTom Peck.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

ICYMI: Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish reports he is planning to write memoir

Friends close to Prince Andrew have hit out at reports that he is planning to write a memoir.

On Sunday, a number of newspapers claimed that the Duke of York was in talks to produce a tell-all autobiography, following the success of Prince Harry’s book ‘Spare’.

However, friends of his family have taken the unusual step to make his views known following the reports.

[*Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish claims he is planning to write memoir*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-andrew-autobiography-harry-spare-b2308191.html)

King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin for first state visit as monarch

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with Harry, Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry leaves High Court after second day of case against Daily Mail publisher

ICYMI: ‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

Duke ‘deprived of important aspects of his teenage years’ by newspaper publisher, lawyer says.

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

King Charles shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait

A new portrait of King Charles III depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation edition, which is on sale from Thursday.

[*King shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-indigenous-amazon-bracelet-portrait-b2310135.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Prince Harry had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the High Court ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

In a witness statement, he accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him about the alleged phone hacking.

As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

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Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim should be rejected ‘in its entirety’, High Court hears

The Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim against the publisher of the Daily Mail is rejected “in its entirety”, brought “far too late”, and should be thrown out by a judge, the High Court has been told.

Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) says legal challenges brought by a number of high-profile individuals, including Sir Elton John and Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, have “no real prospects of succeeding” at a trial.

The publisher’s lawyers argued at the High Court in London on Wednesday that the cases should be dismissed or a judgment made in its favour without a trial.

But the legal team for Harry and others say ANL’s bid is “hopeless, plainly inappropriate and suggestive of a tactical gamble” to avoid a full trial.

King Charles plants tree with German president during Berlin visit

Voices: I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard, writesAndrei Molodkin.

I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

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Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store, Tom Peck writes.

On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

In pictures: Charles and Camilla visit Germany on first state visit

King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla visited the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin this afternoon, after being greeted by Germany’s president at Brandenburg Gate.

The royal tour is the King’s first state visit, having postponed a trip to France due to widespread political protests.

Germany’s president welcome Charles and Camilla in Berlin

In the shadow of Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate -a national symbol of peace and unity -Germany’s president Frank-Walter Steinmeier and wife Elke Budenbender formally welcomed the King and Queen Consort.

The foursome posed for the waiting photographers with the famous landmark in the background before the national anthems of Germany and the UK were played.

The King inspected a guard of honour, accompanied by the president, before Charles, Camilla, the German statesman and his wife went on a brief walkabout meeting people waiting behind nearby crash barriers.

Charles and Camilla touch down in Germany at start of first state visit

The King and Queen Consort have arrived in Germany for the start of their first state visit -a three-day tour of one of the EU’s leading nations.

Charles and Camilla said in a joint statement, released on their official Twitter account, it was a “great joy” to be able to develop the “longstanding friendship between our two nations”.

The couple were greeted by a 21-gun salute and a fly-past by two fighter jets after they emerged from the ministerial plane Voyager and paused at the top of the steps.

As a mark of respect two Typhoon jets escorted the plane carrying the King and Queen Consort, their entourage and a large number of media for a period as it approached Berlin-Brandenburg Government Airport.

The trip has been overshadowed by the postponement of the French leg of the European tour, which was shelved by President Emmanuel Macron last Friday after violent nationwide protests against the French leader’s retirement age reforms.

The decision was made amid reports the King may have been targeted during further demonstrations planned by protestors to coincide with the visit.

“Ahead of our first state visit to Germany, we are very much looking forward to meeting all of those who make this country so special,” the King and his wife said in their joint statement.

“It is a great joy to be able to continue the deepening of the longstanding friendship between our two nations.”

King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late

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.

[*King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-britain-elizabeth-ii-london-b2309938.html)

Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut

Watch live as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Consort, Camilla, arrive in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

The first leg of the King’s trip to France was cancelled due to ongoing protests over controversial pension reform.

German president [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) will welcome Charles and Camilla at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

On Thursday, the King is expected to deliver a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament, and meet with chancellor Olaf Scholz.

[*Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-camilla-berlin-germany-b2310155.html)

King arrives in Berlin

The King has arrived in Berlin for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

Their plane landed at the capital’s Brandenburg Airport.

Star line-up for Camilla’s first literary festival

The Queen Consort’s literary charity has revealed the line-up for its first ever festival.

Dame Judi Dench, Gyles Brandreth, Dame Harriet Walter, Philippa Gregory, David Olusoga, Ben Macintyre, Kate Mosse, David Harewood, Robert Harris and Ken Follett will be among the actors and authors appearing at Hampton Court Palace on June 11.

The one-day event will also see The Queen’s Reading Room join forces with The Royal Society of Literature to stage a memorial event for the late Wolf Hall trilogy author Dame Hilary Mantel, overlooked by Anne Boleyn’s Gateway.

And the cast of the West End show Austentatious will improvise a new Jane Austen novel inspired by a title dreamt up by Camilla.

Dame Judi will appear in conversation with Brandreth to discuss her life, career and love of Shakespeare.

Camilla’s reading room began as an Instagram book club inspired during lockdown, but was relaunched as a charity in February to work on advancing education by promoting the appreciation of literature among adults and children.

Vicki Perrin, chief executive of The Queen’s Reading Room, said: “There is a special kind of magic to be found in a book, and great wonder in listening to authors speak about their work.

“I have no doubt that visitors will find themselves inspired by these great minds, enjoy connecting with fellow readers, and I hope that they will come away transformed into lifelong literature lovers.”

The festival is a co-production between The Queen’s Reading Room and Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that cares for Hampton Court Palace.

Proceeds will go towards the ongoing work of both charities and tickets are available via thequeensreadingroom.co.uk

New portrait of Charles shows King wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader

A new portrait of the King depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation editio, which is on sale from Thursday.

Charles did not sit for the portrait, but Mr Barford attended a biodiversity reception at Buckingham Palace and spent around an hour and a half observing the King as he greeted guests.

He said of his work: “I wanted it to be more about the man and less about the role so I was trying to capture something of a warmth and an empathy which I saw in his interactions with those people when I was there.

“I felt that there was a sort of a sensitivity.”

Charles was presented with a necklace made from seeds -symbolic of an alliance between the King and indigenous people -and a bracelet by Domingo Peas, leader of the Achuar Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon, at the Palace reception in February.

Mr Barford said: “I thought it was really nice to leave the bracelet in as a nod to the event and a nod to his interest in environmental matters.”

The artist, from Bridport in Dorset, was also commissioned by Illustrated London News to paint the late Queen in 2015.

Watch: Prince Harry's two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Harry claims ANL journalists are ‘criminals with journalistic powers’

In a witness statement made public on Tuesday, Harry alleged that journalists at ANL “are criminals with journalistic powers which should concern every single one of us”.

“The British public deserve to know the full extent of this cover-up and I feel it is my duty to expose it,” he said.

However, in a statement, a spokesperson for ANL said Harry “has become a serial litigant against Mail newspapers with whom he seems obsessed”.

They continued: “Associated Newspapers profoundly regrets his untrue, inflammatory and deeply offensive remarks about the Mail’s journalists.

“If they were repeated outside court, they would be highly defamatory.”

Baroness Lawrence claims to have been the victim of the illegal interception of her voicemails, monitoring of her bank accounts and “corrupt payments to serving Metropolitan Police Service police officers, including on the Stephen Lawrence murder investigations, for confidential information”.

Sir Elton and Mr Furnish have alleged the landline phone of their Windsor home was tapped by investigators on ANL’s behalf and that the birth certificate of their first child was unlawfully obtained by the publisher.

But ANL argues that an alleged confession by private investigator Gavin Burrows “prompted the claims” -and highlighted a statement in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

The publisher says it “categorically denies” the allegations against it and it is “profoundly saddened” Baroness Lawrence is bringing her case.

ANL’s lawyers argue the claims are “stale” and “largely inferential”.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, with a ruling expected at a later date.

Prince Harry not at High Court for third day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex was not present at the High Court for the start of the third day of a hearing over multiple privacy claims against the Daily Mail’s publisher.

Proceedings in Court 76 at the Royal Court of Justice in London resumed on Wednesday morning without Harry.

The duke, who unexpectedly appeared at court earlier this week, is one of seven people bringing claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) over denied allegations it carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information gathering.

Those bringing claims include Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, Sir Elton John and his husband David Furnish and actress Sadie Frost -all of whom have made appearances during the ongoing preliminary hearing.

Mr Furnish and Ms Frost returned to the courtroom on Wednesday.

The group’s allegations, which are denied, include that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records and access and record private phone conversations over a period starting from 1993.

ANL is trying to have the claims dismissed without a trial at the hearing, which is due to end this week.

What are Prince Harry’s claims?

His lawyers claim he was “deprived of important aspects of his teenage years” by the “unlawful actions” of Associated Newspapers.

“In particular, suspicion and paranoia was caused by Associated’s publication of the unlawful articles: friends were lost or cut off as a result and everyone became a ‘suspect’, since he was misled by the way that the articles were written into believing that those close to him were the source of this information being provided to Associated’s newspapers,” they argue in a written submission.

They say the actions of Associated Newspapers amounted to “a major betrayal” of promises made by the media after the death of Harry’s mother, Diana, Princess of Wales.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, but Buckingham Palace said the King would be unable to meet his son because of prior commitments, including an official state visit to Germany on Wednesday

David Furnish arrives at High Court

Candian filmmaker David Furnish has arrived at the High Court in London.

Sadie Frost arrives at the High Court for third day of hearing

Actress Sadie Frost has arrived at the Royal Courts Of Justice, central London, ahead of a hearing claim over allegations of unlawful information gathering brought against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

In his witness statement, which was released on Tuesday, Mr Furnish wrote about the friendship he and Sir Elton have with Harry.

Read more here:

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

King and Queen Consort to visit Germany after France trip cancelled

The King and Queen Consort are expected to arrive in Germany today after the couple’s visit to France was postponed due to civil unrest in the country.

Charles and Camilla were due to begin the first state visit of the King’s reign on Sunday but the trip was shelved after a night of violent demonstrations across France that led to hundreds of arrests and police being injured.

President Emmanuel Macron said the four-day state visit was likely to be rescheduled for the beginning of summer, after Downing Street confirmed the French leader had asked the British Government to postpone the trip.

Charles and Camilla were due to travel from France to Germany for a state visit from Wednesday to Friday, and the visit to Berlin will proceed as planned.

France has faced an eruption of violent demonstrations over forced-through pension reforms.

Sylvie Bermann, who served as Paris’s ambassador to Britain between 2014 and 2017, said Mr Macron wanted the visit to go ahead “until the last minute” before realising the situation was untenable.

She said a planned state banquet at the Palace of Versailles for Charles and Camilla would “not have given a good image”.

Lord Ricketts, a former national security adviser, said the lavish Versailles dinner would have had “echoes” of the French revolution if it had gone ahead during a public outcry at Mr Macron’s decision to push back the national retirement age.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: China says it won’t ‘add fuel to fire’ in first war call with Zelensky*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683G-K0F1-DY4H-K468-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:35

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**Byline:** Namita Singh and Martha McHardy

**Highlight:** President Xi is the most powerful world leader to have refrained from denouncing Russia’s invasion

**Body**

China says it will not “add fuel to fire” in the first call between Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) and his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

During the[*phone call*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/china-ap-beijing-ukraine-russia-b2327343.html) , which President Zelensky[*described as “long and meaningful”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/xi-jinping-ap-ukraine-beijing-russia-b2327246.html) , the Mr Xi told him that China would send special representatives to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and hold talks with all parties seeking peace, Chinese state media reported.

“As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a responsible major country, we will neither sit idly by, nor pour oil on fire, still less seek to profit from it,” he said.

Mr Xi said China will focus on promoting peace talks, and make efforts for a ceasefire as soon as possible.

The White House welcomed the call, but said it was too soon to tell whether it would lead to a peace deal.

“That’s a good thing,”[*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) national security spokesperson John Kirby said. “Now, whether that’s going to lead to some sort of meaningful peace movement, or plan, or proposal, I just don’t think we know that right now.”

Key points

‘We are on the verge of a new world war,’ Russia’s Medvedev says Putin’s troops using ‘Syrian tactics’ in destruction of Bakhmut Russian troops trying to steal 'as much as they can' in Kherson Iran shipped one million rounds to Russia via Caspian Sea – report Casualties among Putin’s troops drop, says UK Ministry of Defence

China says it won’t ‘add fuel to fire’ in first war call with Zelensky

China says it will not “add fuel to fire” in the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

During the phone call, which president Zelensky described as “long and meaningful”, the Chinese president told Mr Zelensky that China would send special representatives to Ukraine and hold talks with all parties seeking peace, Chinese state media reported.

“As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a responsible major country, we will neither sit idly by, nor pour oil on fire, still less seek to profit from it,” the Chinese president said.

President Xi, the most powerful world leader to have refrained from denouncing Russia’s invasion, said China will focus on promoting peace talks, and make efforts for a ceasefire as soon as possible

The White House welcomed the call, which it said it had no advanced knowledge of, but said it was too soon to tell whether it would lead to a peace deal.

“That’s a good thing,” White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said. “Now, whether that’s going to lead to some sort of meaningful peace movement, or plan, or proposal, I just don’t think we know that right now.”

President Xi made a state visit to Moscow last month and since February, he has promoted a 12-point peace plan for Ukraine, greeted sceptically by the West but cautiously welcomed by Kyiv as a sign of Chinese interest in ending the war.

Russians pound frontline positions in Bakhmut, Ukraine military says

Russian forces pounded the city of Bakhmut, the months-old focal point of their attempts to capture the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas, and the head of Russia’s Wagner mercenary force said Ukrainian troops were pouring in ahead of an "inevitable" counter-offensive.

The general staff of Ukraine’s armed forces, in a report on Facebook, said fighting gripped Bakhmut and nearby areas. It said Russian forces had failed to advance on two villages to the northwest. At least a dozen localities came under Russian fire.

Separately, Serhiy Cherevatiy, spokesman for Ukraine’s eastern group of forces, told national television on Wednesday that in the past 24 hours, Russian forces had attacked 324 times using artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

"The Russians are destroying buildings in Bakhmut to prevent our soldiers from using them as fortifications," Cherevatiy said.

‘Hyundai Motor to exit Russia, selling its plants’

South Korea’s Hyundai Motor Co plans to exit Russia and sell its manufacturing plants there to a Kazakh company, South Korean media reported yesterday.

South Korean TV network MBC reported that negotiations to sell Hyundai’s factories in Russia are in the final stage, adding that the automaker has been waiting for a final approval from the Russian government.

“It is true that there are ongoing discussions regarding the sale, but nothing has been decided,” Hyundai Motor said, according to the TV network.

Hyundai Motor suspended operations at its Russian operation last year. In March, the automaker said it was reviewing “various options” for its Russian operation.

In a statement to Reuters, Hyundai Motor said it was reviewing various scenarios for the future of its business in Russia, adding no decision had been made so far.

Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats

Workers at the [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) nuclear power plant yesterday marked the 37th anniversary of the world’s worst nuclear disaster amid an ongoing war and nuclear threats, somberly laying flowers at a monument for victims.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky used the day to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , drawing a parallel between the Chernobyl accident in 1986 to Moscow’s brief seizure of that plant and its radiation-contaminated exclusion zone following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“Last year, the occupier not only seized the (Chernobyl) nuclear power plant, but also endangered the entire world again,” Mr Zelensky said in a Telegram post in English.

Report:

[*Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-chernobyl-ukraine-russia-moscow-b2327456.html)

Why is China trying to act as mediator in Russia’s war with Ukraine

Chinese leader Xi Jinping yesterday said that [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) will send an envoy to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to discuss a possible “political settlement” to Russia’s war with the country.

Beijing has previously avoided involvement in conflicts between other countries but appears to be trying to assert itself as a global diplomatic force after arranging talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March that led to them restoring diplomatic relations after a seven-year break.

Mr Xi told Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky in a phone call that a Chinese envoy would visit Ukraine and “other countries” to discuss a possible political settlement, according to a government statement reported by state TV.

But why does this matter? Read this report to find out:

[*China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/china-ap-beijing-ukraine-russia-b2327343.html)

What is the significance of the Ukraine-China call

China said it will not “add fuel to fire” in the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) is the only major government that has friendly relations with Moscow as well as economic leverage as the biggest buyer of Russian oil and gas after the United States and its allies cut off most purchases.

Beijing, which sees Moscow as a diplomatic partner in opposing U.S. domination of global affairs, has refused to criticise the invasion and used its status as one of five permanent U.N. Security Council members to deflect diplomatic attacks on Russia.

Zelensky earlier said he welcomed a Chinese offer to mediate.

Xi’s government has pursued a bigger role in global diplomacy as part of a campaign to restore China to what the ruling Communist Party sees as its rightful status as a political and economic leader and to build an international order that favours Beijing’s interests.

That is a sharp reversal after decades of avoiding involvement in other countries’ conflicts and most international affairs while it focused on economic development at home.

In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran issued a surprise announcement, following talks in Beijing, that they would reopen embassies in each other’s capitals following a seven-year break. China has good relations with both as a big oil buyer.

Last week, Foreign Minister Qin Gang told his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts that his country is ready to help facilitate peace talks.

Wednesday’s statement warned against the dangers of nuclear war, suggesting Beijing might also have been motivated by what it sees as the growing danger of a more destructive conflict.

Mediating between Ukraine and Russia would increase China’s presence in Eastern Europe, where Beijing has tried to build ties with other governments. That has prompted complaints by some European officials that China is trying to gain leverage over the European Union.

US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine’s grain exports

US and European officials yesterday toured Ukraine’s southern port of Izmail that’s important in bringing Ukrainian grain to the world – and could become critical if a deal with Russia to allow grain exports from Ukrainian Black Sea ports expires.

From Izmail, which has been upgraded since the start of the war with the help of US and other funding, grain is taken by barge down a branch of the Danube through Romania to its Black Sea port of Constanta for shipment onward.

US ambassador Bridget Brink said after looking over the port facilities with Ukrainian and EU officials, as well as Ukrainian grain companies, that they were exploring ways to increase the exports from Danube ports.

More in this report:

[*US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine's grain exports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-black-sea-europe-russia-b2327579.html)

Bianca Jagger hails Independent TV’s ‘powerful and moving’ Ukraine documentary after UK premiere

[*Bianca Jagger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bianca-jagger) attended the UK premiere of Independent TV’s [*documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/documentary) on [*war crimes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war-crimes) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on Tuesday evening, hailing it as a “powerful and moving” piece of reporting.

The 77-year-old veteran human rights defender joined more than 100 people at the Frontline Club in central London to watch [*The Body in the Woods*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC-jaAeI5gI&ab_channel=TheIndependent).

The film follows the story of international correspondent Bel Trew’s bid to find out the identity of a young Ukrainian man shot dead by Russian soldiers. She stumbled across his corpse lying in woodland with his hands tied behind his back.

Jagger said the documentary made her draw comparisons between Ukraine’s efforts to identify its victims and build war crimes cases with the decades of work spent documenting atrocities in countries that made up former Yugoslavia.

Tara Cobham reports:

[*Bianca Jagger hails Independent TV’s ‘powerful’ Ukraine documentary at UK premiere*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-war-bianca-jagger-independent-documentary-b2327121.html)

Russians pound frontline positions in Bakhmut, Ukraine military says

Russian forces pounded the city of Bakhmut, the months-old focal point of their attempts to capture the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas, the Ukraine armed forces said.

The general staff of Ukraine’s armed forces, in a report on Facebook, said fighting gripped Bakhmut and nearby areas. It said Russian forces failed to advance on two villages to the northwest. At least a dozen localities came under Russian fire.

Separately, Serhiy Cherevatiy, spokesperson for Ukraine’s eastern group of forces, told national television yesterday that in the past 24 hours Russian forces had attacked 324 times using artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

“The Russians are destroying buildings in Bakhmut to prevent our soldiers from using them as fortifications,” Mr Cherevatiy said.

On Tuesday, he said there had been a record number of attacks on a section of the front further north -near the city of Kupiansk, in northeastern Ukraine.

The governor of the southern Ukrainian region of Mykolaiv said Russian missiles had hit an apartment building and a private house in the city of the same name.

One person was killed and 15 were injured, Vitaliy Kim wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Belarusians wary of being drawn into war with Ukraine

For Ruslan, an engineer in the [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) capital of Minsk, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war in neighboring [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) suddenly seemed closer than ever when a conscription office recently sent him a summons for military training.

It’s part of an effort that will see thousands of men in Belarus attend drills amid fears that the staunch Moscow ally could be drawn into the fighting.

“They are telling us that Belarus won’t enter the war against Ukraine, but I hear Russian warplanes roar over my house heading to the Machulishchi air base outside Minsk,” the 27-year-old told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. He asked not to be fully identified out of concern for his personal safety.

Read the full story:

[*Belarusians wary of being drawn into war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/belarus-ap-alexander-lukashenko-ukraine-russia-b2326997.html)

Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn

[*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***.

Read the full story:

[*Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-2023-ukraine-russia-lta-aeltc-b2326454.html)

Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability

The Ukrainian government is launching an initiative Wednesday to streamline and promote innovation in the development of drones and other technologies that have been critical during [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war in Ukraine.

As part of the initiative dubbed BRAVE1, the government hopes to bring state, military, and private sector developers working on defense issues together into a tech cluster that would give Ukraine a battlefield advantage.

“Considering the enemy that is right next to us and its scale, we definitely need to develop the military tech so that we can defend ourselves,” Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine’s minister of digital transformation, said.

Read the full story:

[*Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-crimea-kyiv-b2327015.html)

In pictures: Destruction in Bakhmut as war rages in

Russian airstrike destroys Ukrainian history museum

At least one person died and 10 people were injured after a Russian missile hit a history museum in Kupiansk, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , on Tuesday (25 April), [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said.

“There are still people under the rubble... All those guilty of these war crimes will definitely be brought to justice,” the Ukrainian president said.

Mr Zelensky posted footage on social media showing devastated buildings and emergency services on scene.

At least three people were hospitalised, Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said.

Tucker Carlson receives a job offer from Russian state TV after Fox News firing

It didn’t take long for [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) to land a job offer after [*losing his primetime slot*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-leaves-fox-news-fired-rupert-murdoch-dominion-b2326141.html) on the most-watched cable news network in the country.

Within hours after [*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) announced that the network agreed to “part ways” with the far-right nationalist pundit on Monday morning, Russian state media personalities and propaganda outlets opened their doors.

[*RT*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rt) – the Russian state broadcaster formerly known as [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) Today, which is banned in dozens of countries, inducing across Europe – offered him a platform. “Hey @TuckerCarlson, you can always question more with @RT\_com,” the outlet[*wrote*](https://twitter.com/RT_com/status/1650530808585932800) on Twitter.

Read the full story:

[*Russian state-owned media offers Tucker Carlson a job*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-russian-state-tv-job-offer-b2327099.html)

US and Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine’s grain exports

U.S. and [*European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) officials on Wednesday toured Ukraine’s southern port of Izmail that’s important in bringing Ukrainian grain to the world — and could become critical if a deal with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) to allow grain exports from Ukrainian [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) ports expires.

From Izmail, which has been upgraded since the start of the war with the help of U.S. and other funding, grain is taken by barge down a branch of the Danube through Romania to its Black Sea port of Constanta for shipment onward.

U.S. Ambassador Bridget Brink told The Associated Press after looking over the port facilities with Ukrainian and EU officials, as well as Ukrainian grain companies, that they were exploring ways to increase the exports from Danube ports.

Ukrainian grain supplies are critical to millions of people around the world, and Wednesday’s visit comes after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov again this week threatened to abandon the Black Sea Grain Initiative, a deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last July.

Read the full story:

[*US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine's grain exports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-black-sea-europe-russia-b2327579.html)

House members propose resolution calling for bold victory in Ukraine

A bipartisan group of House lawmakers are introducing a resolution calling for the United States to support an outright victory for Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Republican Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina emphasised the need to not make the mistakes of history.

“We must not repeat the error of Sept. 1, 1939,” he said in reference to efforts to prevent the Nazis from invading Poland. The resolution would require a full review from the House Foreign Affairs Committee before it goes to the House floor. Yahoo! News first [*reported on the resolution.*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnews.yahoo.com%2Fexclusive-house-lawmakers-to-introduce-resolution-for-bold-ukraine-victory-terms-160006684.html&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/house-resolution-bold-victory-ukraine-b2327297.html)

Read the full story:

[*House members introduce resolution defining what victory in Ukraine would look like*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/house-resolution-bold-victory-ukraine-b2327297.html)

Italian reporter hurt and Ukrainian fixer killed in Kherson ambush

A reporter for the Italian newspaper La Repubblica was injured and his Ukrainian fixer died on Wednesday when they were ambushed in southern Ukraine, most likely by Russian snipers, the paper said in an article on its website.

La Repubblica said correspondent Corrado Zunino and fixer Bogdan Bitik were fired on near a major bridge in the southern city of Kherson after passing through a series of Ukrainian checkpoints. Russian forces left the western part of the city last year but regularly shell it from the eastern portion.

La Repubblica said the two men had been ambushed, “most likely by Russian snipers”.

Separately, the office of Ukraine’s prosecutor-general said a foreign reporter had been injured and a Ukrainian civilian died but did not name them. It said Russians shelled Kherson, and the reporter received a gunshot wound to the shoulder.

Zunino said in the article he had been injured in four places and was being treated in a Kherson hospital. The newspaper published a photo of what it said was his bullet proof vest, with damage from a projectile clearly visible.

Russia’s defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

At least five journalists have died since Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022

Jailed Russian opposition leader Navalny to face new trial

A court in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) held a hearing Wednesday to set the stage for imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei [*Navalny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/navalny) to face a new trial on extremism charges that he has described as a Kremlin-ordered effort to extend his time behind bars.

Navalny, who exposed official corruption and organized massive anti-[*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) protests, was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Moscow after recuperating in [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

He initially received a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence for a parole violation. Last year, he was sentenced to a nine-year term for fraud and contempt of court. He is currently serving time at a maximum-security prison 250 kilometers (150 miles) east of Moscow.

Read the full story:

[*Jailed Russian opposition leader Navalny to face new trial*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/navalny-ap-kremlin-moscow-germany-b2327164.html)

Italy's Meloni urges quick start of Ukraine's EU entry talks

[*Italian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italian) Premier [*Giorgia Meloni*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/giorgia-meloni) on Wednesday urged European allies to accelerate [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s European Union membership bid, as Rome hosted a bilateral conference on the war-torn country’s reconstruction attended by hundreds of Italian and Ukrainian businesses.

“The future of Ukraine must include an always wider capacity of integrating with the European dynamics and institutions,” Meloni said, in joint statements with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on the sidelines of the conference.

“The smartest way to thank Ukrainians for what they are doing is to accelerate their chance of being part of the European institutions. We need to acknowledge Kyiv’s enormous efforts to reform its system and bring it closer to targets required by the EU Commission,” Meloni added, urging a quick start of negotiations needed to grant Ukraine full EU membership.

Read the full story:

[*Italy's Meloni urges quick start of Ukraine's EU entry talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/giorgia-meloni-ap-ukraine-kyiv-italian-b2327344.html)

Fire damages Russian cultural centre in Cyprus as Moscow cites ‘terrorist attack’

A fire damaged a Russian cultural centre in the Cypriot capital Nicosia on Wednesday, prompting Moscow to denounce what it called a “terrorist attack.”

The cause of the fire was under investigation, fire brigade spokesman Andreas Kettis said.

The fire broke out around noon in the complex, which is in the heart of the commercial centre of Nicosia, sending plumes of black smoke into the sky. It was contained in just under two hours.

The centre, which was being renovated, is thought to have strong links to the Russian embassy in Cyprus, and is a popular venue for art exhibitions and plays.

Yevgeny Primakov, head of Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russian government’s cultural promotion agency, said foul play was clearly responsible, TASS reported.

“We qualify this as a terrorist attack since it is an attack on a civilian, peaceful building, clearly with the aim of not only causing damage, but also intimidating both our employees and the people who come to this cultural centre,” it cited him as telling the Russia-24 TV channel.

Earlier this month Cyprus said it was investigating how a number of its nationals ended up on U.S. and British sanctions lists over allegations of cooperating with Russians under sanctions. Some of those restrictions were imposed following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Brazil's Lula stands ground on Ukraine in Spain

[*Brazilian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brazil) President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met with [*Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spain) ‘s prime minister Wednesday for talks aimed at making progress on an intercontinental trade deal, but his differences with the European Union on the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) remained evident.

The 27-member EU completed negotiations in 2019 on a wide-ranging trade deal with [*Mercosur*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mercosur) , a South American bloc that includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. But ratification stalled during the presidency of Lula’s predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, due to concerns over environmental standards and price protections for European farmers.

Lula and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez held a news conference after the signing of bilateral agreements Wednesday. The warmth between the two left-wing leaders was evident, but their divergent views on Ukraine left a note of tension in the room.

Read the full story:

[*Brazil's Lula stands ground on Ukraine in Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-ap-ukraine-brazil-spain-b2327292.html)

Watch: British and German warplanes intercept Russian spy jets flying over Baltic Sea

Xi holds first call with Zelensky since Russia’s invasion – and promises delegation to Kyiv

China’s President [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) has held his first call with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded – offering to send an envoy to Kyiv and other capitals for talks on resolving the war.

Beijing has not condemned the invasion – or shied away from its close ties with Moscow – and Mr Zelensky quickly played up the significance of the “long and meaningful” call in which Mr Xi is said to been willing to help facilitate peace talks aimed at achieving a ceasefire as soon as possible. Kyiv also announced the appointment of a new ambassador to Beijing.

Mr Zelensky tweeted: “I believe that this call, as well as the appointment of Ukraine’s ambassador to China, will give a powerful impetus to the development of our bilateral relations.”

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Xi holds first war call with Zelensky – and promises delegation to Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-china-xi-zelensky-b2327504.html)

In pictures: Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster

Watch: Volodymyr Zelensky pays tribute to victims of Chernobyl disaster on 37th anniversary

France joins US in welcoming Ukraine-Chinal call

France has joined the US in welcoming the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

President Emmanuel Macron’s office said the French leader had pushed Xi to hold this call with Zelenskiy during his visit to Beijing this month.

Russia changes head of peacekeepers in Karabakh

Russia appointed a new head of its peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh, the RIA news agency said on Wednesday, citing the Russian defence ministry.

No reason for the change was given. Russia sent peacekeepers to the South Caucasus region in 2020 when it brokered a truce in a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but tensions between the two countries remain high

Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats

Workers at the [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) nuclear power plant on Wednesday marked the 37th anniversary of the world’s worst nuclear disaster amid an ongoing war and nuclear threats, somberly laying flowers at a monument for victims.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used the day to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , drawing a parallel between the Chernobyl accident in 1986 to Moscow’s brief seizure of that plant and its radiation-contaminated exclusion zone following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“Last year, the occupier not only seized the (Chernobyl) nuclear power plant, but also endangered the entire world again,” president Zelensky said in a Telegram post in English.

UN confirms JPMorgan processed payment for Russian bank

The United Nations confirmed on Wednesday that JPMorgan processed a payment for the Russian Agricultural Bank.

“I wouldn’t dispute that there was that there was a transaction involving JPMorgan that happened that happened earlier this month, but I don’t have any details to provide about that at this stage,” Deputy U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters.

The United States gave JPMorgan permission to process payments for agricultural exports via the Russian Agricultural Bank, but the arrangement was no substitute for reconnecting the bank to the SWIFT system, two Russian sources told Reuters earlier on Wednesday.

Russian fighter jet crashes into lake after bursting into flames

A Russian [*fighter jet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fighter-jet) has crashed into a lake after bursting into flames during a training exercise, according to Russian state media.

The MiG-31 fighter jet crashed in the northern Murmansk region on Wednesday, TASS news agency said, citing Russia’s defence ministry.

The incident took place 10km away from the town of Monchegorsk, near Russia’s Rizh-Guba island.

One of the plane’s two jet engines exploded during a training exercise and the pilot then lost control before the plane plummetted into a nearby lake, state media reported.

Emily Atkinson reports:

[*Russian fighter jet crashes into lake after bursting into flames*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-fighter-jet-crash-murmansk-b2327430.html)

China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine

Chinese leader Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) will send an envoy to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to discuss a possible “political settlement” to Russia’s war with the country.

Beijing has previously avoided involvement in conflicts between other countries but appears to be trying to assert itself as a global diplomatic force after arranging talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March that led to them restoring diplomatic relations after a seven-year break.

Xi told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a phone call that a Chinese envoy would visit Ukraine and “other countries” to discuss a possible political settlement, according to a government statement reported by state TV.

Read the full story:

[*China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/china-ap-beijing-ukraine-russia-b2327343.html)

Ukrainians will get arms in time for counter-offensive, US general says

Ukraine’s military will get the weaponry it needs in time for an upcoming counter-offensive against invading Russian forces, the top U.S. general in Europe told Congress on Wednesday.

General Christopher Cavoli, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, cited as an example that more than 98 percent of the combat vehicles promised to Kyiv had already been delivered.

“I am very confident that we have delivered the materiel that they need and we’ll continue a pipeline to sustain their operations as well,” general Cavoli told a hearing at the House Armed Services Committee.

‘Anything could be discussed’ once Russia and Ukraine sit down to talk peace -Brazil’s Lula

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Wednesday called again for a “peace group” to broker an agreement between Russia and Ukraine, saying anything could be discussed once the nations sat down to talk peace.

“There are a lot of things to be discussed -Crimea, other territories, NATO,” president Lula said during a trip to Spain when asked about Crimea. He said it was not up to him to say who owned Crimea. “That is a discussion between Russia and Ukraine.”

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[*King Charles visit – latest: Monarch to address German parliament as Harry’s court case continues*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WS-1DT1-DY4H-K11R-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:7

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**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Emily Atkinson

**Highlight:** King to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

**Body**

[*The King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-king) will become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles will deliver a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

During the day the King will also attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

It comes as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) on Tuesday accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him “for a long time” about [*phone hacking*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/phone-hacking) as they did not want to “open a can of worms”, the High Court heard.

The allegation – relating to News Group Newspapers – emerged in a witness statement submitted by the [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) in the high-profile privacy case against [*Daily Mail*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/daily-mail) publisher [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) , which he is bringing alongside Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Baroness [*Doreen Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , and others.

Harry did not attend the third day of the hearing on Wednesday.

Key Points

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag King Charles and Queen Consort arrive in Berlin for first state visit Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking Daily Mail publisher claims privacy case uses files provided confidentially to Leveson Inquiry ... Doreen Lawrence feels ‘played for a fool’ after thinking Mail ‘really cared’ about son’s murder

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

Charles speaks affectionately of ‘close personal ties’ to Germany

King Charles is speaking to the Bundestag at length about “the pride” he feels in the “strength of the partnership” between Germany and Britain.

During the historic address, the King spoke of his first visit to Germany’s “remarkable land” at 13 years old. He also talked affectionately of his “close personal ties to the country”, made deeper by his “cherished family relationships”.

He noted that “with all of us, there are countless points of connection and common experience in the British-German story, which has unfolded over nearly two millennia.”

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-germany-camilla-harry-b2310756.html)

Watch live: King Charles continues Germany visit before historic Bundestag address

Camilla pays subtle tribute to Elizabeth II

The Queen Consort wore a tiara once owned by the Queen Mother and a brooch bearing the portrait of Queen Elizabeth II as she attended a state banquet in Berlin last night.

Camilla, sporting a black evening gown studded with silver embroidery, arrived at the Schloss Bellevue residence wearing the Boucheron tiara given to her by the late monarch. She also wore the Queen’s fringed diamond necklace, offered to her as a wedding present in November 1947.

The Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, was pinned to Camilla’s left shoulder. It features a hand-painted miniature of the young Queen set in platinum.

Harry not in court for final day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex is not in court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a group of privacy claims against the publisher of the Daily Mail.

Harry attended the hearing at the Royal Courts of Justice in London on Monday and Tuesday, but was not present on Wednesday or as the hearing continued on Thursday.

Some of the other people bringing the claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL), Sir Elton John, David Furnish, Baroness Lawrence and Sadie Frost, have also attended some of the hearing.

None of the group, which also includes Sir Simon Hughes and Liz Hurley, were seen in the courtroom as the hearing resumed on Thursday morning.

In pictures: German Chancellor Olaf Scholz welcomes King Charles at the Chancellery in Berlin

Charles to become first British monarch to address Bundestag

The King will become the first British monarch to address German politicians from the Bundestag, while the parliament is in session, during his historic state visit to the country.

Charles will deliver a speech that will celebrate the deep historical bonds and longstanding links between Germany and the UK.

During the day the King will attend a meeting with Chancellor Olaf Scholz in the Federal Chancellery building.

Later, the King and the Queen Consort will visit Wittenbergplaztz Food Market and meet a range of local business owners who will discuss the history of the market.

Germany has welcomed more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** seeking sanctuary after Russia invaded their homeland and Charles will tour the Tegel Refugee Centre to meet some of the group.

Separately the Queen Consort will visit the Refugio House community centre, a meeting place for locals and new Berlin residents, including refugees.

In pictures: King Charles III and Camilla, Queen Consort attend a State Banquet at Schloss Bellevue in Germany

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, writesTom Peck.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

Prince Harry is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

ICYMI: Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish reports he is planning to write memoir

Friends close to Prince Andrew have hit out at reports that he is planning to write a memoir.

On Sunday, a number of newspapers claimed that the Duke of York was in talks to produce a tell-all autobiography, following the success of Prince Harry’s book ‘Spare’.

However, friends of his family have taken the unusual step to make his views known following the reports.

[*Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish claims he is planning to write memoir*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-andrew-autobiography-harry-spare-b2308191.html)

King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin for first state visit as monarch

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with Harry, Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry leaves High Court after second day of case against Daily Mail publisher

ICYMI: ‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

Duke ‘deprived of important aspects of his teenage years’ by newspaper publisher, lawyer says.

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

King Charles shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait

A new portrait of King Charles III depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation edition, which is on sale from Thursday.

[*King shown wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader in new portrait*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-indigenous-amazon-bracelet-portrait-b2310135.html)

ICYMI: Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Prince Harry had just two words of advice for reporters who had gathered outside the High Court ahead of his arrival.

The prince is one of a group of high-profile individuals who have accused the Daily Mail publishers of privacy breaches.

In a witness statement, he accused the royal family of “without doubt” withholding information from him about the alleged phone hacking.

As he walked into the building for the second day of the preliminary hearing, he addressed the reporters and said: “Stay dry.”

[*Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/prince-harry-high-court-media-advice-b2309654.html)

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[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-daily-mail-court-battle-b2310316.html)

Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim should be rejected ‘in its entirety’, High Court hears

The Duke of Sussex’s privacy claim against the publisher of the Daily Mail is rejected “in its entirety”, brought “far too late”, and should be thrown out by a judge, the High Court has been told.

Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) says legal challenges brought by a number of high-profile individuals, including Sir Elton John and Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, have “no real prospects of succeeding” at a trial.

The publisher’s lawyers argued at the High Court in London on Wednesday that the cases should be dismissed or a judgment made in its favour without a trial.

But the legal team for Harry and others say ANL’s bid is “hopeless, plainly inappropriate and suggestive of a tactical gamble” to avoid a full trial.

King Charles plants tree with German president during Berlin visit

Voices: I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard, writesAndrei Molodkin.

I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

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Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store, Tom Peck writes.

On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

In pictures: Charles and Camilla visit Germany on first state visit

King Charles and Queen Consort Camilla visited the presidential Bellevue Palace in Berlin this afternoon, after being greeted by Germany’s president at Brandenburg Gate.

The royal tour is the King’s first state visit, having postponed a trip to France due to widespread political protests.

Germany’s president welcome Charles and Camilla in Berlin

In the shadow of Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate -a national symbol of peace and unity -Germany’s president Frank-Walter Steinmeier and wife Elke Budenbender formally welcomed the King and Queen Consort.

The foursome posed for the waiting photographers with the famous landmark in the background before the national anthems of Germany and the UK were played.

The King inspected a guard of honour, accompanied by the president, before Charles, Camilla, the German statesman and his wife went on a brief walkabout meeting people waiting behind nearby crash barriers.

Charles and Camilla touch down in Germany at start of first state visit

The King and Queen Consort have arrived in Germany for the start of their first state visit -a three-day tour of one of the EU’s leading nations.

Charles and Camilla said in a joint statement, released on their official Twitter account, it was a “great joy” to be able to develop the “longstanding friendship between our two nations”.

The couple were greeted by a 21-gun salute and a fly-past by two fighter jets after they emerged from the ministerial plane Voyager and paused at the top of the steps.

As a mark of respect two Typhoon jets escorted the plane carrying the King and Queen Consort, their entourage and a large number of media for a period as it approached Berlin-Brandenburg Government Airport.

The trip has been overshadowed by the postponement of the French leg of the European tour, which was shelved by President Emmanuel Macron last Friday after violent nationwide protests against the French leader’s retirement age reforms.

The decision was made amid reports the King may have been targeted during further demonstrations planned by protestors to coincide with the visit.

“Ahead of our first state visit to Germany, we are very much looking forward to meeting all of those who make this country so special,” the King and his wife said in their joint statement.

“It is a great joy to be able to continue the deepening of the longstanding friendship between our two nations.”

King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late

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.

[*King Charles III keeps eye on prize after tour starts late*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/charles-iii-ap-britain-elizabeth-ii-london-b2309938.html)

Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut

Watch live as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) and Queen Consort, Camilla, arrive in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

The first leg of the King’s trip to France was cancelled due to ongoing protests over controversial pension reform.

German president [*Frank-Walter Steinmeier*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/frank-walter-steinmeier) will welcome Charles and Camilla at the historic Brandenburg Gate.

On Thursday, the King is expected to deliver a speech to the Bundestag, the German parliament, and meet with chancellor Olaf Scholz.

[*Watch live as King Charles and Camilla arrive in Berlin in overseas debut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-camilla-berlin-germany-b2310155.html)

King arrives in Berlin

The King has arrived in Berlin for his first overseas state visit as monarch.

Their plane landed at the capital’s Brandenburg Airport.

Star line-up for Camilla’s first literary festival

The Queen Consort’s literary charity has revealed the line-up for its first ever festival.

Dame Judi Dench, Gyles Brandreth, Dame Harriet Walter, Philippa Gregory, David Olusoga, Ben Macintyre, Kate Mosse, David Harewood, Robert Harris and Ken Follett will be among the actors and authors appearing at Hampton Court Palace on June 11.

The one-day event will also see The Queen’s Reading Room join forces with The Royal Society of Literature to stage a memorial event for the late Wolf Hall trilogy author Dame Hilary Mantel, overlooked by Anne Boleyn’s Gateway.

And the cast of the West End show Austentatious will improvise a new Jane Austen novel inspired by a title dreamt up by Camilla.

Dame Judi will appear in conversation with Brandreth to discuss her life, career and love of Shakespeare.

Camilla’s reading room began as an Instagram book club inspired during lockdown, but was relaunched as a charity in February to work on advancing education by promoting the appreciation of literature among adults and children.

Vicki Perrin, chief executive of The Queen’s Reading Room, said: “There is a special kind of magic to be found in a book, and great wonder in listening to authors speak about their work.

“I have no doubt that visitors will find themselves inspired by these great minds, enjoy connecting with fellow readers, and I hope that they will come away transformed into lifelong literature lovers.”

The festival is a co-production between The Queen’s Reading Room and Historic Royal Palaces, the independent charity that cares for Hampton Court Palace.

Proceeds will go towards the ongoing work of both charities and tickets are available via thequeensreadingroom.co.uk

New portrait of Charles shows King wearing bracelet from indigenous Amazon leader

A new portrait of the King depicts his “warmth” and “empathy” and shows him wearing a bracelet given to him by an indigenous Amazon leader, the artist has said.

Alastair Barford said he wanted to capture Charles’s “sensitivity” in the oil painting, with the inclusion of the bracelet a nod to his environmental campaigning.

The picture was commissioned by the Illustrated London News for its special coronation editio, which is on sale from Thursday.

Charles did not sit for the portrait, but Mr Barford attended a biodiversity reception at Buckingham Palace and spent around an hour and a half observing the King as he greeted guests.

He said of his work: “I wanted it to be more about the man and less about the role so I was trying to capture something of a warmth and an empathy which I saw in his interactions with those people when I was there.

“I felt that there was a sort of a sensitivity.”

Charles was presented with a necklace made from seeds -symbolic of an alliance between the King and indigenous people -and a bracelet by Domingo Peas, leader of the Achuar Nation of the Ecuadorian Amazon, at the Palace reception in February.

Mr Barford said: “I thought it was really nice to leave the bracelet in as a nod to the event and a nod to his interest in environmental matters.”

The artist, from Bridport in Dorset, was also commissioned by Illustrated London News to paint the late Queen in 2015.

Watch: Prince Harry's two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

Harry claims ANL journalists are ‘criminals with journalistic powers’

In a witness statement made public on Tuesday, Harry alleged that journalists at ANL “are criminals with journalistic powers which should concern every single one of us”.

“The British public deserve to know the full extent of this cover-up and I feel it is my duty to expose it,” he said.

However, in a statement, a spokesperson for ANL said Harry “has become a serial litigant against Mail newspapers with whom he seems obsessed”.

They continued: “Associated Newspapers profoundly regrets his untrue, inflammatory and deeply offensive remarks about the Mail’s journalists.

“If they were repeated outside court, they would be highly defamatory.”

Baroness Lawrence claims to have been the victim of the illegal interception of her voicemails, monitoring of her bank accounts and “corrupt payments to serving Metropolitan Police Service police officers, including on the Stephen Lawrence murder investigations, for confidential information”.

Sir Elton and Mr Furnish have alleged the landline phone of their Windsor home was tapped by investigators on ANL’s behalf and that the birth certificate of their first child was unlawfully obtained by the publisher.

But ANL argues that an alleged confession by private investigator Gavin Burrows “prompted the claims” -and highlighted a statement in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

The publisher says it “categorically denies” the allegations against it and it is “profoundly saddened” Baroness Lawrence is bringing her case.

ANL’s lawyers argue the claims are “stale” and “largely inferential”.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, with a ruling expected at a later date.

Prince Harry not at High Court for third day of hearing

The Duke of Sussex was not present at the High Court for the start of the third day of a hearing over multiple privacy claims against the Daily Mail’s publisher.

Proceedings in Court 76 at the Royal Court of Justice in London resumed on Wednesday morning without Harry.

The duke, who unexpectedly appeared at court earlier this week, is one of seven people bringing claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) over denied allegations it carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information gathering.

Those bringing claims include Baroness Doreen Lawrence of Clarendon, Sir Elton John and his husband David Furnish and actress Sadie Frost -all of whom have made appearances during the ongoing preliminary hearing.

Mr Furnish and Ms Frost returned to the courtroom on Wednesday.

The group’s allegations, which are denied, include that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records and access and record private phone conversations over a period starting from 1993.

ANL is trying to have the claims dismissed without a trial at the hearing, which is due to end this week.

What are Prince Harry’s claims?

His lawyers claim he was “deprived of important aspects of his teenage years” by the “unlawful actions” of Associated Newspapers.

“In particular, suspicion and paranoia was caused by Associated’s publication of the unlawful articles: friends were lost or cut off as a result and everyone became a ‘suspect’, since he was misled by the way that the articles were written into believing that those close to him were the source of this information being provided to Associated’s newspapers,” they argue in a written submission.

They say the actions of Associated Newspapers amounted to “a major betrayal” of promises made by the media after the death of Harry’s mother, Diana, Princess of Wales.

The hearing before Mr Justice Nicklin is due to conclude on Thursday, but Buckingham Palace said the King would be unable to meet his son because of prior commitments, including an official state visit to Germany on Wednesday

David Furnish arrives at High Court

Candian filmmaker David Furnish has arrived at the High Court in London.

Sadie Frost arrives at the High Court for third day of hearing

Actress Sadie Frost has arrived at the Royal Courts Of Justice, central London, ahead of a hearing claim over allegations of unlawful information gathering brought against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and [*David Furnish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/david-furnish) have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with [*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) , Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses [*Sadie Frost*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sadie-frost) and [*Liz Hurley*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/liz-hurley) – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

In his witness statement, which was released on Tuesday, Mr Furnish wrote about the friendship he and Sir Elton have with Harry.

Read more here:

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

King and Queen Consort to visit Germany after France trip cancelled

The King and Queen Consort are expected to arrive in Germany today after the couple’s visit to France was postponed due to civil unrest in the country.

Charles and Camilla were due to begin the first state visit of the King’s reign on Sunday but the trip was shelved after a night of violent demonstrations across France that led to hundreds of arrests and police being injured.

President Emmanuel Macron said the four-day state visit was likely to be rescheduled for the beginning of summer, after Downing Street confirmed the French leader had asked the British Government to postpone the trip.

Charles and Camilla were due to travel from France to Germany for a state visit from Wednesday to Friday, and the visit to Berlin will proceed as planned.

France has faced an eruption of violent demonstrations over forced-through pension reforms.

Sylvie Bermann, who served as Paris’s ambassador to Britain between 2014 and 2017, said Mr Macron wanted the visit to go ahead “until the last minute” before realising the situation was untenable.

She said a planned state banquet at the Palace of Versailles for Charles and Camilla would “not have given a good image”.

Lord Ricketts, a former national security adviser, said the lavish Versailles dinner would have had “echoes” of the French revolution if it had gone ahead during a public outcry at Mr Macron’s decision to push back the national retirement age.

**Load-Date:** March 30, 2023

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[*Russia-Ukraine war – live: Putin launches biggest drone attack yet as explosions heard through night in Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PP-D011-JBNF-W188-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:21

**Length:** 6018 words

**Byline:** Andy Gregory and Tom Watling

**Highlight:** Fragments of intercepted drones fall on apartment buildings and start fire at children’s nursery

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has launched its most significant kamikaze drone attack on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in months according to the Ukrainian air force, firing nearly a hundred Iranian-made drones and forcing civilians into bomb shelters for most of the night.

The attack in the early hours of Saturday primarily targeted the capital [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv). Dozens of Russian kamikaze drones were heard circling over the city for a period of roughly six hours before many were intercepted by Ukrainian air defences.

It was the most significant attack since May this year, in which residents were targeted at least 15 times in a month. Last winter, Russia launched a brutal campaign targeting critical infrastructure across Ukraine for several months.

Two were reported injured in the attacks overnight that struck at least three Kyiv districts, said the city’s mayor Vitali Klitschko.

Meanwhile, Ukraine’s long-range precision strikes are inflicting mass casualties among [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces “well behind” Russia’s frontline, the UK’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) earlier claimed.

The dire lack of rotation among frontline troops is leaving Russia’s commanders with “an acute dilemma” of whether to keep soldiers safely dispersed or gather them in groups to boost morale, the ministry claimed – pointing to two recent strikes which likely caused dozens of casualties in Russian-held territory.

Key Points

Explosions heard overnight in Kyiv as Putin launches biggest drone attack yet Vladimir Putin suffering losses ‘well behind the front line’, says UK Chinese executives ‘linked to underwater Crimea tunnel’ in intercepted emails Ukrainian troops ‘standing their ground’ in battle for Avdiivka, claims Kyiv Russia has never abandoned peace negotiations with Ukraine, insists Putin

Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has reportedly pardoned two Russian men convicted of [*cannibalism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cannibalism) after they deployed to the frontline in the war with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

One of the men, Denis Gorin, was recruited into a private military company after signing a contract with the Russian ministry of defence but is known to have been convicted thrice for murdering at least four people between 2003 and 2022. He was also convicted of eating the remains of his victims along with his brother, [*reported*](https://www.sibreal.org/a/putin-pomiloval-lyudoeda-s-sahalina/32696870.html) Sibir Realii, a news outlet aligned with Radio Free Europe.

He is the 17th person convicted for murder to be pardoned by the Russian president between 2022 and 2023. “At the trial, he (Gorin) admitted that they ate the murdered man who was their acquaintance,” said his neighbour Dmitry Vladimirovich.

[*Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-pardons-cannibals-russia-war-ukraine-b2452758.html)

Swiss president arrives in Kyiv during Russian drone attack

The president of Switzerland has arrived in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv to meet Volodymyr Zelensky and attend an international summit on food security as Russian drones were intercepted over the capital.

Alain Berset posted a picture of his arrival at Kyiv’s main train station this morning.

He had written earlier that he had arrived in the capital.

“Arrival in Kyiv where I will be attending the international summit on food security today and meeting President Zelensky,” he wrote.

“The focus is on the impact of Russia’s war of aggression on global food security and Switzerland’s long-term support for Ukraine.”

Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern city

Ukraine launched one of the biggest drone attacks on the Moscow-annexed [*Crimean*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) Peninsula since the full-scale war that started with Russia’s invasion 21 months ago, Russian officials said Friday.

At the same time, Ukrainian officials reported that the Kremlin’s forces escalated their weekslong and costly attempt to storm Avdiivka, a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine.

The stepped-up efforts came as both sides are keen to show they are not deadlocked as the fighting approaches 2024. Neither side has gained much ground despite a Ukrainian counteroffensive that began in June, and analysts predict the war will be a long one.

[*Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-crimea-moscow-b2452885.html)

Below are some photos from Kyiv following the Russian drone attack

Here are some of the latest photos from Kyiv after Russia’s six-hour drone attack.

World’s focus must not leave Ukraine, warns former NATO chief

The world's attention must "stay on Ukraine" as the Russian invasion continues, a former Nato secretary-general has warned.

Lord George Robertson said Russian President Vladimir Putin would be emboldened to extend the attacks beyond Ukraine if foreign governments stop providing weaponry.

Lord Robertson, who was in the top Nato role between 1999 and 2003, said: “I think it is inevitable that because we're seeing the television from Gaza every day, that people are paying less attention to Ukraine, but that must change.

“We have got to keep the world's attention focused on Ukraine because they are involved in a fight with Russia that has got huge implications for all of us as well.

“Vladimir Putin is not simply interested in subjugating Ukraine. He has got a much bigger agenda in the future, and if he succeeds in Ukraine, who knows where he is going to stop.”

The conflict in Ukraine has now surpassed 640 days -the invasion began in February 2022 -and Lord Robertson urged Nato member states to continue to press Russia amid Mr Putin's "miserable failure".

Russia ‘proud of its ability to kill people’ -Zelensky

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has accused Russia of being “proud of its ability to kill people” after it launched a significant drone attack against Kyiv this morning during the remembrance day for those killed in the Holodomor genocide.

As the fourth Saturday of November, today marks the Day of Memory for Victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine, honouring those killed in a famine in Ukraine manufactured by Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in the 1930s.

Estimates suggest that more than three million people, many of whom were farmers and rural villagers, were killed by forced starvation.

Russia launched around 70 "Shahed" drones at Ukraine precisely on the eve of the Holodomor genocide commemoration day. Russia’s leadership appears to be proud of its ability to kill people.Our warriors shot down the majority of the drones, but not all of them. We keep working…— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*November 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1728312139910189161?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) At least 5 injured in drone strikes on Kyiv, local mayor says 07:48 , Tom Watling At least five people have been injured as a result of Russian drone attacks on Kyiv, including an 11-year-old child, the local mayor has claimed.Vitali Klitschko said all five were “receiving medical assistance on the spot or in the trauma centre, without further hospitalistion”.He wrote on Telegram: “The enemy continues to terrorise. To intimidate us, sow panic and decay in our cities and towns.“But it won’t be like that! We work for the livelihood of communities, we support each other, together we bring Victory closer!”Russia fire ‘record number’ of drones overnight07:31 , Tom Watling Russia has fired nearly 100 Iranian-made kamikaze drones overnight, mainly on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. Local reports suggested air raid sirens began at around 3am. Mayor Vilati Klitschko wrote at 3.25: “It’s loud in the capital. Several more groups of ‘Shaheeds’ (Iranian drones) are going to Kyiv. Stay in shelters!”Ukrainian air force commander Mykola Oleschuk said roughly 75 Shahed-131 and 136s were launched overnight, with at least 71 “destroyed by air defence”.“On this night, November 25, 2023, the enemy released a record number of strike UAVs over Ukraine!” he wrote on Telegram. “The main direction of the attack is Kyiv!”Explosions heard overnight in Kyiv as Putin launches biggest drone attack yet07:11 , Anuj Pant Drone engines and explosions were heard overnight in Ukraine’s capital Kyiv in what the country’s air force said was Vladimir Putin’s biggest drone attack yet.The air force said Iran-made Shahed drones were used in the assault that mainly targeted Kyiv, and hit at least three of the capital’s districts.The mass drone attack struck apartment complexes and falling drone fragments set fire to a children’s nursery, said Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko.Two people were also injured in the attack due to the falling drone fragments.Ukraine removes 3 Greek companies from 'international sponsors of war' list07:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine’s National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NAZK) fully removed three Greek shipping companies from the international sponsors of war list after they stopped shipping Russian oil, the NAZK announced on 24 November.Thenamaris Ships Management Inc., Minerva Marine, and TMS Tankers Ltd ceased transporting Russian oil in recent weeks amid tightening U.S. sanctions.“The National Agency is open to cooperation with international business and is ready to consult on the steps necessary to de-list each individual company,” the NAZK said.Mass drone attack strikes Kyiv06:18 , Anuj Pant A mass drone attack targeted many districts in Ukraine’s capital Kyiv on Saturday, reported Reuters, citing an eyewitness. Mayor Vitali Klitschko on Telegram said two people were injured by fragments from downed drones that hit residential areas and other buildings in at least three Kyiv districts.The fragments from one intercepted drone started a fire at a children’s nursery, said the mayor.Zelensky discusses ammunitation supply with Lativa06:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has discussed the production of ammunition supply for his country’s war against Russia with Latvia.“We talked about the defense support of Ukraine, our soldiers. About the stability of such support. We discussed the production and supply of ammunition -artillery, caliber 155 -as well as the issue of “Medevacs” -special armored vehicles for evacuating our wounded soldiers,” Zelensky said.Finland shuts nearly all crossings to Russia05:00 , Alexander Butler Finland has temporarily closed all but one of its eight passenger crossings to Russia, its border force has announced.“All border crossings and application for international protection at the eastern border is centralised at Raja-Jooseppi starting on 24 November 2023. The decision will remain in force until 23 December 2023,” it said in X.More than 700 migrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, and Somalia have entered Finland over the past weeks via Russia.All border crossings and application for international protection at the eastern border is centralised at Raja-Jooseppi starting on 24 November 2023.The decision will remain in force until 23 December 2023.More information on our website: [*https://t.co/E1KJe6EV9q*](https://t.co/E1KJe6EV9q) [*pic.twitter.com/jGFM4JdOen*](https://t.co/jGFM4JdOen) — Rajavartiolaitos (@rajavartijat) [*November 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/rajavartijat/status/1727664338628997280?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine discusses ‘unity’ with Netherlands, Zelensky says04:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said he discussed the importance of maintaining “European unity” with the Netherlands.“During our call, Mark Rutte and I discussed efforts to maintain European unity. We also discussed the importance of continuing military and financial assistance to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. “In this regard, the Netherlands’ recent decision to provide Ukraine with an additional €2bn for 2024 is the best signal to other partners. “I am grateful to the Netherlands for all of its assistance, as well as for its support of Ukraine’s Peace Formula and the humanitarian initiative,” Zelensky said on X.During our call, [*@MinPres*](https://twitter.com/MinPres?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mark Rutte and I discussed efforts to maintain European unity.We also discussed the importance of continuing military and financial assistance to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression.In this regard, the Netherlands' recent decision to… [*pic.twitter.com/kjNPF4DD7M*](https://t.co/kjNPF4DD7M) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1728047091841155454?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Up to 25,000 tons of graine destined for Nigeria, Kyiv says03:00 , Alexander Butler Up to 25,000 tons of grain will be sent to Nigeria from Ukraine, according to Ukraine’s foreign ministry.“In cooperation with UN WFP, in a few days, the loading of vessel with 25K tons of grain to Nigeria will start, as part of the #GrainFromUkraine initiative. “Ukraine is focused on expanding the list of recipient states and is actively considering supplying 12,5K tons to Somalia,” Ukraine’s foreign ministry said.In cooperation with UN [*@WFP*](https://twitter.com/WFP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , in a few days, the loading of vessel with 25K tons of grain to [*#Nigeria*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Nigeria?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) will start, as part of the [*#GrainFromUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GrainFromUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) initiative.Ukraine is focused on expanding the list of recipient states and is actively considering supplying 12,5K tons to Somalia. [*pic.twitter.com/25PVsomHM2*](https://t.co/25PVsomHM2) — MFA of Ukraine (@MFA\_Ukraine) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1728050850134622492?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Strengthening of Ukraine aids European security, Kyiv says02:00 , Alexander Butler The strengthening of Ukraine’s military industry is also an investment into European and global security, a Ukrainian official said.“Strengthening Ukrainian military industry is an investment into European and global security, not just Ukraine’s. Our state is a reliable partner in ensuring stability,” Andriy Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian president’s office, said.Strengthening Ukrainian military industry is an investment into European and global security, not just Ukraine's. Our state is a reliable partner in ensuring stability.— Andriy Yermak (@AndriyYermak) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/AndriyYermak/status/1728072484149252597?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine prepares army mobilisation reforms as war drags on01:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine is drawing up reforms to its programme for mobilising troops as the war with Russia rages on with no end in sight, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.“The plan will be worked out and all the answers will be there -next week I will see this plan,” he said. Kyiv does not disclose its troop losses or the workings of its mobilisation programme which has been under way since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Zelensky said he had ordered senior officials to draft proposals.Ukrainian resident sentenced to 15 years for aiding Russia00:01 , Alexander Butler A Ukrainian resident was sentenced to 15 years in prison for passing information to Russia and aiding strikes on Vinnytsia, the Prosecutor General’s Office said.The man was found guilty of treason on account of providing Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) with information on local military and civilian infrastructure.The prosecutors pointed to a period between May and June 2023 when the sentenced resident spied on a local defense company’s facility. He also reportedly scanned WiFi networks and cell towers near military facilities using specialized software.Zelensky names ‘three victories’ Ukraine needs on international frontFriday 24 November 2023 23:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine needed to secure three key “victories” abroad, including the approval of major aid packages from the US Congress and European Union, and a formal start of accession talks to join the bloc.“We need three victories. The first one is the victory with US Congress. It’s a challenge, it’s not easy but Ukraine is doing everything,” Zelensky said.“The second is we need the help from the EU on the 50bn euro package,” he added. “And the third is to open a dialogue about our future membership.”President Joe Biden asked Congress to approve many billions of dollars in assistance for Ukraine last month, but Kyiv funding was omitted from a stop-gap spending bill passed last week, raising concerns it may not get through.A vocal bloc of Republicans oppose sending more aid to Ukraine. Opponents of the aid have said US taxpayer money should be spent at home, but a majority of Republicans and Democrats in Congress still support supplying aid.Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflictFriday 24 November 2023 22:00 , Alexander Butler Slovakia’s new prime minister, Robert Fico, said on Friday he considers the war between Ukraine and Russia a frozen conflict that cannot be solved by sending arms to the Ukrainian armed forces.Fico ended his country’s military aid for Ukraine after his new government was sworn in on 25 October.After meeting his Czech counterpart, Petr Fiala, in Prague on Friday, he said he would prefer the Russian and Ukrainian sides sit at a negotiation table. He didn’t say how to achieve that.[*Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-robert-fico-russia-prague-b2453008.html) Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'Friday 24 November 2023 21:00 , Alexander Butler Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday announced a plan to endorse a national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence, emphasizing that it’s essential to prevent a Western monopoly.Speaking at an AI conference in Moscow, Putin noted that “it’s imperative to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable and transparent artificial intelligence systems that are also safe for humans.”“Monopolistic dominance of such foreign technology in Russia is unacceptable, dangerous and inadmissible,” Mr Putin said.[*Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-russia-moscow-ukraine-b2453029.html) Pictured: Ukrainians sit atop German leapord tanksFriday 24 November 2023 20:00 , Alexander ButlerRussia warns Moldova for joining EU sanctionsFriday 24 November 2023 19:00 , Alexander Butler Russia has vowed to retaliate against Moldova for joining European Union sanctions against it.“We regard this as yet another hostile step by the Moldovan leadership, which is fully integrated into the anti-Russian campaign of the ‘collective West’,” the Russian foreign ministry said.“Its aim is the complete destruction of Russian-Moldovan relations, which, through the fault of official Chisinau, are already in a very deplorable state.”Denmark gives Ukraine £300m in military supportFriday 24 November 2023 18:00 , Alexander Butler Denmark will increase its military support for Ukraine by £302m this year, its defence ministry has said.This is in addition to the £629m it has already pledged to spend on military donations for Kyiv.Interestingly, Denmark, which is a NATO member, said it would include this funding for Ukraine towards its alliance obligations.Putin calls on Russia to rival West in AI developmentFriday 24 November 2023 17:07 , Alexander Butler Russian president Vladimir Putin has urged his country to rival the West in its development of artificial technology.“In the very near future, as one of the first steps, a presidential decree will be signed and a new version of the national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence will be approved,” Mr Putin said.More than 150 ships travel through Black Sea grain corridorFriday 24 November 2023 16:35 , Alexander Butler More than 150 ships carrying grain and other cargo have now travelled through Ukraine’s Black Sea corridor, according to the US ambassador in Kyiv.“As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world,” ambassador Bridget A. Brink said on X.As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world. [*pic.twitter.com/KQvupHiXo7*](https://t.co/KQvupHiXo7) — Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/USAmbKyiv/status/1728000209941041391?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Full report: Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture eastern cityFriday 24 November 2023 15:56 , Andy Gregory Ukraine launched one of the biggest drone attacks on the Moscow-annexed Crimean Peninsula since the full-scale war that started with Russia’s invasion 21 months ago, Russian officials said Friday.At the same time, Ukrainian officials reported that the Kremlin’s forces escalated their weekslong and costly attempt to storm Avdiivka, a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine.The stepped-up efforts came as both sides are keen to show they are not deadlocked as the fighting approaches 2024.Illia Novikov has the full report:[*Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-crimea-moscow-b2452885.html) More than 150 ships have passed through Black Sea corridor, says US diplomatFriday 24 November 2023 13:29 , Andy Gregory Some 153 ships have so far passed through Ukraine’s humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea since Russia pulled out of the UN-brokered grain deal in July, the US ambassador in Kyiv has said.As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world. [*pic.twitter.com/KQvupHiXo7*](https://t.co/KQvupHiXo7) — Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/USAmbKyiv/status/1728000209941041391?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Germany extends protection status for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** until March 2025

The residence permits of refugees from Ukraine who fled the war and received protection status in Germany will be extended until March 2025, the interior ministry has said.

The Bundesrat upper house of parliament had approved the decree from the ministry on Friday, the ministry said in a statement.

This means that those affected do not have to apply for an extension of their residence status, and no associated appointments with the immigration authorities are necessary, it added.

Dutch minister says she hopes aid to Ukraine will continue despite election outcome

Dutch defence minister Kajsa Ollongren has said she hoped the country’s military support to Ukraine would continue even under a new government led by anti-EU populist Geert Wilders – who has said the Dutch should stop providing Kyiv with arms.

Ms Ollongren said Mr Wilders’ victory in this week’s elections had led to concerned phone calls from colleagues around Europe asking whether the Dutch stance on Ukraine would change.

“In the Netherlands there is broad support for our help to Ukraine,” she told reporters on Friday. “I hope and expect this will not change in the new parliament. But the PVV is now the largest party and they have never been enthusiastic about support to Ukraine. They have even been pro-Russia at times. So that has me worried.”

The Dutch government last week earmarked an additional €2bn in military aid for Ukraine in 2024, taking total support since the start of the Russian invasion to around €7.5bn.

It is still unclear how Dutch talks that began on Friday on the formation of a new government will unfold, but none of the PVV’s potential coalition partners share his views on ending support for Ukraine.

Moscow accuses Ukraine of launching huge drone attack on Crimea

Ukraine has launched one of its largest drone attacks on Crimea since Moscow’s invasion last February, Russian officials have claimed.

Vladimir Saldo, governor in Russian-occupied parts of Kherson, said claimed dozens of drones were shot down over the region and in northern Crimea after Ukraine launched a major attack early on Friday.

The Russian defence ministry said air defences downed 13 Ukrainian drones over Crimea and three more over southern Russia’s Volgograd region.

Hopes fade for quick end to Polish lorry protests, as two Ukrainian drivers die in cold

Ukraine’s top hauliers’ union has warned that hopes of a rapid end to Polish lorry driver protests at the border were fading, as Kyiv prepared to evacuate its drivers stranded in Poland.

Two Ukrainian drivers have died and thousands of lorries have been stuck for days in the winter cold as Polish truckers blocked the roads to four crossings on the border.

“Frankly speaking, the more we talk to them the less hope we have,” Leonid Kostiuchenko, president of the Ukrainian Association of International Carriers, told Ukrainian broadcasters.

“I spoke to the leader of the protesters and his attitude is that we will block for such a long time that you will ... celebrate New Year in a queue. I don’t understand this humour.”

The Polish truckers say they are losing out to Ukrainian companies who offer a cheaper rate and are now transporting goods within the European Union, and not just back and forth to Ukraine.

Russian and Chinese executives holding secret talks on underwater tunnel to Crimea

Russian and Chinese business executives have been secretly discussing the construction of an underwater tunnel from Russia to annexed Crimea, Ukraine’s security services claim.

Kyiv claims to have intercepted transmissions about plans to build a vast tunnel under the Kerch strait, as Vladimir Putin’s prized 11-mile bridge there comes under sustained Ukrainian attacks.

The emails – handed to the Washington Post, which claims to have corroborated them in its own reporting – suggest one of China’s largest construction companies has indicated its willingness to be involved, and mention meetings with Chinese delegates in Crimea.

The emails also reportedly reveal efforts to maintain secrecy, with one emphasising that the company will participate only under a “strict provision of complete confidentiality”, with its name will be replaced by “another, unaffiliated legal entity” on any contracts. Another email mentions a Chinese bank willing to “convert its dollar funds into rubles for their transfer to Crimea to fund [consortium] projects”, The Post reports.

Experts told the newspaper that any such construction would likely not be completed for many years – but that this may well fit into Mr Putin’s longer-term planning for the Ukrainian peninsula illegally seized by Russia in 2014.

Kremlin expresses concern over Nato calls for military ‘Schengen Zone'

Nato’s desire to create a military equivalent of the Schengen Zone has ratcheted up tensions and is a cause for concern, the Kremlin has said.

The chief of Nato’s logistics command, Lieutenant-General Alexander Sollfrank, told Reuters in an interview on Thursday that he would like to see such a zone, as he was worried that too much red tape across Europe was hindering troop movements.

Mr Sollfrank said it was a problem that could cause major delays were a conflict with Russia to erupt.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov retorted on Friday that Russia would respond if the proposal became a reality.

Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in fierce battle for Avdiivka

Russia’s forces have halted their fighting at hotspots on the frontline as the war in Ukraine entered its 22nd month on Friday, my colleagueArpan Raireports.

Russian forces continued to pound the battered Ukrainian town of Avdiivka but were unable to breach the defence of Ukraine’s troops as heavy fighting engulfed Bakhmut, military officials said.

“Basically, nothing has changed. Everything is very tough. As regards the city, there is an average number of eight to 16 to 18 attacks per day. Sometimes 30. We don’t have the time to count them,” said Vitaliy Barabash, head of Avdiivka’s military administration.

Russia’s troops have unleashed “the fiercest” attacks on Avdiivka – Moscow’s newest target after the bloody battle of Bakhmut.

“I am pleased the defence line has been holding for a month and a half. It has not been breached, no matter what they say,” Mr Barabash said in a daily update of fighting on Thursday.

[*Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in battle for Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-avdiivka-bakhmut-latest-b2452727.html)

Pictured: Snow hits Kyiv and hampers efforts on frontline

Snow has been pictured falling as far west as Kyiv in recent days, with Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky warning that the changing weather would make the situation more difficult on the frontline.

Finland closes all but one crossing on Russian border

Finland has temporarily closed all but one of its eight passenger crossings to Russia.

Helsinki has accused Russia of funnelling asylum-seekers to its border, after more than 700 people from nations such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria have entered Finland from Russia in recent weeks.

Having last week closed four border stations, Finland overnight closed all remaining passenger crossings except its northernmost one – Raja-Jooseppi, in the Arctic region – for a month.

Raja-Jooseppi opened its gates for traffic this morning and will continue to accept asylum applications during its four daily opening hours, the Finnish Border Guard said.

No migrants arrived overnight outside opening hours, it added.

The European Union’s border agency Frontex said on Thursday it would deploy 50 border guard officers and other staff to Finland along with equipment such as patrol cars to bolster control activities along the Russian border.

High inflation persists in Russia

The shelves at Moscow supermarkets are full of fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat. But many of the shoppers look at the selection with dismay as inflation makes their wallets feel empty.

Russia’s Central Bank has raised its key lending rate four times this year to try to get inflation under control and stabilize the ruble’s exchange rate as the economy weathers the effects of Russia’s military operation in Ukraine and the Western sanctions imposed as a consequence.

The last time it raised the rate – to 15 per cent, doubled that from the beginning of the year – the bank said it was concerned about prices that were increasing at an annualised pace of about 12 per cent. The bank now forecasts inflation for the full year, as well as next year, to be about 7.5 per cent.

Although that rate is high, it may be an understatement.

“If we talk in percentage terms, then, probably, (prices) increased by 25 per cent. This is meat, staple products — dairy produce, fruits, vegetables, sausages. My husband can’t live without sausage! Sometimes I’m just amazed at price spikes,” said Roxana Gheltkova, a shopper in a Moscow supermarket.

[*Russian consumers feel themselves in a tight spot as high inflation persists*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-moscow-ukraine-latvia-b2452757.html)

Putin’s troops suffering mass casualties ‘well behind the front line’, says UK

Ukrainian long-range precision strikes are inflicting mass casualties among Vladimir Putin’s forces gathering in large groups “well behind the frontline”, as lengthy deployments to the front leave commanders with “an acute dilemma” of whether to keep troops separate or arrange events to boost morale, the UK has claimed.

“Russian forces in Ukraine continue to suffer mass casualties from Ukrainian long-range precision strikes well behind the front line,” said Britain’s Ministry of Defence.

“On 10 November 2023, likely over 70 Russian troops were killed in a strike on a convoy of trucks 23km behind the front line in the village of Hladkivka, Kherson Oblast. Subsequently, on 19 November 2023, a strike on Russian troops attending an award ceremony or concert in Kumachove, 60km inside Russian-controlled territory, likely caused tens of casualties.

“Ukraine has also suffered similar incidents: a Russian ballistic missile killed 19 members of Ukraine’s 128th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade at a medal ceremony on 3 November 2023.

“Deployed soldiers are typically well aware of the ranges of their adversary’s weapons systems. However, faced with the reality of very long combat deployments, commanders face an acute dilemma.

“They must balance the best practice of keeping the troops dispersed, and less vulnerable to strikes, and the day-to-day requirement to gather units together to conduct administration and to maintain morale.”

Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report

Vladimir Putin has reportedly pardoned two Russian men convicted of cannibalism after they deployed to the frontline in the war with Ukraine.

One of the men, Denis Gorin, was recruited into a private military company after signing a contract with the Russian ministry of defence but is known to have been convicted thrice for murdering at least four people between 2003 and 2022. He was also convicted of eating the remains of his victims along with his brother, reported Sibir Realii, a news outlet aligned with Radio Free Europe.

Another man, Nikolai Ogolobyak, was convicted of ritual murders, according to the Russian media reports.

He was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2019 for murdering four teenagers and then consuming their remains. The 33-year-old man was reportedly pardoned this week by the Russian president for fighting in the invasion of Ukraine.

My colleague Arpan Rai has the full report here:

Estonia accuses Russia of weaponising immigration at Europe’s borders

Estonia has accused Russia of weaponising immigration on Europe’s eastern borders amid a rise in the number of asylum seekers trying to enter its territory and Finland.

Speaking during a meeting in Stockholm of Nordic and Baltic defence ministers, Hanno Pevkur, Estonia’s defence minister, claimed the hundreds of people who had arrived at the borders of the two countries in recent weeks were a “fully state-orchestrated” operation by Moscow.

Latvia’s defence minister, Andris SprÅ«ds, went a step further, blaming the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, who he described as the “puppet master”.

Ukrainian embassy asks Warsaw to unblock border following 2nd driver's death

The Ukrainian embassy in Poland appealed to Warsaw to end a haulers’ blockade at the Polish-Ukrainian border after a second trucker died while waiting in the line, Ambassador Vasyl Zvarych said.

Polish protesters have been blocking the movement of cargo vehicles at several border crossings with Ukraine since early November in a protest against the EU’s liberalization of transport rules for Ukrainian trucks.

EU border agency to bolster Finland's border

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) plans to deploy 50 border guard officers and other staff, as well as equipment, to Finland amid a growing migrant crisis on the border with Russia, the agency announced on Nov. 23.

November saw an unusually high number of third-country asylum seekers coming to the Finnish border from Russia.

Helsinki accused Moscow of orchestrating the migrant influx as retribution for the country’s entry to NATO and moved to close all but one border crossing with its eastern neighbor.

Ukraine sanctions over 300 Russian, foreign companies

Ukraine has introduced economic sanctions against more than 300 companies around the world, President Volodymyr Zelensky announced.

A number of energy companies from across Russia have been targeted by five-year sanctions, while sanctions lasting 10 years were imposed on 87 individuals, among them Ukrainian citizens.

A separate decree imposed 10-year sanctions on Swiss, Cypriot, British, Uzbek, and Russian citizens, as well as companies based in Malta, China, Turkey, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

**Load-Date:** November 25, 2023

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin suffers serious losses in largest offensive in months*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DC-HS01-JBNF-W26S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Vishwam Sankaran and Alex Ross

**Highlight:** The war has proved costly for both Russia and Ukraine

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has lost 127 tanks, 239 armoured personnel vehicles (APVs) and 161 artillery systems in a week, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) has said as [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) launches a sustained assault in the east of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

[*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ’s forces lost eight tanks, 25 APVs and 33 artillery systems in the past day, Ukraine’s General Staff said on Sunday.

The Independent cannot independently confirm Kyiv’s numbers which come after Putin claimed Ukraine‘s counteroffensive “completely failed”.

“As for the counteroffensive, which is allegedly stalling, it has failed completely,” Putin said in video remarks posted to social media by a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) journalist Pavel Zarubin.

Russia currently controls about 17.5% of Ukrainian territory and a four-month-old Ukrainian counteroffensive this year has resulted in almost no net territorial gains.

Key Points

Russia’s ‘exhausted’ troops ‘suffer significant losses in key town Avdiivka’ British artillery guns aren’t used due to shortage of ammunition Ukraine hit two Russian vessels, says intelligence source Death toll from Hroza missile strike rises to 59, Ukraine says

At least six killed in Russian airstrikes

A teenager is among at least six people killed in Russian airstrikes[*across*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-poland-latest-news-b2430234.html) [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) over the past 24-hour period, local officials said on Sunday.

Of these, two people were killed and three were injured in the [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) area after [*Russia fired*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-poland-latest-news-b2430234.html) more than [*100 shells over the weekend*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-poland-latest-news-b2430234.html) , local governor Oleksandr Prokudin said.

Two more people died in the [*Donetsk*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/donetsk) area, local officials said. An airstrike in the [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) region killed a 57-year-old man and a 54-year-old woman, and also destroyed their home.

A 14-year-old boy was killed in a separate incident after a mine exploded in a field in the Mykolaiv region, interior minister Ihor Klymenko said. Another 12-year-old boy was also injured in the attack.

[*Russian attacks kill six in Ukraine as Kyiv ramps up drone counterstrikes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-drone-strikes-b2430290.html)

Russia revoking ratification of nuclear test ban treaty

Russia is revoking ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty because the irresponsible attitude of the United States to global security, the speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament said on Tuesday.

President Vladimir Putin, who earlier this month suggested that Russia revoke ratification of the 1996 treaty because the United States had not ratified it, said he was not ready to say whether or not Russia would resume nuclear testing.

“In the interests of ensuring the security of our country, we are withdrawing the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty,” Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said ahead of a debate and parliamentary vote on revoking ratification.

Volodin said that while Russia had ratified the treaty in 2000, Washington had failed to ratify because of its “irresponsible attitude to global security issues”.

“The Russian Federation will do everything to protect its citizens and to maintain global strategic parity,” Volodin said.

While Russia is revoking ratification, it will remain a signatory and will continue to cooperate with the test ban treaty organisation and the global monitoring system which alerts the world to any test.

A resumption of nuclear tests by Russia, the United States or China could indicate the start of a new nuclear arms race between the big powers who stopped nuclear testing in the years following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

As the conflict in Israel rages on, the world must not forget about Ukraine

Russian troops are shelling the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka with such relentlessness that emergency workers have been unable to enter destroyed buildings to remove the bodies. Ukrainian generals have said that fighting in eastern frontline towns has “worsened” significantly in the last few days, a consequence of Ukraine’s promised counteroffensive having been far less successful than had been hoped (Vladimir Putin, for all that his words are worth, said on Sunday that it had “failed completely”).

Ukrainian soldiers have been reduced to firing their high-powered, long-range howitzer guns, supplied to them by the UK, just once a day, owing to a shortage of ammunition to put in them.

This, but for horrifying events in Israel and Gaza, would have been last week’s news. There is always a concern that when people are forced to reprioritise what they care about that governments follow suit. That somehow events in Israel and Gaza might lessen the resolve and the unity of Western countries to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Reality doesn’t quite work like that. Commitments made are not unmade. Promises do not simply get broken. Not least as, for now, the horrific terrorist attack in Israel and the ongoing retribution do not come with extraordinary demands for assistance from Israel’s allies.

Read more below:

[*Editorial: As the conflict in Israel rages on, we must not forget about Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/israel-ukraine-gaza-war-conflict-shelling-b2430065.html)

Government told it must make visa decisions for Ukrainians in UK soon

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 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, 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.

“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.”

Russian governor reported to police for speaking out over Putin’s war

A Russian governor who said that Moscow had not prepared for its invasion of Ukraine and did not “need” the continuing war has been reported to the police.

Natalya Komarova, a member of president Vladimir Putin’s governing United Russia party and the governor of Russian Khanty-Masiysk region, on Saturday criticised the conflict that has stretched to nearly 600 days during a meeting with residents of the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk.

Ms Komarova was confronted by the wife of a mobilised Russian man fighting in Ukraine who had asked why her husband was not provided with the necessary equipment to fight.

“Are you asking me (why your husband does not have equipment) knowing that I’m the governor and not the minister of defence?” the official said.

She added: “As a whole, we did not prepare for this war. We don’t need it. We were building a completely different world, so in this regard, there will certainly be some inconsistencies and unresolved issues,” according to a video of the event posted on social media.

Read more below:

[*Russian governor reported to police for speaking out over Putin’s ‘unnecessary’ war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-governor-police-against-ukraine-war-putin-latest-b2430240.html)

'We cannot allow Ukraine to lose the war for economic reasons’

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said support for Ukraine remained a “top priority” for the US and Europe, calling it crucial to underpin Ukraine‘s military battle against Russia’s invasion.

She said the Biden administration was committed to supporting Ukraine “for as long as it takes” and would fight to ensure a bipartisan majority in the Congress enacted “robust” and uninterrupted assistance for the war-torn country.

“We cannot allow Ukraine to lose the war for economic reasons when it has shown an ability to succeed on the battlefield,” Yellen said in remarks prepared for her third meeting with the Eurogroup euro zone finance ministers.

Yellen’s meeting with the Eurogroup comes as the Biden administration prepares to push through a new military assistance package worth well over $2 billion for both Ukraine and Israel, which is preparing a ground invasion after a deadly Oct. 7 attack by the militant Hamas group that rules Gaza.

ICYMI: Latest MoD intelligence update

The purported Private Military Company (PMC) Redut is recruiting mercenaries under the guise of “volunteers”, including former Wagner personnel, the Ministry of Defence has said in its latest update.

“The Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) likely supervises and finances the group’s activities, including its recruitment,” the MoD said on Monday morning.

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 16 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/Up4ldmPd9Z*](https://t.co/Up4ldmPd9Z) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/MIIFxg5O1D*](https://t.co/MIIFxg5O1D) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 16, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1713850808431775939?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russian official to visit North Korea amid weapons claims

Russia’s foreign minister will visit North Korea this week, days after the United States claimed Pyongyang had delivered munitions and military equipment to Russia for use in the fighting in Ukraine.

The ministry said Sergei Lavrov will be in North Korea on Wednesday and Thursday, but did not specify any meetings or the aims of the trip.

The White House said on Friday that more than 1,000 containers of equipment and ammunition have been sent to Russia from North Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un travelled to Russia last month to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites, triggering speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia’s munition stores that have been drained by the protracted conflict with Ukraine.

Putin in call with Netanyahu

Russian president Vladimir Putin has told Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a phone call on Monday that Russia was ready to help end the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians, the Kremlin said.

“Vladimir Putin informed (Netanyahu) about the steps Russia is taking to help normalize the situation, prevent further escalation of violence and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip,” the Kremlin said.

Earlier on Monday Putin discussed the crisis with the leaders of Iran, Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian Authority and said any form of violence against civilians was unacceptable, the Kremlin said. In these discussions Putin reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to ending the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Russia ‘aiming to recapture territory in the north east'

Russia is aiming to break through defences in the Kupiansk-Lyman sector of the front line after a sharp increase in fighting, the commander of Ukraine‘s ground forces said

Video footage released by the ground forces showed General Oleksandr Syrskyi meeting troops at an undisclosed location in woodland, and quoted him as saying fighting in the northeastern Kupiansk-Lyman sector had “significantly escalated”.

“The enemy is preparing, seriously preparing for offensive actions, bringing in staff,” Syrskyi said in the footage posted on the Telegram messaging app. “The main goal is to break through our troops’ defences and recapture our territory.”

Ukrainian forces recaptured the city of Kupiansk and nearby areas nearly a year ago, ending months of Russian occupation following Moscow’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, but Russian forces have gone on the attack in the region again.

The Ukrainian military reported in its daily update that fighting was raging along the eastern front, particularly around Kupiansk, and near Avdiivka and Mariinka in the Donetsk region.

Russia went on the offensive around Avdiivka last week and fighting there has been intense. A strategically important town with a large coking plant, Avdiivka is located in the northern outskirts of the Donetsk region, much of which has been occupied by Russia.

Putin condemns violence against civilians in Middle East

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the escalation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict with the leaders of Iran, Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian Authority on Monday and said any form of violence against civilians was unacceptable, the Kremlin said.

In the conversations, “there was also serious concern about the likelihood of the conflict escalating into a regional war”, it said.

Putin reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to co-ordinate with all “constructive partners” to stop the fighting between Israel and the Palestinians.

Republican House speaker skeptical over US funding for Ukraine

Some Republicans in Congress have questioned funding for Kyiv, including Ohio Representative Jim Jordan, who has been nominated to be House speaker and leads a hardline Republican party caucus backed by former president and likely 2024 nominee Donald Trump.

Some EU countries including Hungary have also challenged Brussels’s plans.

Ukrainian Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko told Reuters on Saturday that Ukraine is finding it harder to secure financial support.

Yellen lauded the European Union’s plans for a 50 billion euro Ukraine Facility to provide sustained economic and reconstruction support, saying that economic support should have maximum concessionality, meaning low or zero interest rates.

“Flexibility is also important, as it could enable front-loading budget support in the immediate term when it is needed most,” she said.

Monday 16 October 2023 15:32 , Sam Rkaina U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said support for Ukraine remained a “top priority” for the United States and Europe, calling it crucial to underpin Kyiv‘s military battle against Russia’s invasion.

She said the Biden administration was committed to supporting Ukraine “for as long as it takes” and would fight to ensure a bipartisan majority in the U.S. Congress enacted “robust” and uninterrupted assistance for the war-torn country.

“We cannot allow Ukraine to lose the war for economic reasons when it has shown an ability to succeed on the battlefield,” Yellen said in remarks prepared for her third meeting with the Eurogroup euro zone finance ministers.

Yellen’s meeting with the Eurogroup comes as the Biden administration prepares to push through a new military assistance package worth well over $2 billion for both Ukraine and Israel, which is preparing a ground invasion after a deadly Oct. 7 attack by the militant Hamas group that rules Gaza.

Yellen did not address the escalating crisis in the Middle East in her remarks, but told Sky News earlier that America “certainly” could afford to stand with both Israel and Ukraine.

Russia claims to take out Ukrainian aerial targets

Russia has said that it has taken out Ukrainian aerial targets over Bakhmut using surface and missiles.

Footage released by the Russian Ministry of Defence reportedly shows Russian Strela-10 systems firing missiles into the sky and hitting Ukrainian unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV).

The Russian MoD said “Russian Airborne Troops are in control of the sky over Artyomovsk preventing the enemy from conducting any surveillance and dropping ammunition on Russian positions.

“Ivanovo-based paratroopers have equipped a system of aerial surveillance posts which make it possible to timely detect aircraft of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. After that, the Strela-10 SAM systems acquire aerial targets and engage them.

“Air defence crews of Ivanovo-based paratroopers eliminate dozens of unmanned aerial vehicles of the enemy on a daily basis. Moreover, one of the Strela-10 crews have managed to neutralise about 50 enemy UAVs in one month.”

Russia recruiting ‘volunteer’ units

Russia has been accused of recruting mercenaries under the guide of volunteers by the UK’s Ministry of Defence.

The MoD said the private military company Redut is likely to be supervised and financed by the Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate on activities including the recruitment of soldiers.

It adds that the group has been involved in combat operations in Donetsk, Kharkiv, Kyiv and Lunhansk, and has more than 7,000 personnel.

In a statement, the MoD said: “At present, Redut is one of a number of private miltary companies and volunteer corps units being utilised by the Russian Ministry of Defence to augment Russian regular forces.

“It is a realistic possibility that the Russian Ministry of Defence’s practise of recruiting through “volunteer” units has contributed to Russia avoiding further unpopular mobilisations.”

Russia's assault on a key eastern Ukraine city is weakening, Kyiv claim

An attempt by Russian forces to storm a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine appears to be running out of steam, Kyiv officials claimed Monday, as the Kremlin’s war entered its 600th day.Ukrainian forces repelled 15 Russian attacks from four directions on Avdiivka over the previous 24 hours, the Ukrainian General Staff said.That compared with up to 60 attacks a day in the middle of last week, according to Vitalii Barabash, head of the city administration. The slackening suggests the Russian effort to capture Avdiivka has “deflated,” Barabash said.

A Washington-based think tank broadly concurred with that assessment. “Russian forces continued offensive operations aimed at encircling Avdiivka — but have yet to make further gains amid a likely decreasing tempo of Russian operations in the area,” the Institute for the Study of War said in analysis published late Sunday.

Avdiivka lies in the northern suburbs of the city of Donetsk, in a region of the same name that Russian forces partially occupy. Avdiivka’s location grants Ukrainian forces artillery advantages over the city and could serve as a springboard for them to liberate Donetsk.

600th day of the full-scale war -in numbers

Russia invadedUkraine on 24th February 2022 in what the Kremlin is still calling a “special military operation”.

The General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported that between 24th February 2022 and 16th October 2023, Russia had lost about 288,630 personnel, 4,965 tanks, 9,385 armoured combat vehicles, 6,910 artillery units, 814 multiple launch rocket systems, 547 air defence systems, 318 warplanes, 317 helicopters, 5,280 drones, 1,531 cruise missiles, 20 warships, 1 submarine, 9,271 motor vehicles and fuel tankers, and 981 units of special equipment.

Russia has claimed that its casualties have been much lower but provides infrequent updates on its latest figures.

Russian helicopter ‘destroyed by paratroopers'

A video of the burning wreckage of a Russian Mi-8 helicopter has been released by Ukraine’s military, which says the aircraft was shot down by paratroopers.

The12-second [*video*](https://t.me/osirskiy/392) of the helicopter engulfed in flames was shared by General Syrskyi on his official Telegram channel late on Sunday.

The location and the time of the destruction of the Russian helicopter was not immediately clear.

[*Ukrainian forces release video of downed Russian Mi-8 helicopter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-mi-8-helicopter-crash-latest-b2430259.html)

Slovakia support for Ukraine

Slovakia’s former Prime Minister Robert Fico and his SMER-SSD party will sign a coalition agreement to form a new government with the centre-left HLAS and nationalist SNS parties on Monday, SMER said.

Fico, a three-time prime minister, won an election on September 30 with pledges to halt military aid to Ukraine.

He struck a deal with the coalition parties last week and is expected to lead a new government.

The parties are seeking to have an administration in place ahead of a European Union summit this month where Ukraine will be high on the agenda.

Pictures: Latest images from the Ukraine-Russia war

Ukraine evacuating residents from Gaza

Ukraine is working to evacuate nearly 260 of its citizens from Gaza and to fly other Ukrainians out of Israel, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said in his nightly address on Sunday.

Ukraine‘s embassy in Israel said on social media on Saturday that 207 Ukrainian citizens, including 63 children, were evacuated from Tel Aviv to Romania on Saturday and that another flight would take 155 people to Romania on Sunday.

Putin set to meet Chinese leaders this week

Russian President Vladimir Putin is expected to meet Chinese leaders in Beijing this week on a visit that underscores China’s economic and diplomatic support for Moscow during its war in Ukraine.

The two countries have forged an informal alliance against the United States and other democratic nations that is [*complicated by the Israel-Hamas conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-strip-evacuation-israel-palestine-who-b2430265.html%22%20title=%22Evacuation%20of%20Gaza%20a%20‘death%20sentence’%20for%202,000%20sick%20and%20injured%20Palestinians%20in%20hospital,%20says%20WHO).

China has sought to balance its ties with Israel with its economic relations with Iran and Syria, which are strongly backed by Russia.

Mr Putin’s visit is also a show of support for Chinese leader Xi Jinping’s signature Belt and Road drive to build infrastructure and expand China’s overseas influence.

The Russian leader will be among the highest profile guests at a gathering marking the 10th anniversary of Mr Xi’s announcement of the policy, which has laden countries such as Zambia and Sri Lanka with heavy debt after they signed contracts with Chinese companies to build roads, airports and other public works.

Chinese officials have suggested he will be arriving late on Monday.

Displaced children reunited with Ukrainian families

Three Ukrainian children who had been taken to Russia are being reunited with family back in their home country, under a mechanism run by Qatar.

Qatari diplomats in Moscow aim to return many more children from Russia to Ukraine, a Qatari official briefed on the plans told Reuters on Monday.

Qatar on Friday facilitated the return of another Ukrainian child, aged 7, who was reunited with his grandmother and is en route to Ukraine via Estonia, the official said. The other three children are a boy aged 2, a 9-year-old boy, and a girl aged 17.

Kyiv has identified 20,000 children as taken to Russia or Russian-held territory without the consent of family or guardians.

The return of these first four children tests a system the Gulf Arab state established after months of secret talks with Moscow and Kyiv, according to the Qatari official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity due to the sensitivity of the process.

Russia’s commissioner for children’s rights, Maria Lvova-Belova, shared a short initial list of Ukrainian children to be returned with a team of Qatari diplomats who verified each child’s identity, the official said.

About 400 children have been returned to Ukraine since Moscow’s invasion began in February 2022, but the United Nations human rights agency raised concerns last week that there was no system to facilitate the return.

Overnight attack by Russia in Ukraine

Airstrikes from Russia continued overnight with five missiles and 12 kamikaze drones launched by Moscow toward Ukraine, Kyiv said early on Monday.

Ukraine’s air force said the missiles, of which it shot down two, targeted northern and eastern regions, while the drones, of which 11 were downed, were launched in several directions with a particular focus on western Ukraine.

The governor of the eastern region of Poltava, Filip Pronin, also said his region had been attacked by drones and missiles, and that three civilians had been hospitalised as a result.

“Fortunately, no civilian or critical infrastructure was hit. However, missile fragments damaged several private homes,” he wrote on the Telegram messaging service.

Russia also carried out artillery shelling and air strikes in the Zaporizhzhia region, damaging several residential buildings and infrastructure and injuring one elderly woman, the governor there said.

Two killed in Avdiivka

Two civilians were killed in Russian attacks on the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka on Saturday, the Donetsk region administration said on Sunday.

In one of its few offensives in months, Russia’s military pressed on for a fifth day with [*assaults*](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/top-ukraine-general-says-fighting-northeast-has-significantly-worsened-2023-10-14/) on Avdiivka, with shelling so fierce that emergency crews were unable to recover the dead from wrecked buildings.

The administration of the Donetsk region said on Sunday on the Telegram messaging app that one more person was injured elsewhere in the region.

The General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces said on Sunday its forces had repelled 15 Russian attacks near Avdiivka, Tonenke and Pervomaiske in the Donetsk region, while Russian forces launched heavy air strikes in the area.

Oleh Sinehubov, governor of the Kharkiv region also in Ukraine’s east, said on Sunday a 54-year-old woman and a 57-year-old man were killed and one woman injured in an overnight Russian air attack.

Russia bombards Sumy Oblast but no Ukraine casualties

Ninety-three explosions were reported in Sumy Oblast on Sunday according to Governor Volodymyr Artiukh.

Artiukh noted that, as a result of Russian shelling in the region, civilian infrastructure and homes were damaged. No casualties were reported.

“Enemy military aircraft, kamikaze drones, artillery systems, and salvo fire systems were used,” he said. “Over the past month of (Russian) shelling, seven civilians have died in our region, including a 13-year-old girl. Many wounded.”

Artiukh added that there are currently over 5,000 homes in Sumy Oblast that have been damaged by Russian shelling.

Sumy Oblast, which borders Russia, has been targeted by Russian forces on a near-daily basis since April 2022.

Woman killed by Russian airstrike in garden

Russian shelling killed a 58-year-old woman and wounded a 26-year-old man in [*Donetsk Oblast, the media outlet Suspilne*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kyiv-vassily-nebenzia-b2429783.html%22%20title=%22Fierce%20fighting%20persists%20in%20Ukraine’s%20east%20as%20Kyiv%20reports%20nonstop%20assaults%20by%20Russia%20on%20a%20key%20city) [*reported*](https://suspilne.media/594245-vnaslidok-obstriliv-armii-rf-v-avdiivci-zaginula-zinka-ta-poranenij-colovik-v-oceretinomu/?utm_source=copylink&utm_medium=ps).

The woman was killed in her garden when shells struck her home in the city of Avdiivka.

“A man was taken to the hospital with a concussion, fracture and shrapnel wounds for medical treatment. According to preliminary data, the Russian army shelled both settlements with artillery,” regional spokesperson Anastasia Medvedeva said.

Russian attacks on Ukraine over a 24-hour period killed six people, local officials reported Sunday.

Two people were killed and three more injured in the Kherson area after more than 100 shells bombarded the region over the weekend, local governor Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on social media.

Two guided bombs later hit key infrastructure in Kherson city, sparking a partial blackout and disruption to the area’s water supply, reported the head of the city’s military administration, Roman Mrochko.

Local officials said two more people died in the Donetsk area and that a 57-year-old man and a 54-year-old woman were killed by an airstrike that destroyed their home in the Kharkiv region.

In a separate incident, a 14-year-old boy was killed by a mine in a field in Ukraine’s Mykolaiv region, Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said. The explosion also injured another 12-year-old boy.

Fighting remained fierce across eastern Ukraine over the weekend, with Russian forces repeatedly attempting to encircle the city of Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region, military officials said.

Watch: Ex-GOP lawmaker criticises colleagues comparing Israel and Ukraine conflicts

Russian governer underfire for saying army unprepared for Ukraine war

A Russian governor was accused by critics on Sunday of “discrediting Russia’s armed forces” after telling residents in her region that the country had “no need” for its war in Ukraine.

Natalya Komarova, the governor of the Khanty-Mansiysk region and a member of President Vladimir Putin’s governing United Russia party, made the remarks during a meeting with residents in the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk on Saturday.

Critics have called for authorities to launch an investigation into her remarks, but Komarova hasn’t been detained or faced any charges so far.

A video of the event posted on social media showed the politician being confronted by the wife of a Russian soldier who said that mobilized men had been poorly equipped for the front line.

“Are you asking me (why your husband does not have equipment), knowing that I’m the governor and not the minister of defence?”, the 67-year-old said.

“As a whole, we did not prepare for this war. We don’t need it. We were building a completely different world, so in this regard, there will certainly be some inconsistencies and unresolved issues,” she said.

Putin to meet President Xi next week

President Vladimir Putin will meet his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping in Beijing this week in a rare visit from the Russian leader.

During Tuesday’s trip to Beijing, Putin will attend a forum marking 10 years of the Belt and Road Initiative, China’s global infrastructure program that has helped boost its influence worldwide.

China and Russia declared a “no limits” partnership in February 2022 when Putin visited Beijing just days before he sent tens of thousands of troops into Ukraine, triggering the deadliest land war in Europe since World War Two.

Washington and Brussels have been eyeing with alarm the relationship between China and Russia, with Beijing refusing to condemn Moscow’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, even as it has voiced support for the principle of territorial integrity.

“Over the past decade, Xi has built with Putin’s Russia the most consequential undeclared alliance in the world,” Graham Allison, professor at Harvard University and a former assistant secretary of defence under Bill Clinton, told Reuters.

“The U.S. will have to come to grips with the inconvenient fact that a rapidly rising systemic rival and a revanchist one-dimensional superpower with the largest nuclear arsenal in the world are tightly aligned in opposing the USA.”

Biden to pledge £2billion for Israel and Ukraine

White House national security adviser Jake Sullivan said on Sunday that the Biden administration hopes to push a new weapons package for Israel and Ukraine through Congress that will be significantly higher than $2 billion.

Sullivan, in an interview on CBS’s “Face the Nation,” said U.S. President Joe Biden will have intensive talks with the U.S. Congress this week on the need for the package to be approved.

Asked whether the request would be for $2 billion, as has been previously reported, Sullivan said: “The number is going to be significantly higher than that, but it will, as I said, certainly include the necessary military equipment to defend freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity in Ukraine, and to help Israel defend itself as it fights its terrorist threat.”

Some Republicans have [*already said*](https://www.reuters.com/world/us/some-us-republicans-resist-linking-israel-ukraine-aid-2023-10-11/) they would not back any Israel aid package that also contains aid for Ukraine.

Ukraine working to evacuate 260 citizens from Gaza and Israel

Ukraine is working to evacuate nearly 260 of its citizens from Gaza and to fly other Ukrainians out of Israel, President Volodymyr Zelensky said in his nightly address on Sunday.

Ukraine’s embassy in Israel said on social media on Saturday that 207 Ukrainian citizens, including 63 children, were evacuated from Tel Aviv to Romania on Saturday and that another flight would take 155 people to Romania on Sunday.

Ukrainian human rights ombudsman Dmytro Lubinets said three parties would have to approve the departure of Ukrainians from Gaza, complicating the process.

“The Palestinians need to release all Ukrainian citizens, Egypt to accept them, and Israel should not conduct any operation at this time, so that the crossing point would be safe,” he said in remarks televised on Sunday.

Russian governor reported to police for there’s ‘no need’ for the war in Ukraine

A Russian governor was accused by critics of “discrediting Russia’s armed forces” after telling residents in her region that the country had “no need” for its war in Ukraine.Natalya Komarova, the governor of the Khanty-Mansiysk region and a member of President Vladimir Putin’s governing United Russia party, made the remarks during a meeting with residents in the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk on Saturday.Critics have called for authorities to launch an investigation into her remarks, but Komarova hasn’t been detained or faced any charges so far.

Russian forces ‘bolster’ positions across Ukraine

Russian forces have “bolstered” their positions across the Ukrainian frontline, Vladimir Putin claimed. He said troops had been “improving their position” in a vast area in an interview on Russian television, which was posted on social media.

On Saturday, Kyiv reported “heated” fighting around Avdiivka Saturday, saying Russian forces had “not stopped assaulting” it for days in their attempt to surround it.

“What is happening now along the entire length of the [line of] contact is called ‘an active defence’. And our troops are improving their position at almost entire area. Quite a large area,” Putin said.

Putin: US seeking war with Russia and China is ‘nonsense'

Russian president Vladimir Putin said suggestions the US is preparing for a simultaneous war against Russia and China were “nonsense”.

“I don’t think these are healthy thoughts in the minds of healthy people, because to say that the United States is preparing for war with Russia, well we are all preparing for war because we follow the ancient principle: if you want peace, get ready for war,” he said.

“But we want peace,” Putin said with a chuckle. “Moreover, to fight with both Russia and China, it is nonsense -I don’t think it is serious. I think they are just scaring each other.”

Pictured: Donestsk

Roundup of today’s developments

British artillery guns aren’t used due to shortage of ammunition

Ukrainian soldiers can only use L119 howitzers less than one a day because of the “catastrophic” shortage of ammunition used for them.

“The British L119 is a nice gun, very comfortable to work with and accurate to fire. But we don’t have enough shells for it – last week, we fired only five shells all week.

“It is catastrophically limited. When we are in battle, we are having to weigh up very carefully whether we should use a shell or not,” an artillery commander told The Telegraph.

Putin says Ukraine’s counteroffensive “failed completely”

Today, Vladimir Putin branded Ukraine‘s counteroffensive a “failure”.

“As for the counteroffensive, which is allegedly stalling, it has failed completely,” Mr Putin said in video remarks posted to social media by a Kremlin journalist Pavel Zarubin.

“The opposing side is preparing new active offensive operations. We see it and we know it,” he added when asked about the battle for the eastern Ukrainian town of Avdiivka.

US says North Korea delivered 1,000 containers of equipment and munitions to Russia

The White House said North Korea has delivered more than 1,000 containers of military equipment and munitions to Russia.

Speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia’s munition stores drained in its protracted war with Ukraine flared last month, when Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites.

US weapons package to cost $2bn

The White House national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, said on Sunday that a new weapons package for Israel and [*Ukraine*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine) would be significantly higher than $2bn.

In an interview on CBS’s Face the Nation, said Sullivan said Joe Biden would have extensive talks with the US Congress this week on the need for the package to be approved.

Asked whether the request would be for $2 billion, Sullivan said: “Well, the number is going to be significantly higher than that, but it will, as I said, certainly include the necessary military equipment to defend freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity in Ukraine, and to help Israel defend itself as it fights its terrorist threat.”

British artillery guns aren’t used due to shortage of ammunition

British artillery guns provided to Ukraine aren’t being used on the battlefield due to a lack of ammunition, troops have claimed.

Ukrainian soldiers can only use L119 howitzers less than one a day because of the “catastrophic” shortage of ammunition used for them.

“The British L119 is a nice gun, very comfortable to work with and accurate to fire. But we don’t have enough shells for it – last week, we fired only five shells all week.

“It is catastrophically limited. When we are in battle, we are having to weigh up very carefully whether we should use a shell or not,” an artillery commander told The Telegraph.

US says North Korea delivered 1,000 containers of equipment and munitions to Russia

President Zelensky’s international aid comes after the White House said [*North Korea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/north-korea) has delivered more than 1,000 containers of military equipment and munitions to [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia’s munition stores drained in its protracted war with Ukraine flared last month, when [*Kim Jong Un*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kim-jong-un) traveled to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites.

On Friday White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said that the U.S. believes Kim is seeking sophisticated Russian weapons technologies in return for the munitions to boost North Korea’s nuclear program.

**Load-Date:** October 17, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Russia-Ukraine news – live: Putin fires barrage of missiles on Kyiv, air defence activated across country*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683X-HBB1-DY4H-K524-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:72

**Length:** 5307 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai and William Mata

**Highlight:** Air raid alarm active for over two hours as Russian missiles fired

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) activated air defence systems and sounded air raid alerts across the country after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) fired another barrage of missiles towards the besieged nation in the early hours today.

“Air defences are at work!” [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) ’s regional administration wrote on the Telegram amid explosions heard in the region.

“Keep calm! Stay in shelters until the air alarm goes off!”

Blasts have been reported in Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy so far. Locals were seen taking shelter in metro stations after the whole country came under air raid alert.

The air raid alert was sounded around 3.40am local time today and it is still on.

Serhii Shaikhet, the head of Ukrainian city Mykolaiv’s police, had warned that Russia may try to strike Ukraine with up to a hundred missiles and overnight, Ukraine’s presidential office head Andriy Yermak had urged citizens not to ignore air raid sirens.

The barrage of missiles comes just two days after a similar attack by [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces on Ukraine killed at least 23 people, including four children, after a Russian missile struck a nine-storey residential building.

Key Points

Putin’s soldiers ‘likely’ put in holes in the ground as punishment for misdemeanors Russia vows harsh response after Poland embassy school ‘seizure’ Moscow blames Ukraine for major Crimea oil depot fire Ukraine says more than 10 oil tanks destroyed by Crimea blast Ukraine controls key supply route into Bakhmut, military says

Barrage of missile fired over Kyiv, air defence activated

Air raid alerts have been issued throughout all of Ukraine by emergency services after a threat of missile strikes in the early hours today.

“The threat of a missile strike!” Kyiv’s regional administration wrote on the Telegram. “Stay in shelters.”

Andriy Yermak, head of president Volodymyr Zelensky’s office, said on the Telegram, “Take care of your safety, do not publicise the work of air defence.”

Ukrainian defenders oust Russian forces from some positions in Bakhmut

Ukrainian counterattacks have ousted Russian forces from some positions in the besieged eastern city of Bakhmut, but the situation remains “difficult”, a top Ukrainian general said in comments released Monday.

During the past few months the battle for Bakhmut has become the fulcrum of a conflict that has seen little shift in front lines since late last year, leaving both sides looking for a breakthrough.

“The situation is quite difficult,” said Col. Gen. Oleksandr Syrskyi, the commander of ground forces, in a statement on Telegram.

“At the same time, in certain parts of the city, the enemy was counterattacked by our units and left some positions.”

Syrskyi made the remarks while visiting front-line troops on Sunday, the military said.

He added that new Russian units, including paratroopers and fighters from the Wagner mercenary group, were being “constantly thrown into battle” despite taking heavy losses.

“But the enemy is unable to take control of the city,” Syrskyi said.

Russian forces have steadily made incremental gains in Bakhmut, but a Ukrainian military spokesman said on Sunday it was still possible to supply the defenders with food, ammunition and medicine.

Ukraine said on Monday its forces had repelled more than 36 enemy attacks on the part of the eastern frontline that stretches from Bakhmut to Maryinka, just west of Donetsk.

Kyiv is preparing to mount a widely expected counteroffensive to retake swathes of territory in the east and south that was occupied by Russian forces following the invasion, which Moscow calls a “special military operation”, 15 months ago.

Ukrainian warehouses reportedly storing ammunition hit

Warehouses reportedly storing ammunition at a railway depot have been struck by Russian missiles in the Ukrainian city of Pavlohrad, it is understood.

The aim seemed to be to hamper Kyiv’s preparations for its counteroffensive, which is set to launch soon.

A video posted on social media shows secondary detonations and a blaze where the strike hit.

This comes as missiles were launched by Russian strategic bombers against Ukrainian cities overnight.

The Ukrainian military reported air defence had shot down 15 out of 18 missiles launched by Russia in the early hours of Monday morning.

Russia fortifying Crimea amid fears of Ukraine’s major breakthrough – UK MoD

The recent defences erected by Vladimir Putin’s forces highlight deep concern running among Russian leaders that Ukraine could achieve a major breakthrough, the British Ministry of Defence (MoD) said.

“Since summer 2022, Russia has constructed some of the most extensive systems of military defensive works seen anywhere in the world for many decades. These defences are not just near the current front lines but have also been dug deep inside areas Russia currently controls,” the MoD said in its latest intelligence update.

It pointed to the imagery of Russia’s particular effort to fortify the northern border of occupied Crimea, including with a multi-layered defensive zone near the village of Medvedevka.

“Russia has also dug hundreds of miles of trenches well inside internationally recognised Russian territory including in the Belgorod and Kursk regions,” the ministry said.

It added: “However, some works have likely been ordered by local commanders and civil leaders in attempts to promote the official narrative that Russia is ‘threatened’ by Ukraine and Nato.”

All missiles directed at Kyiv destroyed, says Ukraine

All missiles directed at the capital were destroyed, Kyiv’s city officials wrote on Telegram.

“According to (preliminary information), no casualties among the civilian population and no destruction of residential facilities or infrastructure have been recorded,” the city administration said.

Air defence systems were also called into action to shield the Kyiv region, which is a separate administrative entity from the city, from Russian missiles, officials said.

Ukrainian media also reported blasts in the Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy regions.

Ukraine shoots down 15 out of 18 Russian missiles fired overnight

Ukrainian air defence has shot down 15 out of 18 missiles launched by Russia in the early hours today.

“Around 2.30am (1130 GMT), the Russian invaders attacked Ukraine from strategic aviation planes,” the country’s commander-in-chief of Ukraine’s armed forces Valerii Zaluzhnyi said on Telegram.

It added that 15 out of the 18 missiles launched had been destroyed.

Russia fired cruise missiles of Ð¥-101/Ð¥-555 types on Ukraine, commander Zaluzhnyi said.

Czech president offers support to Ukraine

Petr Pavel, president of the Czech Republic, has been in Ukraine over the weekend.

The Ukraine defence ministry tweeteed: “After the events of 1968, the Czechs were left to fend for themselves for more than 20 years, all because no one came to their aid.

“Ukraine has over 50 partner countries supporting it. The Russians will be pushed out much faster.”

Slovy literatury je prezident [*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) malý velký muž. Přesně věděl, kdy a jak svůj národ podpořit, i když to vypadalo ztraceně. Všiml jsem si, že se směje mnohem méně než dřív. Moc důvodů k úsměvu totiž nemá. Jemu i všem Ukrajincům bych nejvíc přál, aby se mohli zase usmívat [*pic.twitter.com/tVMVcGFYzo*](https://t.co/tVMVcGFYzo) — Petr Pavel (@prezidentpavel) [*April 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/prezidentpavel/status/1652607656849297411?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Late night explosions reported in Ukraine’s Pavlohrad 05:48 , Arpan Rai Loud explosions were heard in Dnipropetrovsk oblast’s Pavlohrad city last evening, officials said. Mayor Anatolii Vershyna confirmed explosions in the Pavlohrad region while an air raid warning was in force.Some social media users also reported powerful explosions in the city, damage to buildings and broken windows.Zelensky and Macron hold Sunday call to speak about Ukraine’s military needs05:24 , Arpan Rai Volodymyr Zelensky spoke to his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron over a phone call and discussed Ukraine’s military needs, both sides said.Mr Zelensky said he had a long and meaningful talk with Mr Macron during which the two men co-ordinated their positions on the war and on how to end the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.“I am grateful to France and Emmanuel personally for their support of our country and our people,” he said in an evening video address, in which he also thanked France for promising to send weapons to Ukraine.The French presidency said Macron had reaffirmed France’s support for Ukraine to the war-time president, and that Mr Macron had given an update on European co-ordination to give Ukraine military help.Pope Francis wraps up weekend in Hungary with plea05:00 , William Mata Pope Francis urged Hungarians to open their doors to others on Sunday, as he wrapped up a weekend visit with a plea for Europe to welcome migrants and the poor and for an end to Russia's war in Ukraine.Francis issued the appeal from the banks of the Danube as he celebrated Mass on Budapest's Kossuth Lajos Square, with the Hungarian Parliament and Budapest's famed Chain Bridge as a backdrop. The celebration provided the visual highlight of Francis' three-day visit that has been dominated by the Vatican's concern for the plight of migrants and the war in neighboring Ukraine.Vatican involved in secret Ukraine peace mission, says Pope04:48 , Arpan Rai Pope Francis has confirmed the Vatican’s direct involvement in a peace mission to try to end the conflict between Russia and Ukraine.“I am willing to do everything that has to be done. There is a mission in course now but it is not yet public. When it is public, I will reveal it,” the Pope told reporters during a flight home after a three-day visit to Hungary.“I think that peace is always made by opening channels. You can never achieve peace through closure. ... This is not easy.”The Pope added that he had spoken about the situation in Ukraine with Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban and with Metropolitan (bishop) Hilarion, a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church in Budapest.“In these meetings we did not just talk about Little Red Riding Hood. We spoke of all these things. Everyone is interested in the road to peace,” he said.Ukraine says it still holds parts of Bakhmut04:25 , Arpan Rai Ukraine’s troops are holding onto parts of the eastern city of Bakhmut, focus of a prolonged Russian assault, while the head of a major pro-Moscow force said his men were making progress.“Fierce fighting continues in the city of Bakhmut. The enemy is unable to take control over the city, despite throwing all its forces into the battle and having some success,” said Ukrainian deputy defence minister Hanna Malyar.“The defence of Bakhmut is coping with its military tasks,” she said in a Telegram post. The Ukrainian military does not reveal exactly how much of the city is in Russian hands.Russian forces, which have struggled for months to capture Bakhmut, are slowly taking over more and more of the city.On Sunday, Russian defence ministry has said its forces had taken four blocks in the western direction in Bakhmut. And, Serhiy Cherevatyi, a spokesperson for Ukrainian troops in the east, told the ICTV channel it was still possible to supply the Bakhmut defenders with food, ammunition and medicine and evacuate the wounded.Vatican involved in ‘secret peace mission'04:00 , William Mata Pope Francis said Sunday the Vatican was willing to help facilitate the return of Ukrainian children taken to Russia during the war, saying the Holy See had already helped mediate some prisoner exchanges and would do “all that is humanly possible” to reunite families.“All human gestures help. Gestures of cruelty don’t help,” Francis said during an airborne press conference en route home from Hungary.Francis also revealed a secret peace “mission” was under way. However, he gave no details when asked whether he spoke about peace initiatives during his talks in Budapest this weekend with Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban or the representative of the Russian Orthodox Church in Hungary.Relatives bury children killed in Russian missile attack03:00 , William Mata Relatives and friends cried next to coffins on Sunday as they buried children and others killed in a Russian missile attack on this central Ukrainian city, while fighting claimed more lives elsewhere.Almost all of the 23 victims of the attack on Friday died when two missiles slammed into an apartment building in Uman. Ukrainian Interior Minister Ihor Klymenko said six children were among the dead.Mykhayl Shulha, 6, cried and hugged relatives next to the coffin of his 11-year-old sister Sofia Shulha during Sunday’s funeral, while others paid respects to a 17-year-old boy.As mourners held candles, crossed themselves and sang, the priest at the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God “Quick to Hear” waved a vessel containing incense over the coffins. He said the deaths had hit the entire community hard.“I live nearby,” said Father Fyodor Botsu. “I personally knew the children, the littlest, from when they were very young, and I personally baptized them in this church. I’m worried with everyone since I have children and I’m a citizen of this country and have been living in this city for 15 years.”He said he prayed “that the war should end and peace should come to our homes, city and country.”British armed forces chief comments on Ukraine02:00 , William Mata Chief of the Defence Staff Admiral Sir Tony Radakin has said he has accompanied the National Security Adviser Tim Barrow and had a meeting with Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky.“We’ve got the capacity to deal with lots of different things at different times. I was in Ukraine earlier this week and met my opposite number General (Valerii) Zaluzhnyi,” he said in defending the British policies in rescuing individuals while also preparing for the coronation.“I accompanied the National Security Adviser Tim Barrow and we had a meeting with President (Volodymyr) Zelensky.“We have also been involved in the evacuation from Sudan. And I’m pleased with how that has gone.”Read the[*full story here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/sudan-james-cleverly-government-khartoum-president-b2329900.html). Full story: Putin’s commanders ‘forcing troops into caged pits for being drunk or refusing to fight’01:00 , William Mata Russian commanders are likely punishing soldiers by forcing them into caged holes in the ground, the Ministry of Defence has said.In its daily intelligence update on Sunday, the MoD said that troops are likely facing the makeshift dungeons as a form of punishment for actions such as being drunk or refusing to fight in the Ukraine war.The holes, called “Zindans”, consist of holes in the ground “covered with a metal grille”, it said. The MoD said in the statement that it had heard multiple reports of the Zindans being in use.Read William Mata’s [*full story here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-troops-caged-pits-b2329905.html). Irish criticise statement from Russian ambassador after deathMonday 1 May 2023 00:00 , William Mata Teachta Dálas, the Irish equivalen to MPs, across the political spectrum have criticised a statement from the Russian ambassador issued in response to the death of an Irishman fighting in Ukraine.But despite the Irish government stating that its support for Ukraine was "unwavering", and that Russian disinformation would have "no impact" on this, it said that diplomatic channels between the two nations should remain open.Finbar Cafferkey, from Achill Island in Co Mayo, was killed while serving as a military volunteer in the eastern part of Ukraine.Irish deputy premier Micheal Martin paid tribute to Mr Cafferkey as "obviously a young man of clear principles", which prompted the Russian embassy in Ireland to question that statement.Today’s headlinesSunday 30 April 2023 23:00 , William Mata At 11pm on Sunday, April 30, we can bring you some of the headlines from the events of the day in Ukraine. [*Russian forces suffer radiation sickness after digging trenches and fishing in Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-forces-radiation-sickness-trenches-chernobyl-b2329690.html) Russian troops who dug trenches in Chernobyl forest during their occupation of the area have been struck down with radiation sickness, authorities have confirmed.[*Train drivers’ union boss hits out over criticism of strike on eve of Eurovision*](https://www.independent.co.uk/business/train-drivers-union-boss-hits-out-over-criticism-of-strike-on-eve-of-eurovision-b2329759.html) Aslef’s Mick Whelan said Transport Secretary Mark Harper’s accusation was ‘bizarre’, implying the union was not standing in solidarity with Ukraine.Putin’s soldiers ‘likely’ put in holes in the ground as punishment for misdemeanorsRussian commanders have “likely” started a harsher punishment regime for their soldiers by placing them in “holes in the ground” called ‘Zindans’, the UK ministry of defence has said.The Zindans are “improvised cells consisting of holes in the ground covered with a metal grille”, according to UK intelligence.Russian forces suffer radiation sickness after digging trenches and fishing in ChernobylSunday 30 April 2023 22:00 , William Mata Russian troops who dug trenches in Chernobyl forest during their occupation of the area have been struck down with radiation sickness, authorities have confirmed.Ukrainians living near the nuclear power station that exploded 37 years ago, and choked the surrounding area in radioactive contaminants, warned the Russians when they arrived against setting up camp in the forest.Read Emily Atkinson’s [*full story here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-forces-radiation-sickness-trenches-chernobyl-b2329690.html). Loss estimates of Russian militarySunday 30 April 2023 21:00 , William Mata The Armed Forces of Ukraine has given its latest update on the losses of Russian troops. Some of the headline figures are:-190,510 soldiers have died, an increase of 470 from Saturday,-7,189 all purpose vehicles have now been eliminated, a rise of five,-3,699 Russian tanks are now out of action. The figures have not been verified by the Kremlin. Government teases Stacey Dooley documentarySunday 30 April 2023 20:00 , William Mata The British Ministry of Defence has advertised a new documentary called Stacey Dooley: Ready For WarThe trailer features the presenter talking to Ukrainian Mykola, who was a florist before the war, and now joins his two brothers in fighting against Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The documentary is now streaming on iPlayer. Mykola was a florist before the war, and now joins his two brothers in fighting against Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Watch Stacey Dooley: Ready For War? [*https://t.co/c9YyIhlyk5*](https://t.co/c9YyIhlyk5) [*pic.twitter.com/EPsxDYFPvv*](https://t.co/EPsxDYFPvv) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1652606248796184582?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Zelensky makes video address to UkrainiansSunday 30 April 2023 19:00 , William Mata Ukraine president Volodymyr Zelensky has tweeted a message of encouragement to his supporters.“Russian invaders won’t take away our peace – a natural part of Ukrainian character,” he tweeted.“Peace & the desire for freedom for our entire country, all our regions, cities & communities. We'll definitely gain it. Glory to everyone who is in combat for Ukraine! Thank you to everyone in the world who helps!” invaders won’t take away our peace – a natural part of character. Peace & the desire for freedom for our entire country, all our regions, cities & communities. We'll definitely gain it. Glory to everyone who is in combat for ! Thank you to everyone in the world who helps! [*pic.twitter.com/EpIdIV3vZ9*](https://t.co/EpIdIV3vZ9) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*April 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1652687628507000836?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine: Sunday, April 30 in picturesSunday 30 April 2023 18:00 , William MataRussia says its forces take four blocks in western Bakhmut -RIASunday 30 April 2023 16:45 , William Mata Russia's Ministry of Defence on Sunday said its forces had taken four blocks in western Bakhmut, Russian state-owned news agency RIA reported -Reuters has said. The news agency could not independently confirm the claim. Russian forces have been struggling for months to capture the city in eastern Ukraine.Pope on the banks of the Danube in final Mass in HungarySunday 30 April 2023 15:26 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Tens of thousands of Hungarians flocked to Budapest’s main square Sunday for Pope Francis’ final Mass, gathering on the banks of the Danube as the pontiff wrapped up a weekend visit to the heart of [*Europe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) with pleas for a peaceful end to Russia’s war next door.The Mass on Kossuth Lajos Square, with the Hungarian parliament and Budapest’s famed Chain Bridge as a backdrop, provided the visual highlight of Francis’ three-day visit that has been dominated by the Vatican’s concern for the plight of neighboring Ukraine.Citing local organizers, the Vatican said some 50,000 people were participating at the Mass, more than 30,000 of them in the square on a brilliantly sunny spring morning. Among them were President Katalin Novak and Hungary’s right-wing populist prime minister, Viktor Orban, whose lukewarm support for Ukraine has rankled fellow European Union members.[*Pope on the banks of the Danube in final Mass in Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/pope-francis-ap-hungary-europe-budapest-b2329680.html) Four civilians killed in Ukrainian shelling on Russia’s BryanskSunday 30 April 2023 14:49 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Four civilians died as a result of Ukrainian shelling on a village just over the border in Russia‘s Bryansk region on Saturday evening, a local governor said.“Four civilians have been killed,” Governor Alexander Bogomaz said on the Telegram messaging app. Two other citizens were being treated in hospital, Bogomaz said.Bogomaz earlier said that one residential building had been completely destroyed and two other houses partially destroyed.Bogomaz blamed the incident on “Ukrainian nationalists”. Ukraine almost never publicly claims responsibility for attacks inside Russia and on Russian-controlled territory in Ukraine.Both sides deny targeting civilians in the 14-month-old Russian invasion on Ukraine.“Work is continuing at the site of the incident to remove rubble and clear the area,” Bogomaz said. “A state of emergency has been introduced in the village.”Russia‘s Bryansk region borders Ukraine. The village of Suzemka, where the incident occurred, is around 10 kms (6.2 miles) from the border.Russia says its forces take four blocks in western BakhmutSunday 30 April 2023 14:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russia‘s Ministry of Defence on Sunday said its forces had taken four blocks in western Bakhmut, Russian state-owned news agency RIA reported.Reuters could not independently confirm the claim. Russian forces have been struggling for months to capture the city in eastern Ukraine.The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original DocumentarySunday 30 April 2023 13:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain It was a month into Vladimir Putin’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Russian forces had withdrawn from around Kyiv and in their wake Bel Trew and her team stumbled on a body by an abandoned Russian camp.His hands were tied. He had been burned and shot in the back. Soldiers said he was a teenager.As Bel tried to find out who he was and what had happened, she uncovered a nightmare world: a nation struggling to find thousands of its missing and to identify its dead.The Body in the Woods by Bel Trew is[*streaming now on Independent TV and on your smart TV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/independent-tv-download-smart-tv-how-b2287476.html). [*The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-documentary-crimes-b2291759.html) Russia blames Ukraine drone attack for major Crimea oil depot fireSunday 30 April 2023 13:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian officials have claimed a Ukrainian drone strike [*caused a massive fire to erupt at an oil depot in Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-kyiv-explosions-b2328591.html) , in the latest in a series of attacks on the annexed peninsula as Russia braces for an expected Ukrainian counteroffensive.Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-installed governor of Sevastopol, said the oil depot was attacked by “two enemy drones” and four oil tanks had burned down. A third drone was shot down from the sky, and one more was deactivated through radio-electronic means.He said the fire at the city’s harbour had been assigned the highest ranking in terms of how complicated it would be to extinguish. However, he reported that the blaze had been contained.[*Russia blames Ukraine drone attack for major Crimea oil depot fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/crimea-oil-depot-fire-ukraine-russia-b2329560.html) In pictures: scenes from BakhmutSunday 30 April 2023 12:23 , Maryam Zakir-HussainPutin’s soldiers ‘likely’ put in holes in the ground as punishment for misdemeanorsSunday 30 April 2023 11:22 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian commanders have “likely” started a harsher punishment regime for their soldiers by placing them in “holes in the ground” called ‘Zindans’, the UK ministry of defence has said. The Zindans are “improvised cells consisting of holes in the ground covered with a metal grille”, according to UK intelligence. Behaviours which warrant such a punishment include drunkenness and soldiers attempting to terminate their contracts. Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -30 April 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/SIvHuzvKuo*](https://t.co/SIvHuzvKuo) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/n6EiQpwtpM*](https://t.co/n6EiQpwtpM) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 30, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1652543590088814592?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Don't shut door on foreigners, migrants, Pope Francis says in Hungary

Pope Francis on Sunday presided over a big outdoor Mass where he urged Hungarians not to close the door on migrants and those who are “foreign or unlike us,” in contrast to the anti-immigrant policies of nationalist Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

More than 50,000 people gathered in and around the square behind Budapest’s iconic neo-gothic parliament building, a symbol of the capital on the Danube, to see the pope on the last day of his visit to the country.

He continued a theme he began on the first day of his visit on Friday, when he warned against the dangers of rising nationalism in Europe, but put it in gospel context, saying that closed doors were painful and contrary to the teachings of Jesus.

Orban, a populist who was attending the Mass, sees himself as a protector of Christian values. He has said he would not allow Hungary to be transformed into an “immigrant country,” as he claims others in Europe have become, unrecognizable to its native peoples.

In his homily, 86-year-old Francis said that if Hungarians wanted to follow Jesus, they had to shun “the closed doors of our individualism amid a society of growing isolation; the closed doors of our indifference towards the underprivileged and those who suffer; the doors we close towards those who are foreign or unlike us, towards migrants or the poor”.

Francis believes migrants fleeing poverty should be welcomed and integrated because they can culturally enrich host countries and boost Europe’s dwindling populations. He believes that while countries have a right to protect their borders, migrants should be distributed throughout the European Union.

Orban’s government has built a steel fence on the border with Serbia to keep out migrants.

In his homily, Francis also spoke against doors “closed to the world”.

‘Thick’ Russian forces suffer radiation sickness after digging trenches and fishing in Chernobyl

Russian troops who dug trenches in [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) forest during their occupation of the area have been struck down with radiation sickness, authorities have confirmed.

Ukrainians living near the [*nuclear power station*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nuclear-power-station) that exploded 37 years ago, and choked the surrounding area in radioactive contaminants, warned the Russians when they arrived against setting up camp in the forest.

But the occupiers who, as one resident put it to The Times, “understood the risks” but were “just thick”, installed themselves in the forest, reportedly carved out trenches, fished in the reactor’s cooling channel – flush with catfish – and shot animals, leaving them dead on the roads.

[*‘Thick’ Russian troops suffer sickness after digging and fishing in Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-forces-radiation-sickness-trenches-chernobyl-b2329690.html)

What are the ‘dragon’s teeth’ defences being erected by Russia in Ukraine?

Russian forces have been erecting “dragon’s teeth” defensive barricades in areas of Ukraine they control, in anticipation of [*an imminent counteroffensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-kyiv-explosions-b2328591.html) by Kyiv, according to the latest satellite imagery of the warzone.

The defensive obstacles, pyramid-shaped concrete shards also nicknamed “devil’s teeth” for their resemblance to a fanged jawline, can be seen running between anti-tank ditches and troop-manned trenches from western [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) through eastern Ukraine towards [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) , in aerial imagery recorded by Capella Space, [*Reuters reports*](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-digs-ukraine-prepares-attack-2023-04-27/).

The layered, zig-zagging lines are intended to make life as difficult as possible for any oncoming Ukrainian forces, as Russia seeks to protect the territory it has seized.

[*What are the ‘dragon’s teeth’ defences being erected by Russia in Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html)

Ukraine welcomes EU deal on continued farm exports

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on Saturday welcomed the European Union’s hard-fought deal to keep farm exports flowing into and through the bloc to world markets, saying that the [*Middle East*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/middle-east) and [*Africa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/africa) would specifically stand to benefit from it.

Late Friday, the 27-nation EU ended a damaging internal standoff over a destabilizing glut of Ukraine farm imports by granting five eastern member countries the right to temporarily ban the most problematic produce while allowing all farm products to transit onward.

Resolving the issue allows the EU to maintain a unified stance in the face of Russia’s invasion of its neighbor. “We welcome that we resolved this issue,” Ukrainian Finance Minister Sergii Marchenko said at a meeting of EU finance ministers in Stockholm.

[*Ukraine welcomes EU deal on continued farm exports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-middle-east-russia-africa-b2329397.html)

Pope visits refugees, urges Hungary to show charity to all

Pope Francis thanked Hungarians on Saturday for welcoming ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and urged them to help anyone in need, as he begged for a culture of charity in a country where the prime minister has justified firm anti-immigration policies with fears that migration threatens Europe’s [*Christian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/christian) culture.

On the second day of a visit to Hungary, Francis met with refugees and poor people at St. Elizabeth’s church, which was named for a Hungarian princess who renounced her wealth to dedicate herself to the poor as a follower of the pope’s namesake, St. Francis of Assisi.

Speaking in the white-brick church in [*Budapest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/budapest) , Francis recalled that the Gospel instructs Christians to show love and compassion to all, especially those experiencing poverty and pain and “even those who are not believers.”

[*Pope visits refugees, urges Hungary to show charity to all*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-ap-eastern-europe-budapest-viktor-orban-b2329407.html)

Wagner threatens Bakhmut withdrawal

Yevgeny Prigozhin, founder of Russia’s Wagner Group has threatened to withdraw troops from Bakhmut, saying they had enough ammunition left only for days.

In a nearly 90-minute video interview with Russian military blogger Semyon Pegov published on Saturday, Mr Prigozhin said: “If the shortage of ammunition is not replenished, then ... most likely, we will be forced to withdraw part of the units.”

He was quoting a letter he said was sent to Russia’s defence minister Sergei Shoigu, giving an 28 April deadline.

It was not immediately known when the interview was recorded.

Mr Prigozhin has often blamed regular armed forces for not giving his men the ammunition they need and has sometimes accused top brass of betrayal.

“We need to stop deceiving the population and telling them that everything is fine,” he was quoted as saying in the interview.

“I must honestly say: Russia is on the brink of a disaster.”

ICYMI: Pope Francis meets refugees who fled Ukraine on Hungary visit

Pope Francis has met with refugees who fled from Ukraine during the invasion as part of his three-day trip to Hungary.

Watch:

[*Watch: Pope Francis meets refugees who fled Ukraine on Hungary visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-ukraine-refugees-hungary-b2329347.html)

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[*Royal news -latest: Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67WY-V1F1-DY4H-K27X-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:4

**Length:** 5823 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Noyce and Peony Hirwani

**Highlight:** Florida judge said Markle’s statements were pure opinion and ‘not capable of being proved false’

**Body**

[*Meghan Markle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/meghan-markle) has won a [*defamation lawsuit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/defamation-lawsuit) filed against her by her half-sister [*Samantha Markle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/samantha-markle).

The duchess had been accused by her relative of spreading “malicious lies” [*during an explosive 2021 interview with Oprah Winfrey*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-oprah-interview-meghan-b1850945.html) and alleged statements to journalists in 2020.

But on Thursday a Florida judge dismissed the lawsuit, saying that Markle’s statements were pure opinion and “not capable of being proved false”.

In other news, [*the King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-king) has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” on his visit to Germany after [*condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-putin-nuclear-war-bakhmut-b2310626.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine-Russia%20news%20-live:%20Putin%20‘looking%20to%20trade%20food%20for%20North%20Korean%20weapons’) of their homeland.

[*Charles met families who escaped to Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html%22%20title=%22Prince%20Harry%20returns%20to%20court%20for%20phone-tapping%20fight%20as%20King%20Charles%20visits%20Germany) after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine, delivering the [*first speech by a British monarch to the German Bundestag.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/king-charles-state-visit-germany-b2311073.html%22%20title=%22Why%20the%20King’s%20address%20to%20the%20German%20parliament%20was%20so%20significant)

“The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people”, he told the chamber.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.”

Elsewhere at Tegel Airport, the King met recently arrived Ukrainians. To date, more than a million have sought refuge in Germany.

Key Points

Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha as Florida judge dismisses case Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha as Florida judge dismisses case

Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, has emerged victorious from a defamation lawsuit filed against her by her half-sister Samantha Markle.

The actor and estranged royal had been accused by her relative of spreading “malicious lies” during an explosive 2021 interview with Oprah Winfrey and alleged statements to journalists in 2020.

But on Thursday a Florida judge dismissed the lawsuit, saying that Ms Markle’s statements were pure opinion and “not capable of being proved false”.

Io Dodds reports:

[*Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against her half-sister Samantha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/meghan-markle-samantha-defamation-lawsuit-b2311419.html)

WATCH LIVE: King Charles welcomed by Hamburg mayor as he arrives

King Charles’ watercolour paintings to go on display at Sandringham

More than 40 watercolours painted by King Charles III are to be displayed in an exhibition at Sandringham House in Norfolk.

The collection, featuring interpretations of British landscapes and royal residences, will be put on view in the ballroom at the estate.

The exhibition contains a range of scenes painted in the Welsh hills, the highlands of Scotland and at Windsor Castle, Highgrove, Birkhall Castle and the surrounding Norfolk countryside at Sandringham.

Read more below:

[*King Charles’ watercolour paintings to go on display at Sandringham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-painting-watercolours-sandringham-b2311650.html)

William and Kate ‘considering Prince George role’ at coronation

Prince George might be given an official role at his grandfather’s coronation on Saturday 6 May, it has been reported.

The Prince and Princess of Wales are said to be considering whether their eldest child, nine-year-old George, and second in line to the throne, should be included in the congregation at Westminster Abbey.

It has also been said that Camilla’s five grandchildren, may have a role in the coronation.

Ellie Muir has the story:

[*William and Kate ‘considering Prince George role’ at coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-king-charles-coronation-b2290852.html)

Meghan Markle shares ‘famous’ cake recipe in chef José Andrés’ new cookbook

Meghan Markle has shared one of her signature cake recipes in chef José Andrés’ newest cookbook.

Earlier this week, Penguin Random House announced that the Spanish chef’s nonprofit World Central Kitchen would be releasing its first book, The World Central Kitchen Cookbook: Feeding Humanity, Feeding Hope, which is set to come out in September 2023. The publisher also noted the cookbook will feature recipes from some famous faces, including the Duchess of Sussex’s recipe for her Lemon Oil Cake.

My colleagueAmber Raiken reports:

[*Meghan Markle shares ‘famous’ cake recipe in chef José Andrés’ new cookbook*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/meghan-markle-cake-recipe-wck-cookbook-b2301629.html)

Harry and Meghan Frogmore eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans to slim down monarchy

King Charles III has put into motion his plan to slim down the monarchy, with the eviction of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from Frogmore Cottage signalling “just the start”, it has been reported.

The monarch, who is set to be crowned alongside Queen Consort Camilla in just six weeks, reportedly wishes to end subsidised rents for members of the royal family over the next five years.

Get the whole story below:

[*Harry and Meghan eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans for monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-harry-meghan-monarchy-b2307885.html)

WATCH LIVE: King Charles arrives at Berlin train station ahead of Hamburg visit

Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast

The Duchess of Sussex has received a Gracie Award for her work on her Archetypes podcast.

The 48th annual Gracie Awards honoured Meghan Markle as one of its digital media national winners for her Spotify podcast, which sees her speaking to various famous women about the stereotypes they face.

Get the full story below:

[*Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/meghan-markle-archetypes-gracie-award-b2311544.html)

Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking for ‘long time’

The Duke of Sussex has accused the royal family of withholding information from him about phone hacking because they did not want him to bring a claim as it would “open a can of worms”.

In a witness statement submitted before his civil claim against Daily Mail publisher Associated Newspapers, Prince Harry said that he was conditioned to accept his family’s rule to “never complain, never explain” when dealing with the press.

Thomas Kingsley reports.

[*Duke says royal family ‘without doubt’ withheld phone hacking information from him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-royal-family-phone-hacking-evidence-b2309942.html)

Oprah weighs in on Harry and Meghan attending King Charles’ coronation

Oprah Winfrey has weighed in on speculation as to whether the Duke and Duchess of Sussex will attend King Charles III’s coronation this May.

“I think they should do what they feel is best for them,” the television host said.

[*Oprah weighs in on Harry and Meghan attending King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/harry-meghan-king-charles-oprah-winfrey-b2302793.html)

Succession’s Brian Cox says Meghan’s marriage into royal family is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’

Brian Cox has claimed that Meghan Markle’s marriage into the royal family is a “fairytale that went horribly wrong”.

In a new interview with the Radio Times, the Succession star said that he understood why Meghan was attracted to marrying into the royal family, due to its “fairytale” image.

Ellie Muir reports.

[*Brian Cox says Meghan’s royal marriage is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/succession-brian-cox-meghan-markle-harry-b2309966.html)

Prince Harry has begun his ‘life’s work’ – by turning up in court when he didn’t need to be there

“The very best satire has a remarkable knack for changing absolutely nothing. Harry and Meghan were made to look so perfectly absurd by [*South Park’s “Worldwide Privacy Tour” episode*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/harry-meghan-south-park-episode-worldwide-privacy-tour-b2288647.html) that the California-based campaigners have evidently concluded that they have been left with little choice but to carry on precisely as normal.

“The Worldwide Privacy Tour made an unexpected stop in London on Monday morning, [*when Prince Harry arrived at the High Court to attend a preliminary hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-trial-daily-mail-live-b2308564.html) in one of his many legal actions against an extremely large section of the British newspaper industry.

“He didn’t need to be there. He wasn’t required to participate in any way in the hearing. But the act of taking everyone by surprise by actually turning up is certainly the prince’s first big shot in [*what he told Tom Bradby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-itv-interview-talking-points-b2258282.html) was going to be his “life’s work” from now on: that of holding the [*press*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/press) to account.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Prince Harry has begun his ‘life’s work’, apparently | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html)

Meadows to be established at historic English sites to mark King’s coronation

One hundred wildflower meadows are to be created or enhanced at historic sites across England including Stonehenge and Westminster’s Jewel Tower in celebration of the King‘s coronation.

English Heritage said the project would leave a natural legacy by working to restore the country’s lost flower-rich glasslands, in tribute to Charles‘s love of the natural world.

Some 97% of the UK’s meadows have disappeared since the 1930s, with many remaining fragments left unprotected.

Seventy-five of the meadows will be brand new and 25 are existing ones which will be developed.

English Heritage’s chosen locations include 43 castles and forts, 22 abbeys and priories and 10 historic houses.

Whitby Abbey in Yorkshire, Queen Victoria’s former home Osborne on the Isle of Wight and Tintagel Castle in Cornwall are among them.

At the world-famous prehistoric stone circle Stonehenge in Wiltshire, a new field of wildflowers is planned for outside the visitor centre to greet people on arrival.

The banks of the monument are already a county wildlife site, with flowers such as orchids found in the outer grassland near the stones.

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

Tom Peck writes:

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night

A luxury London hotel has launched a King’s coronation package, which will set guests back a right royal £13,000 per night.

The Crown Jewels Experience is available to book at Hotel Café Royal, fittingly located on Regent Street, and includes an overnight stay in the Royal Suite.

Helen Wilson-Beevers reports:

[*Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/england/london/luxury-london-hotel-kings-coronation-package-b2305932.html)

King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) received a rousing standing ovation from [*German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/german) politicians after addressing the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) in both fluent German and [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english).

The monarch made history on Thursday 30 March, becoming the first member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) to speak in Germany’s federal [*parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) while it is in session.

During his address, Charles spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Camilla, Queen Consort, was watching his speech from the Bundestag floor.

Watch:

[*King Charles receives standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-germany-bundestag-speech-b2310877.html)

‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

In case you missed it...

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) suffered from “suspicion and paranoia” and lost friends because of newspaper articles, a court heard on Monday, [*as he launched his campaign to reform the media with a surprise appearance in London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html).

The [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) flew 5,500 miles from his new home in California to attend a High Court hearing [*as the Daily Mail’s publisher bids to throw out claims against its titles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html) , including accusations of phone-hacking.

Also in court were Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Sadie Frost, and [*Baroness Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , who are among the public figures suing [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) for alleged unlawful activity.

Alastair Jamieson reports:

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

The King has made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror – but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity – in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

King hails ‘special bond’ between UK and Germany in Bundestag address

The King has celebrated the “special bond” between the UK and Germany as he became the first British monarch to address the Bundestag during his historic state visit to the country.

Speaking in both German and English, Charles said he could “hardly begin to express the pride” he felt in the relationship between the two countries and spoke fondly of his “cherished” family ties to Germany.

He also thanked the country for its kindness following the death of his mother, the late Queen.

He said: “Today, it gives me particular pride to be with you ... and to renew the special bond between our two countries.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

With a quip about the Lionesses’ victory over Germany at Euro 2022, the monarch hailed it as “just one example of how our countries, together, can offer a compelling example to the world”.

“Faced with so many shared challenges, the United Kingdom and Germany are together providing leadership to secure our shared future,” he added.

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

[*Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/maryam-zakir-hussain)

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html)

I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

“I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard. [*I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/andrei-molodkin-prince-harry-taliban-afghanistan-b2308471.html) – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

“As Harry is in London, I have contacted him to set up a meeting, as an ex-militarist myself, to discuss my ideas for the computer game I am producing inspired by his time in Afghanistan. We have much to discuss.

“[*He is in court against Associated Newspapers Limited over allegations of criminality against him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-daily-mail-latest-news-b2309372.html) – “unlawful information gathering”. From what I have seen, he keeps himself in the spotlight, [*bringing attention to his personal life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html) , while going to extreme lengths to plead for privacy.

“[*Boasting about killing,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-killed-25-taliban-military-b2257584.html) whether for democracy or not, is something I do not accept. During military service in the Soviet Union, I saw a fellow soldier put a gun to his heart and shoot himself. Later, we were eating in the canteen and the guards pulled him through the room. His body and clothes were covered in blood, so he left a line like a signature behind him. A bloodline.”

[*Andrei Molodkin writes:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/andrei-molodkin)

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

“Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store.

“On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

“Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

King Charles ‘really showed interest in everyone’s stories’, refugee centre manager says

During his state visit to Germany with the Queen Consort, Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Thursday.

Stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: “Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?”

Charles took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre’s games room and joked: “I remember trying this when I was younger.”

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: “Amazing, two hands you are the experts.”

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: “I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives.

“He said that he was praying for us all. I’m the luckiest lady in the world.”

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That’s tour manager, said afterwards: “He really showed interest in everyone’s stories.

“He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide.

“There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to.”

Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) continues his visit to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany).

The monarch addressed the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) on Thursday 30 March during a high-profile trip that will attempt to rebuild some of the European ties damaged by [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit).

His remarks marked the first time that a member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) has spoken to members of Germany’s lower house of parliament while it is in session.

On Wednesday night, Charles pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the two nations while speaking at a banquet at Schloss Bellevue presidential palace in Berlin.

He also spoke in German to say he and Camilla were “deeply touched” by the warm welcome they had received and he praised the “very special” nation.

Oliver Browning reports:

[*Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-king-charles-visit-speech-b2310750.html)

Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) has paid tribute to the queens who came before her while attending a State Banquet in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) to honour her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s state visit to Germany.

Camilla pinned a brooch with a portrait of her late mother-in-law, [*Queen Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-elizabeth-ii) , onto her black evening dress for the occasion on Wednesday (29 March).

On her head, she wore a tiara that once belonged to the Queen Mother. Her dress, which was covered in silver embroidery, was designed by Bruce Oldfield, [*who is in charge of creating her coronation dress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-coronation-outfit-queen-consort-b2306836.html).

The glittering Boucheron tiara was gifted to the Queen Consort by the late Elizabeth. Camilla also wore a fringed necklace from the late Queen’s jewellery collection.

The brooch is the Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, and showcases a hand-painted miniature portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth.

Kate Ng reports:

[*Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html)

Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) meets with members of a German-British battalion during his first overseas trip as sovereign.

The King was greeted by [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) state premier Dietmar Woidke upon his arrival to the base in Finowfurt.

The head and deputy head of the battalion, Stefan Klein and Ian Higginbotham, also met with the monarch during his visit.

King Charles became the first monarch to address Germany’s parliament, the Bundestag, earlier on Thursday.

During his address, he stressed the close bonds between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Watch here:

[*Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-germany-military-battalion-b2310948.html)

Prince Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as King Charles visits Germany

Prince has returned to court for his ongoing case against the publisher of the Daily Mail, just as his father Charles visits Germany in his first overseas visit as king.

After missing the third day of the hearing, the Duke of Sussex reappeared at the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) on Thursday, as his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher to end the legal action.

Earlier in the day his father -who it was reported would not be seeing his US-based son during his surprise visit to the UK -[*gave a historic address to the German parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html).

[*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) and other high-profile individuals accuse Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) of having “concealed wrongdoing” over the alleged unlawful gathering of their private information.

ANL, which denies the allegations, says a judge should rule in its favour without a trial because the legal challenges against it are brought “far too late”.

Tom Pilgrim reports:

[*Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as father Charles visits Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html)

In pictures: King Charles and Queen Consort’s visit to Germany

The King and the Queen Consort are halfway through their first state visit to Germany, taking place in Berlin, Brandenburg and Hamburg from Wednesday, 29 March to Friday, 31 March, 2023.

Their visit to France, which was scheduled for 26-29 March, has been postponed due to ongoing mass strikes and protests.

Today, Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

Public says allegations “unfounded"

Adrian Beltrami KC, for the publisher, previously told the court: “The claims are rejected by the defendant in their entirety as are the unfounded allegations that are repeatedly made that the defendant either misled the Leveson Inquiry or concealed evidence from the Leveson Inquiry.”

The lawyer said the legal action against it has “no real prospects of succeeding” and is “barred” under a legal period of limitation.

The duke and others allege that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records, and access and record private phone conversations.

Six of those bringing cases against the publisher have referred to alleged confessions by private investigator Gavin Burrows in their claims, but ANL has highlighted a later contrasting witness statement from Mr Burrows in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

Court told of “systemic wrongdoing by the defendant”

In written arguments, Mr Sherborne added there were “vociferous and prolific denials of any wrongdoing by the defendant, made on oath to the Leveson Inquiry by its senior executives, and repeated ever since”, which the duke and others “were entitled to and did believe”, and which prevent the publisher from arguing that material could have been discovered earlier.

He said the group had since “uncovered concealed and systemic wrongdoing by the defendant” through information allegedly provided by private investigators and in new documents.

Mr Furnish, and later Baroness Lawrence, were also present in court again on Thursday, following visits this week from Sir Elton and Ms Frost.

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Baroness Lawrence ‘was gaslit'

Mr Sherborne later read out extracts from Baroness Lawrence’s witness statement in which she said she felt “played for a fool” by the Daily Mail, believing the newspaper “really cared” about the injustice of the murder of her son Stephen Lawrence.

The baroness said she learned a journalist allegedly instructed a private investigator to target her, saying that she “never thought to blame” the newspaper.

“They were supposed to be our allies and friends, the good people, not the bad,” she said, adding that she had believed that information in articles about her came from the police.

Mr Sherborne told the court: “That is nothing short of gaslighting Baroness Lawrence, that’s the form of concealment we are talking about.”

Daily Mail publisher ‘ commissioned 19 different private investigators'

On the final day of a preliminary hearing in London on Thursday, David Sherborne, representing Harry and others, said ANL’s challenge to their legal action was as “ambitious as it is unattractive”.

He accused the publisher of seeking an “impermissible mini-trial or worse” before further documentation and evidence was secured in the cases.

The barrister said the group, which also includes actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley and ex-Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes, had a “compelling case”.

Mr Sherborne said ANL was alleged to have commissioned 19 different private investigators to carry out a series of unlawful acts from 1993 to 2011 and beyond, which in some instances informed articles.

He told the court the group was “thrown off the scent by the way in which the articles were written”.

Latest photos from Charles and Camilla’s Germany visit

Tom Peck: If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, (writesTom Peck).

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Prince Harry spotted wearing £800 Dior shirt, complete with 18-carat gold embroidery

Prince Harry donned an £800 Dior shirt as he reappeared at the High Court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in London.

The shirt, which the luxury designer describes as being “crafted in luxurious and soft white cotton poplin”, is emblazoned with an embroidered bee, sewn using 18-carat gold thread.

Dior recommends the shirt be worn either with a suit “for a timeless look” or with jeans “for more laid-back allure,” according to its description.

The Duke of Sussex opted for the former after his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher of the Daily Mail to end his legal action against it.

Baroness Doreen Lawrence arrives at High Court

Baroness Doreen Lawrence has arrived in the courtroom for the final day of the preliminary hearing involving Associated Newspapers Limited.

Harry pictured arriving at High Court

Harry arrives at High Court

Prince Harry has arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a set of privacy claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

He arrived through the building’s side entrance around 1:45pm.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Latest images of Charles and Camilla’s trip to Germany

UK’s friendship with Germany ‘meant so much to my beloved mother’, says Charles

King Charles spoke earnestly of late Queen Elizabeth II’s affection for Germany during his historic address to the Bundestag on Thursday.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits,” he said.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

**Load-Date:** March 31, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin’s forces suffer blow as helicopters destroyed by missile strikes, says Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69DK-BGB1-JBNF-W44G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:26

**Length:** 6872 words

**Byline:** Vishwam Sankaran,Alex Ross,Tom Watling and Barney Davis

**Highlight:** The war has proved costly for both Russia and Ukraine

**Body**

Ukrainian special forces early on Tuesday struck two Russian military airfields, saying they successfully destroyed nine Russian military helicopters, an anti-aircraft missile system, and an ammunition warehouse.

The attacks took place in occupied Berdyansk, a southern city in the Zaporizhzhia region; and at an airfield in Luhansk, an occupied city in eastern Ukraine.

The special forces also managed to successfully damage airfield runways, Ukraine said, in what it called “Operation Dragonfly.”

“The ammunition depot in Berdyansk detonated until 4am. The detonation in Luhansk continued until 11am. Losses in the enemy’s manpower amount to dozens of dead and wounded. Bodies are still being pulled from the rubble,” Ukrainian Special Operations Forces [*said in a statement.*](https://t.me/ukr_sof/787)

[*It came as Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s frontal assault in eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has led to huge losses, according to the latest claims by Ukraine, as the [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) denied Western accusations that they are receiving weapons from North Korea.

Geolocated [*footage*](https://twitter.com/GeoConfirmed/status/1712337033153175709) throughout the past week has shown multiple columns of Russian armoured personnel carriers (APCs) around Avdiivka, Donetsk Oblast, being hit by Ukrainian artillery.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) has claimed that Russia has lost 127 tanks, 239 APCs and 161 artillery systems in the last week, though this has not been confirmed.

Key Points

Russia’s ‘exhausted’ troops ‘suffer significant losses in key town Avdiivka’ British artillery guns aren’t used due to shortage of ammunition Ukraine hit two Russian vessels, says intelligence source Death toll from Hroza missile strike rises to 59, Ukraine says

Rescue work underway after Russian missile attack on buildings in Zaporizhzhia

Ukrainian farm worker killed after his tractor hit mine

A farm worker died on Tuesday in Ukraine‘s eastern Kharkiv region after his tractor hit a mine while ploughing a field, the Ukrainian emergency service said on Wednesday.

Liberated after the Russian occupation, the region is heavily mined and farmers risk their lives trying to work in fields that have not yet been cleared of the explosive devices.

“We ask everyone to be as careful as possible and always remember the high mine danger in the de-occupied territories,” the emergency service said on the Telegram messaging app.

It published a photo of a burnt tractor with a torn-off wheel and damaged plough standing in a field near the explosion site.

Ukrainian authorities earlier this year said that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine had created the world’s largest minefield spanning an area of 250,000 square kilometres (96,525 square miles).

Russia threatens US with ‘serious consequences’ after Ukraine fires first ATACMS

Russia has hit out at the US for its decision[*to send long-range missiles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-missiles-putin-war-latest-news-b2431513.html) to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) for the first time, claiming the move increases the risks of a direct conflict between Nato and Moscow.

Volodymyr Zelensky confirmed on Tuesday that the Ukrainian military used [*the US-supplied ATACMS (Army Tactical Missile Systems)*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/ukraine-us-atacms-missiles-b2431341.html) for the first time this week and struck two Russian military airfields.

Western backers of Ukraine have been reluctant to provide long-range munitions since Vladimir Putin launched his invasion in February last year, fearing that their use against targets within Russia would represent an escalation of the conflict.

But Ukraine has repeatedly argued that it needs long-range missiles and other more powerful equipment like fighter jets in order to defend itself against attacks launched from military facilities deep inside Russia.

Read more:

[*Russia threatens US after Ukraine fires first long-range ATACMS missiles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-atacms-missiles-long-range-b2431511.html)

Biden wants $100b for defence aid to Ukraine and Israel

President Joe Biden may consider a supplemental request of about $100 billion that would include defence aid for Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan, multiple sources familiar with the request told Reuters on Tuesday.

Biden has been widely expected to ask Congress to pass a supplemental spending bill within days, as Washington responds to the deadly Oct. 7 attack on Israel by Hamas militants while looking to continue to support Ukraine as it grapples with a Russian invasion.

U.S. Senate leaders had said earlier on Tuesday they expected Biden to send them a request by the end of this week for billions of dollars in assistance for Israel, Ukraine and Taiwan and for security at the U.S. border.

Two of the sources said the request was for a full year of funding, explaining the large size.

A congressional source familiar with the request said Israel had asked for $10 billion, as it responds to an attack on its citizens by the Iran-backed militant group Hamas. Israel already receives $3.8 billion per year from the United States, under a 10-year agreement that began in 2016.

Zelensky hails ‘building' relationship with South Africa

President Volodymyr Zelensky has spoken of building stronger ties with South Africa after a “lengthy and fruitful” phone call with President Ramaphosa.

He posted on X to say: “I welcome South Africa’s participation in the Peace Formula talks and thank President Ramaphosa for confirming further engagement in their next rounds.

“We both agreed on the importance of continued Ukrainian food exports for global and Africa’s food security and the functioning of Ukraine’s Black Sea export corridor.

“I invited South Africa to our second ‘Grain From Ukraine’ summit. We also discussed the developments in the Middle East and their implications for regional and global security, as well as ways to evacuate South African citizens.”

EU to provide Ukraine with €50million for energy fund

The European Commission has already provided more than €50 million to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund, established to support the Ukrainian energy system amidst Russia’s attacks on critical infrastructure.

The move was announced by Kadri Simson, a European Commissioner, following a meeting of the Council of the European Union on energy issues, as reported by [*European Pravda.*](https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/news/2023/10/17/7171617/)

“The Commission has already earmarked over 50 million euros to the Ukraine Energy Support Fund and I encouraged the Member States to continue their donations, too,” Simson said.

She added that the European Union will do everything possible to ensure that this winter, “effects of any Russian attacks targeting Ukraine’s energy and civilian infrastructure will be minimised”.

Ukraine shares first video of new US donated missile in action

Ukraine on Tuesday claimed to have carried out one of the most destructive attacks on Russian air assets since the beginning of the war, with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky saying the assault used longer-range ballistic missiles donated by the United States.

Zelensky’s announcement came hours after a US official revealed that the longer-range ballistic missiles sought for months by Kyiv and promised by President Joe Biden had been delivered quietly and are in battlefield use.

For the first time, Ukraine used weapons provided by the US against Russian targets.Hello ATACMS.Thank you, USA [*@POTUS*](https://twitter.com/POTUS?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@USEmbassyKyiv*](https://twitter.com/USEmbassyKyiv?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/gd70elFn0z*](https://t.co/gd70elFn0z) — SPRAVDI — Stratcom Centre (@StratcomCentre) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/StratcomCentre/status/1714315944628036037?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine’s Special Operations Forces claimed it destroyed nine Russian helicopters at two airfields in Russia-occupied regions in a nighttime attack on targets in eastern and southern Ukraine.It also hit military equipment, an air-defense system, ammunition warehouses and runways, a statement said. Dozens of Russian military personnel were injured in the attack codenamed Operation Dragonfly, it said.US says all 31 Abrams tanks arrived in Ukraine01:57 , Barney Davis The US has delivered all the previously pledged 31 Abrams tanks to Ukraine, US Army Europe and Africa Command’s spokesperson Martin O’Donnell told the Voice of America.The Ukrainian soldiers who trained on Abrams with US troops in Germany have also returned to Ukraine, along with ammunition and spare tank parts, according to O’Donnell.“We have lived up to our end of the bargain. From this point forward, it is up to them (Ukraine) to determine when and where they will deliver this capability,” the US military official said, as cited by the Voice of America.UN estimates $14bn damages after Kakhovka Dam blown upWednesday 18 October 2023 00:57 , Barney Davis The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam in southeastern Ukraine in June caused $14 billion worth of damage and losses, a Tuesday report by the Ukrainian government and the United Nations said.Ukraine accused Russia of blowing up the dam, which crosses the Dnipro River, flooding the surrounding area with landmine-contaminated water and leaving areas upstream without water. Moscow has denied responsibility.“The stark figures speak for themselves. The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam has resulted in a staggering loss and damage,” said Christophoros Politis, the United Nations Development Program’s deputy resident representative in Ukraine, at a presentation in Kyiv.Russia won’t obey UN on Tehran missile developmentTuesday 17 October 2023 21:16 , Barney Davis Russia said it need no longer obey U.N. Security Council restrictions on giving missile technology to its ally Iran once they expire on Wednesday, without saying whether it now planned to support Tehran’s missile development.“Supplies to and from Iran of products falling under the Missile Technology Control Regime no longer require prior approval by the U.N. Security Council,” Russia’s foreign ministry said in a statement on Tuesday.The restrictions were defined in Resolution 2231 of 2015 endorsing a deal by which Britain, China, the European Union, France, Germany, Russia and the U.S. removed sanctions against Iran in return for Tehran curbing its nuclear programme.In 2018, then-President Donald Trump withdrew the U.S. from the deal, known as the JCPOA, leaving unilateral U.S. sanctions in place, and Iran subsequently accelerated its nuclear programme, which it says is purely peaceful.Putin calls for a little respect from the USTuesday 17 October 2023 18:48 , Barney Davis Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday rejected comments by U.S. President Joe Biden, saying in an interview in Beijing that Moscow’s interests could not be suppressed, and that U.S. politicians should learn to respect others.Putin was responding to comments by U.S. President Joe Biden in an interview with CBS News, where he said: “Imagine what happens if we, in fact, unite all of Europe and Putin is finally put down where he cannot cause the kind of trouble he’s been causing”.In a brief interview aired on state television during a summit in the Chinese capital, Putin said: “This is not about me personally. This is about the interests of the country. And it is impossible to suppress the interests of Russia. They have to be taken into account.” Putin said that both Biden, with whom he has had an antagonistic relationship since the U.S. president took office in 2021, and the wider American political elite needed to learn to “respect” Russia.He said: “This applies not only to President Biden, but also to the U.S. political elites as a whole. You must learn to respect others, and then there will be no need to suppress anyone.”Zelensky confirms use of US missileTuesday 17 October 2023 17:13 , Barney Davis Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky on Tuesday said Kyiv has used U.S.-provided long-ranged ATACMS missile.“Today, special thanks to the United States. Our agreements with President Biden are being implemented. Very accurately -ATACMS proved themselves,” he said in his nightly address. Earlier on Tuesday, media reported that Kyiv had used ATACMS for the first time in attacks on Russian-occupied territories.Navalny condemns arrest of three of his lawyers leaving him 'isolated’Tuesday 17 October 2023 16:51 , Barney Davis Jailed Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny on Tuesday condemned the arrest of three of his lawyers on suspicion of belonging to an “extremist group”.Another member of Navalny’s legal team said he had fled the country on Monday.Navalny, 47, was sentenced in August to an extra 19 years on various charges relating to “extremist activity”, extending his total prison term to more than 30 years.At the latest of a series of hearings where he has challenged his treatment in prison, Navalny said the “flagrant and illegal” actions against his lawyers had left him “completely isolated from information”.He ridiculed the idea that his lawyers could have engaged in illegal activity with him since he was imprisoned, saying every document that passed between them was censored and copied.“And even here the authorities find some terrible danger, such great danger that they have to make a show of arresting three lawyers,” he said.“These are the convulsions of the system. They’re afraid. They’re not at all as strong as they think.”Navalny’s lawyers say the targeting of his lawyers crosses a new threshold of repression in Russia, where President Vladimir Putin has intensified a crackdown on dissent since launching his invasion of Ukraine last year.The Kremlin, which has painted Navalny in the past as a tool of the American CIA, declines to discuss his case or even speak his name in public.“I have the right in this court to say straight out: yes, I am against Vladimir Putin, yes I am against his rule, I will fight it,” he told a hearing on Tuesday.Orban becomes first EU leader to meet Putin since invasionTuesday 17 October 2023 16:35 , Barney Davis Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban has held talks with Vladimir Putin, becoming the first leader of a European Union nation to meet in person with the Russian president since the beginning of the war in Ukraine in February 2022.The two leaders met in Beijing ahead of an international forum on one of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s signature policies, the Belt and Road Initiative.Their meeting, which focused on Hungary’s access to Russian energy, marked the end of nearly 20 months in which western leaders eschewed contact with Mr Putin over his invasion of Ukraine.“Hungary never wanted to confront Russia, Hungary always has been eager to expand contacts,” Mr Orban told Mr Putin, according to a Russian translation of his remarks broadcast on Russian state television. Bilateral ties between the two countries have suffered because of EU sanctions against Moscow, he said.Hungary’s stance on the war has confounded its European partners and led to deadlocks in providing financial and military assistance to Kyiv.US confirms long-range ATACMS sent to UkraineTuesday 17 October 2023 15:40 , Tom Watling A US official has confirmed that the longer-range ballistic missiles long sought by Ukraine have been delivered quietly by the US and are being used on the battlefield against Russia nearly a month after President Joe Biden promised them to his Ukrainian counterpart.Ukraine’s President Volodymyr Zelensky and other Ukrainian leaders have been urgently pressing the US to provide the Army Tactical Missile System, known as ATACMS. Their delivery to the war front was shrouded in secrecy, with the expectation that the first public acknowledgement would come when the missiles were used on the battlefield.The official was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter before an official announcement and spoke Tuesday on the condition of anonymity.The confirmation comes as rumours swirl today that the missiles use to strike the Berdyansk airfield in occupied Ukraine were ATACMS. Images of the submunitions, posted earlier in this blog, are believed to be the remnants of an ATACM. More missile debris from the Berdyansk missile attackTuesday 17 October 2023 15:22 , Tom Watling More images have emerged showing the detritus of a Ukrainian missile attack on occupied territories. More missile debris from Berdiansk airbase area published by Russians. [*https://t.co/9cY8ThlJPe*](https://t.co/9cY8ThlJPe) [*pic.twitter.com/if5KUQoQom*](https://t.co/if5KUQoQom) — Special Kherson Cat (@bayraktar\_1love) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1714285259725128149?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russian strikes in Kherson injure eight peopleTuesday 17 October 2023 15:08 , Tom Watling Russian attacks in Kherson have injured eight people, the local governor has claimed. Russia struck the southern Ukrainian region four times throughout the day, including a hospital, residential buildings, transportation enterprise, and the city center, according to Oleksandr Prokudin. Consequences of the Russian attack after 4 pm on the centre of Kherson.[*https://t.co/mfQxgz23XD*](https://t.co/mfQxgz23XD) [*pic.twitter.com/wrmsDLXt0p*](https://t.co/wrmsDLXt0p) — Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/EuromaidanPress/status/1714279880496738377?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine restores more than 400 hospitals after Russian invasionTuesday 17 October 2023 13:46 , Barney Davis Ukraine’s Health Ministry announced that 410 healthcare facilities, damaged during the ongoing Russian invasion have been fully restored.They added a further 413 are in various stages of restoration. The ministry emphasized that the restoration of the medical infrastructure remains a top priority for the state.“After all, every patient in every corner of Ukraine should have unimpeded access to the necessary medical care,” the Ministry claims, adding that along with its partners, it is tirelessly working towards this mission, even in the face of systemic bombardments from adversaries.Russia taunts United States with plans to leave nuclear test ban treatyTuesday 17 October 2023 13:42 , Barney Davis Russia’s parliament took the first step on Tuesday towards revoking ratification of the [*Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty*](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-is-nuclear-test-ban-treaty-why-is-russia-changing-its-position-2023-10-17/) and its top lawmaker warned the United States that Moscow might even abandon the pact altogether.Russia says the aim is to restore parity with the United States, which has signed but never ratified the 1996 treaty, and that it will not resume testing unless Washington does.“Our vote is an answer to the USA -to their crass approach to their duties to maintain global security,” Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, a member of President Vladimir Putin’s Security Council, told parliament.Russia claims US ATACMS used in airfield attackTuesday 17 October 2023 13:01 , Tom Watling Russian sources have posted submunitions from the attack at the Berdyansk airfield this morning, claiming that they are indicative of US ATACMS long-range missiles.US President Joe Biden told his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky during his last trip to Washington in September that a few of the long-range missiles would be sent to Ukraine.In a post on Telegram, multiple milbloggers claimed that pictures from Berdyansk had shown “remnants of M74 cluster submunitions from an ATACMS ballistic missile”.The Independent could not confirm these reports.M74 submunition reportedly at Berdyansk airfield. These are delivered by MGM-140 missiles. [*https://t.co/JSX3lFKbYD*](https://t.co/JSX3lFKbYD) [*pic.twitter.com/tfS0uW1o8C*](https://t.co/tfS0uW1o8C) — Benjamin Pittet (@COUPSURE) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/COUPSURE/status/1714243723989496311?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Putin meets with Hungarian PM in BeijingTuesday 17 October 2023 12:25 , Tom Watling Vladimir Putin has met with the Hungarian PM in Beijing, declaring that he is “pleased” he has “preserved” his relationship with the European Union member state."In today’s geopolitical conditions, the opportunities for maintaining contacts and developing relations are very limited,” Putin said.“Nevertheless, one cannot but be pleased that with many countries in Europe, our relations are being preserved and are developing. One of these countries is Hungary.”Mr Orban said: “Hungary has never wanted to confront Russia, just the opposite, Hungary’s goal has always been to establish and expand mutually best contacts, and we have succeeded.”Putin met with Hungary's pro-Russian Prime Minister Viktor Orban in Beijing"In today's geopolitical conditions, the opportunities for maintaining contacts and developing relations are very limited, nevertheless, one cannot but be pleased that with many countries in Europe, our… [*pic.twitter.com/uYWJ9Bhllm*](https://t.co/uYWJ9Bhllm) — NEXTA (@nexta\_tv) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1714237910080225504?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Further info on Ukrainian strikes on Russian airfieldsTuesday 17 October 2023 12:02 , Tom Watling The Ukrainian Special Forces have released further claims about overnight operations against two Russian airfields in occupied territories. Successful SOF operation to strike russian airbases in Berdiansk and Luhansk. As a result, enemy’s losses are: -9 helicopters destroyed;-1 air defense launcher; -special vehicles;-ammo depots; -air strips were severely damaged.— SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES OF UKRAINE (@SOF\_UKR) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/SOF_UKR/status/1714232141381341335?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russian attacks in southern Ukraine injure fourTuesday 17 October 2023 11:30 , Tom Watling Russian attacks overnight have injured four people in southern Ukraine, a local governor has claimed.Kherson Oblast Governor Oleksandr Prokudin said Russia launched 32 attacks throughout Monday and overnight, “firing 158 shells from mortars, artillery, Grads, tanks, aviation and UAVs”.He added: “The Russian military aimed at the residential quarters of the populated areas of the region; medical institutions in Beryslav.”He later said on Tuesday morning that further attacks had taken place.“As a result of the shelling, people were injured. Two employees of the security company were injured. Which were in a company car during the shelling,” he said.“Another wounded man is a 47-year-old man. He was hospitalised in the surgery department with shrapnel injuries to both lower legs. The condition of the victim is medium.”Ukraine claims to have destroyed ‘Helicopters, ammunition and equipment’Tuesday 17 October 2023 11:02 , Tom Watling Ukraine has claimed to have destroyed “helicopters, ammunition and equipment” in a series of strikes on Russian military airfields in occupied territories.Their claims have not been confirmed but [*satellite imagery from the end of September*](https://twitter.com/bradyafr/status/1707847715789672710) showed more than 20 Russian helicopters positioned in Berdyansk, which was one of the airfields attacked overnight.Footage of the aftermath in Berdyansk appears to show a fire raging through the airfield.This morning Armed Forces of Ukraine successfully struck russian helicopters and aviation equipment at the temporarily occupied Berdyansk and Luhansk Airfields, – [*@AFUStratCom*](https://twitter.com/AFUStratCom?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) reports. [*pic.twitter.com/UVFYmeJQ1u*](https://t.co/UVFYmeJQ1u) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1714211238043910155?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia to return four Ukrainian children to their families as part of Qatari-brokered dealTuesday 17 October 2023 10:45 , Tom Watling Four [*children*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/children) from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are to be to be returned to their families from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) in a deal brokered by [*Qatar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/qatar). The youngest is two years old, while the oldest is 17.A seven-year-old boy [*returned to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-counter-offensive-putin-war-latest-b2430834.html) on Monday via Estonia after he was reunited with his grandmother in Qatar’s Moscow embassy last week, the official said. The two-year-old boy was handed over to Qatari diplomats in Moscow on Monday, and a nine-year-old boy and a 17-year-old girl are due to be handed over this week, the official said.The Ukrainian Presidential Office said the children would all be home soon.“We are bringing home four Ukrainian children illegally deported to the Russian Federation,” Andriy Yermak, head of the presidential office, said on X, formerly known as Twitter. He gave no further details.You can read the full report below. Photos shows the Ghosts of BakhmutTuesday 17 October 2023 10:26 , Tom Watling Photos posted online have shown the Ghosts of Bakhmut, a group of Ukrianian snipers positioned around the beseiged city in eastern Ukraine. For months, a team of 20 Ukrainian snipers, known as the Ghosts of Bakhmut, has been tirelessly eliminating Russian forces in an eastern Ukrainian city utterly destroyed by intense combat. AFP, AP via RFE/RL [*pic.twitter.com/NwINoiMGSy*](https://t.co/NwINoiMGSy) — Euromaidan Press (@EuromaidanPress) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/EuromaidanPress/status/1714210664577638723?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukrainian forces release video of downed Russian Mi-8 helicopter: ‘It burns beautifully’Tuesday 17 October 2023 09:53 , Tom Watling[*Ukraine’s military*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/israel-ukraine-gaza-war-conflict-shelling-b2430065.html) has released a video of the burning wreckage of a Russian Mi-8 helicopter on the war’s southern frontline, saying the aircraft was shot down by paratroopers.“The Russian Mi-8 was shot down. Great work by the 25th Separate Airborne Brigade. It burns beautifully. Well done, warriors,” said Colonel General Oleksandr Syrskyi, heading the Ukrainian armed ground forces on[*one of the southern Ukrainian fronts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-poland-latest-news-b2430234.html). A 12-second [*video*](https://t.me/osirskiy/392) of the helicopter engulfed in flames was shared by General Syrskyi on his official Telegram channel late on Sunday. The location and the time of the destruction of the Russian helicopter was not immediately clear.You can watch it in full below. [*Ukrainian forces release video of downed Russian Mi-8 helicopter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-mi-8-helicopter-crash-latest-b2430259.html) China's foreign ministry says President Xi, Russia's Putin will exchange views on bilateral tiesTuesday 17 October 2023 09:41 , Tom Watling China’s foreign minsitry has said President Xi Jinping and Russia’s President Vladimir Putin will exchange views on bilateral ties and issues of common concern in their proposed meeting at the Belt and Road Forum in Beijing on Tuesday. Putin arrives in ChinaTuesday 17 October 2023 09:04 , Tom Watling Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has arrived in [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) to meet with his Chinese counterpart [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) , on a trip aimed at showing the “no limits” partnership between [*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) and Russia.Putin flew into the Beijing Capital International Airport on Tuesday morning.He is among over 100 representatives from different [*countries*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/countries) attending an event to mark the 10-year anniversary of President Xi’s initiative to grow China’s overseas interests through various projects.This latest trip comes just days after Putin’s visit to [*Kyrgyzstan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyrgyzstan) , a Central Asian nation with strong [*ties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ties) to [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow). You can watch the full video below. [*Putin arrives in China on second foreign trip since March 2023*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/vladimir-putin-russia-president-china-foreign-visit-b2430895.html) Footage shows aftermath of attack in Berdyansk -claimTuesday 17 October 2023 08:50 , Tom Watling Footage posted online has appeared to show the aftermath of a Ukrainian strike on a military airfield in occupied Berdyansk. Locals report explosions and secondary detonations in Berdiansk. Video is allegedly from Berdiansk. [*pic.twitter.com/T6qaRczT8l*](https://t.co/T6qaRczT8l) — Special Kherson Cat (@bayraktar\_1love) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/bayraktar_1love/status/1714077753517932659?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Putin arrives in China ahead of meeting with Xi JinpingTuesday 17 October 2023 08:32 , Tom Watling Russian President Vladimir Putin has arrived in Beijing to meet with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping on a widely watched trip aimed at showcasing the trust and “no-limits”. Russian air force bloggers angry at ‘serious losses’ overnightTuesday 17 October 2023 08:15 , Tom Watling Russian military bloggers associated with the air force have admitted it “is not a good morning” over reports that Ukraine had struck airfields in occupied Luhansk and nearby Berdyansk.Fighterbomber, a Telegram channel associated with the air force, described the attack as “one of the most serious blows of all time in the Northern Military District”.He added: “There are losses in both people and technology.”You can see further comments from other milbloggers attached in the report below.Satellite images from the occupied Berdyansk military airfield at the end of last month showed more than 20 Russian helicopters, while subsequent graphics showed they were building new revetments and shelters for vehicles and equipment at the site. Somewhat major news-Russian Air Force adjacent telegram channel Fighterbomber confirms a large Ukrainian attack last night, alluding to serious losses.Ukrainian forces reportedly targeted Berdyansk and Luhansk airfields, both heavily populated by Russian aviation assets. [*pic.twitter.com/Z6PT3AMyPG*](https://t.co/Z6PT3AMyPG) — OSINTtechnical (@Osinttechnical) [*October 17, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Osinttechnical/status/1714165411208413651?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine makes overnight strike on Russian airfield, claims KyivTuesday 17 October 2023 08:00 , Tom Watling Ukraine’s forces made successful overnight strikes on Russian airfields and equipment near the cities of Luhansk and Berdyansk in territory controlled by Russian forces, Ukraine’s military said on Tuesday."The Armed Forces of Ukraine made well-aimed strikes on enemy airfields and helicopters near the temporarily occupied Luhansk and Berdyansk," the Ukrainian military’s communication department said on the Telegram messaging app.Vladimir Rogov, a Russian-installed official in parts of the Zaporizhzhia region controlled by Moscow in Ukraine’s southeast, said, however, that the strikes on Berdyansk were not successful."According to preliminary information, our air defence system successfully intercepted enemy rockets," Rogov said on the Telegram. "Information about victims and possible damage is being clarified."Berdiansk is a port city in Zaporizhzhia on the northern coast of the Sea of Azov, which is connected to the Black Sea.Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Moscow.Since the start of its counteroffensive in June, Ukraine has made frequent air attacks on Russia-controlled territory, aiming to destroy military equipment and undermine Moscow’s war efforts.Russia revoking ratification of nuclear test ban treatyTuesday 17 October 2023 07:40 , Tom Watling Russia is revoking ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty because the irresponsible attitude of the United States to global security, the speaker of the lower house of the Russian parliament said on Tuesday.President Vladimir Putin, who earlier this month suggested that Russia revoke ratification of the 1996 treaty because the United States had not ratified it, said he was not ready to say whether or not Russia would resume nuclear testing.“In the interests of ensuring the security of our country, we are withdrawing the ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty,” Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin said ahead of a debate and parliamentary vote on revoking ratification.Volodin said that while Russia had ratified the treaty in 2000, Washington had failed to ratify because of its “irresponsible attitude to global security issues”.“The Russian Federation will do everything to protect its citizens and to maintain global strategic parity,” Volodin said.While Russia is revoking ratification, it will remain a signatory and will continue to cooperate with the test ban treaty organisation and the global monitoring system which alerts the world to any test.A resumption of nuclear tests by Russia, the United States or China could indicate the start of a new nuclear arms race between the big powers who stopped nuclear testing in the years following the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.As the conflict in Israel rages on, the world must not forget about UkraineTuesday 17 October 2023 04:00 , Independent Editorial Russian troops are shelling the Ukrainian town of Avdiivka with such relentlessness that emergency workers have been unable to enter destroyed buildings to remove the bodies. Ukrainian generals have said that fighting in eastern frontline towns has “worsened” significantly in the last few days, a consequence of Ukraine’s promised counteroffensive having been far less successful than had been hoped (Vladimir Putin, for all that his words are worth, said on Sunday that it had “failed completely”).Ukrainian soldiers have been reduced to firing their high-powered, long-range howitzer guns, supplied to them by the UK, just once a day, owing to a shortage of ammunition to put in them.This, but for horrifying events in Israel and Gaza, would have been last week’s news. There is always a concern that when people are forced to reprioritise what they care about that governments follow suit. That somehow events in Israel and Gaza might lessen the resolve and the unity of Western countries to support Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Reality doesn’t quite work like that. Commitments made are not unmade. Promises do not simply get broken. Not least as, for now, the horrific terrorist attack in Israel and the ongoing retribution do not come with extraordinary demands for assistance from Israel’s allies.Read more below: [*Editorial: As the conflict in Israel rages on, we must not forget about Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/israel-ukraine-gaza-war-conflict-shelling-b2430065.html) Government told it must make visa decisions for Ukrainians in UK soonTuesday 17 October 2023 00:30 , Katy Clifton 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 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, 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.“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.”Russian governor reported to police for speaking out over Putin’s warMonday 16 October 2023 23:30 , Arpan Rai A Russian governor who said that Moscow had not prepared for its invasion of Ukraine and did not “need” the continuing war has been reported to the police.Natalya Komarova, a member of president Vladimir Putin’s governing United Russia party and the governor of Russian Khanty-Masiysk region, on Saturday criticised the conflict that has stretched to nearly 600 days during a meeting with residents of the Siberian city of Nizhnevartovsk.Ms Komarova was confronted by the wife of a mobilised Russian man fighting in Ukraine who had asked why her husband was not provided with the necessary equipment to fight.“Are you asking me (why your husband does not have equipment) knowing that I’m the governor and not the minister of defence?” the official said.She added: “As a whole, we did not prepare for this war. We don’t need it. We were building a completely different world, so in this regard, there will certainly be some inconsistencies and unresolved issues,” according to a video of the event posted on social media.Read more below: [*Russian governor reported to police for speaking out over Putin’s ‘unnecessary’ war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-governor-police-against-ukraine-war-putin-latest-b2430240.html) 'We cannot allow Ukraine to lose the war for economic reasons’Monday 16 October 2023 22:00 , Jabed Ahmed US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen has said support for Ukraine remained a “top priority” for the US and Europe, calling it crucial to underpin Ukraine‘s military battle against Russia’s invasion.She said the Biden administration was committed to supporting Ukraine “for as long as it takes” and would fight to ensure a bipartisan majority in the Congress enacted “robust” and uninterrupted assistance for the war-torn country.“We cannot allow Ukraine to lose the war for economic reasons when it has shown an ability to succeed on the battlefield,” Yellen said in remarks prepared for her third meeting with the Eurogroup euro zone finance ministers.Yellen’s meeting with the Eurogroup comes as the Biden administration prepares to push through a new military assistance package worth well over $2 billion for both Ukraine and Israel, which is preparing a ground invasion after a deadly Oct. 7 attack by the militant Hamas group that rules Gaza.ICYMI: Latest MoD intelligence updateMonday 16 October 2023 20:44 , Jabed Ahmed The purported Private Military Company (PMC) Redut is recruiting mercenaries under the guise of “volunteers”, including former Wagner personnel, the Ministry of Defence has said in its latest update. “The Russian General Staff Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) likely supervises and finances the group’s activities, including its recruitment,” the MoD said on Monday morning. Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 16 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/Up4ldmPd9Z*](https://t.co/Up4ldmPd9Z) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/MIIFxg5O1D*](https://t.co/MIIFxg5O1D) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 16, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1713850808431775939?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russian official to visit North Korea amid weapons claims

Russia’s foreign minister will visit North Korea this week, days after the United States claimed Pyongyang had delivered munitions and military equipment to Russia for use in the fighting in Ukraine.

The ministry said Sergei Lavrov will be in North Korea on Wednesday and Thursday, but did not specify any meetings or the aims of the trip.

The White House said on Friday that more than 1,000 containers of equipment and ammunition have been sent to Russia from North Korea.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un travelled to Russia last month to meet President Vladimir Putin and visit key military sites, triggering speculation about a possible North Korean plan to refill Russia’s munition stores that have been drained by the protracted conflict with Ukraine.

Putin in call with Netanyahu

Russian president Vladimir Putin has told Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a phone call on Monday that Russia was ready to help end the confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians, the Kremlin said.

“Vladimir Putin informed (Netanyahu) about the steps Russia is taking to help normalize the situation, prevent further escalation of violence and prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in the Gaza Strip,” the Kremlin said.

Earlier on Monday Putin discussed the crisis with the leaders of Iran, Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian Authority and said any form of violence against civilians was unacceptable, the Kremlin said. In these discussions Putin reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to ending the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Russia ‘aiming to recapture territory in the north east'

Russia is aiming to break through defences in the Kupiansk-Lyman sector of the front line after a sharp increase in fighting, the commander of Ukraine‘s ground forces said

Video footage released by the ground forces showed General Oleksandr Syrskyi meeting troops at an undisclosed location in woodland, and quoted him as saying fighting in the northeastern Kupiansk-Lyman sector had “significantly escalated”.

“The enemy is preparing, seriously preparing for offensive actions, bringing in staff,” Syrskyi said in the footage posted on the Telegram messaging app. “The main goal is to break through our troops’ defences and recapture our territory.”

Ukrainian forces recaptured the city of Kupiansk and nearby areas nearly a year ago, ending months of Russian occupation following Moscow’s full-scale invasion in February 2022, but Russian forces have gone on the attack in the region again.

The Ukrainian military reported in its daily update that fighting was raging along the eastern front, particularly around Kupiansk, and near Avdiivka and Mariinka in the Donetsk region.

Russia went on the offensive around Avdiivka last week and fighting there has been intense. A strategically important town with a large coking plant, Avdiivka is located in the northern outskirts of the Donetsk region, much of which has been occupied by Russia.

Putin condemns violence against civilians in Middle East

Russian President Vladimir Putin discussed the escalation of the Israel-Palestinian conflict with the leaders of Iran, Egypt, Syria and the Palestinian Authority on Monday and said any form of violence against civilians was unacceptable, the Kremlin said.

In the conversations, “there was also serious concern about the likelihood of the conflict escalating into a regional war”, it said.

Putin reaffirmed Russia’s commitment to co-ordinate with all “constructive partners” to stop the fighting between Israel and the Palestinians.

Republican House speaker skeptical over US funding for Ukraine

Some Republicans in Congress have questioned funding for Kyiv, including Ohio Representative Jim Jordan, who has been nominated to be House speaker and leads a hardline Republican party caucus backed by former president and likely 2024 nominee Donald Trump.

Some EU countries including Hungary have also challenged Brussels’s plans.

Ukrainian Finance Minister Serhiy Marchenko told Reuters on Saturday that Ukraine is finding it harder to secure financial support.

Yellen lauded the European Union’s plans for a 50 billion euro Ukraine Facility to provide sustained economic and reconstruction support, saying that economic support should have maximum concessionality, meaning low or zero interest rates.

“Flexibility is also important, as it could enable front-loading budget support in the immediate term when it is needed most,” she said.

**Load-Date:** October 18, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Coronation -live: William and Kate make unexpected visit to concert queue*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-MCW1-DY4H-K4HT-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:30

**Length:** 5795 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Jane Dalton,Shweta Sharma and Tara Cobham

**Highlight:** ‘Excited’ royal fans started arriving at Windsor Castle hours before the star-studded concert starts at 8pm on Sunday

**Body**

The Prince and Princess of Wales have made a surprise appearance to Windsor to meet fans congregating [*for the coronation concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-latest-live-katy-perry-b2334290.html%22%20title=%22Coronation%20concert%20–%20live:%20Prince%20William%20and%20Katy%20Perry%20prepare%20for%20Windsor%20Palace%20gig%20as%20Zoe%20Ball%20drops%20out).

Crowds started arriving at Windsor Castle hours before the star-studded concert starts at 8pm on Sunday, with many draped in Union flags and wearing Union flag dresses.

William and Kate were seen shaking hands and chatting to revellers, with William telling one group of well-wishers: “Enjoy the concert tonight.”

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will be joining around 20,000 members of the public at the concert in Windsor where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

It comes after Buckingham Palace issued [*the King and Queen’s first statement*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-queen-charles-camilla-statement-b2334353.html%22%20title=%22King%20Charles%20and%20Queen%20Camilla%20issue%20first%20statement%20since%20crowning%20ceremony) since the couple was crowned, saying they were “deeply touched” by the nation’s celebration of their historic coronation.

An average of 18.8 million people in the UK watched the lavish ceremony at Westminster Abbey, with audience figures peaking at 20.4 million when the King was crowned just after midday.

Ahead of the show on Sunday evening, thousands of street parties are taking place, with people encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

[*The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-day-ceremony-b2334160.html) attended a big lunch in Cranleigh, while [*the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-princess-anne-coronation-hat-b2334121.html) will attend a community street party in Swindon, and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie will attend a big lunch in Windsor.

Coronation news – latest updates

Prince and Princess of Wales surprise coronation concert-goers to greet them in Windsor Watch live as Prince William and Princess Kate do a walkabout in Windsor Coronation celebrations continue with royals at lunches and glittering concert Everything you need to know about coronation concert Duke of Sussex returns to California on British Airways flight Peak TV audience of over 20 million watched coronation Dozens of arrests ‘set dangerous precedent' How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of the coronation

Prince and Princess of Wales surprise coronation concert-goers to greet them in Windsor

The Prince and Princess of Wales have made a surprise appearance to greet coronation concert-goers on The Long Walk in Windsor on Sunday.

Prince William and Princess Kate are chatting to well-wishers who have lined the streets after King Charles III's coronation.

The Prince and Princess of Wales surprised fans in Windsor with a walkabout as the King and Queen thanked well-wishers for their support.

William and Kate made the unannounced appearance ahead of Sunday’s star-studded coronation concert at Windsor Castle and were seen shaking hands and chatting to revellers.

Scores of people crowded around the couple, with William crouching down to chat to a boy and girl wearing golden crowns.

The prince and princess looked relaxed, with William telling one group of well-wishers: “Enjoy the concert tonight.”

William and Kate sip cocktails with fans on Windsor walkabout

The Prince and Princess of Wales sipped homemade cocktails with royal fans as they soaked up the atmosphere in Windsor ahead of Sunday’s star-studded coronation concert, which starts at 8pm.

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.

‘Such an honour’ to be at UK’s premier street party

Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty this afternoon hosted a Big Lunch at Downing Street to celebrate King Charles III’s coronation.

Among those attending the lunch at Downing Street was Zoe Clark-Coates, who runs a charity with her husband, Andy, supporting people who have gone through baby loss.

She is also co-chairing a pregnancy loss review for the government.

She said: “ I was sitting next to the US ambassador, who was lovely, and very close to the First Lady.

“It’s such an honour to be amongst so many people doing such great work. It’s so moving.”

Met Police arrest of women’s safety volunteers on coronation day branded ‘absolute disgrace’

The Met Police has been fiercely criticised by Labour MPs for arresting women’s safety volunteers in central London during the early hours of coronation day (Maya Oppenheim writes).

Campaigners told The Independent that volunteers who work for Westminster Council’s night life safety team had been detained in custody for 15 hours.

The Metropolitan Police said that, at around 2am on Saturday, three people were stopped by officers and arrested in Soho on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance. Britain’s largest police force said rape alarms were some of the items they seized.

Click here to read on:

[*Met Police called a ‘disgrace’ for arresting volunteers on coronation day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/metropolitan-police-volunteers-coronation-day-b2334358.html)

‘I curtsied to the Archbishop of Canterbury’

A woman in a Union flag dress and headboppers at the Big Coronation Lunch in Canterbury curtsied when she met the Archbishop as he spoke to attendees.

Michelle Downer, 45, from Canterbury, said: “I did this really embarrassing thing. I curtsied to him!

“But isn’t it amazing to be at the cathedral and meeting Justin Welby?”

On the Big Lunch, she said: “I love seeing everyone come together. Why would you not want to be here?”

Regarding the coronation, she said: “I didn’t move from the TV.”

Ms Downer then explained how her husband had been decorating and she told him he needed to change before coming in to watch the ceremony – which he took very seriously, changing into a waistcoat and tails for the occasion.

Bongbong Marcos meets King Charles

Bongbong Marcos, president of the Philippines met King Charles on coronation day.

“Deeply honored to attend the royal reception with First Lady Liza Marcos at Buckingham Palace,” he wrote on Twitter.

Deeply honored to attend the royal reception with First Lady Liza Marcos at Buckingham Palace.We underscore the thriving relationship between the Philippines and the United Kingdom, which has been promising in increasing trade, investment, and cultural exchanges for the… [*pic.twitter.com/0yuAx4lyxW*](https://t.co/0yuAx4lyxW) — Bongbong Marcos (@bongbongmarcos) [*May 6, 2023*](https://twitter.com/bongbongmarcos/status/1654752422030614529?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In pictures: Thousands take part in Big Lunch and street parties as coronation celebrations continue 16:45 , Liam James Thousands of people across the country have marked the coronation with street celebrations, tea parties and lunches, as the festivities to mark King Charles III’s continued for a second day.Saturday’s ceremony – a mingling of solemn religious rites and royal pomp – saw Charles become the 40th monarch to be crowned in Westminster Abbey since 1066.On Sunday, formality gave way to festivity as Britons joined together to share in a day of eating, drinking and music-making – with the coronation concert set to bring the weekend to a rousing conclusion.[*Coronation celebrations continue as thousands take part in Big Lunch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronation-celebrations-big-lunch-street-parties-b2334359.html) London’s flag-mad estate hails new king16:35 , Liam James The Kirby estate in Bermondsey, London is known for decorating on national occasions.You may have seen those old flatblocks strewn with England flags for the World Cup last year, or any number of earlier international tournaments.Today, though, they wear the Union Jack as residents gather to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.Celebrities and singers walk red carpet ahead of King Charles's coronation concert16:28 , Liam JamesIndependent TV brings you coverage live from Windsor Castle, where guests and performers are arriving ahead of the 8PM coronation concert:Royal fans left surprised by Prince Harry’s Dior coronation suit16:06 , Tara Cobham[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) wore a bespoke suit designed by [*Dior*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dior) to his father’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) on Saturday (6 May) and royal fans have been sharing their thoughts on the look.Luxury [*fashion house*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fashion-house) Dior tweeted on Saturday that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born [*Kim Jones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kim-jones) , saying to do so was an “honour”.Royal fans were surprised by Harry’s decision to wear Dior, not least because it was a French brand – royals are typically dressed by British designers for large events – but because the suit simply looked “ordinary”.Ellie Muir reports.[*‘Just ordinary’: Royal fans left surprised by Prince Harry’s Dior coronation suit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-suit-dior-coronation-b2334390.html) King ‘very pleased’ with coronation and rain ‘didn’t dampen spirits’ -Dean of Canterbury16:02 , Tara Cobham The King was “very pleased” with his coronation day and the rain “didn’t damp the spirits”, the Dean of Canterbury has said.The dean said: “The King’s very pleased with the day and even the rain didn’t damp the spirits.“It was very clear everyone was out to enjoy themselves.”On the Archbishop’s relationship with the King, he said: “Of course, there’s a privacy about that relationship that’s so important, that’s held special and sacred.”Coronation celebrations continue with military parade in Glasgow15:59 , Tara Cobham Cheers rang through the centre of Glasgow as hundreds of military personnel gathered for a special parade to mark the King’s coronation, which was set to be one of the main celebrations north of the border.The city’s Lord Lieutenant, Jacqueline McLaren, made a speech in George Square to launch the event, which also included inspection of a guard of honour and three cheers for the King and Queen, followed by the national anthem.As well as military servicemen and women, veterans and cadets as young as 10 gathered for the march to Glasgow Cathedral.In her speech, the Lord Lieutenant, who attended the coronation at Westminster Abbey on behalf of Glasgow on Saturday, congratulated Charles and Camilla. She said: “On behalf of the city on this day, which marks the first full day of our new King’s reign, I wish the royal couple longevity, happiness and wisdom.”Meanwhile, more than 200 Coronation Big Lunch celebrations have been registered across the weekend.Some 1,500 people attended the Church Green in the Royal Deeside village, on the doorstep of the Balmoral estate.Watch Rishi Sunak host coronation lunch at Downing Street15:55 , Tara Cobham[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and his wife [*Akshata Murty*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/akshata-murty) this afternoon hosted a Big Lunch at [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street) to celebrate [*King Charles III’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii?CMP=ILC-refresh) s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) (7 May).Community heroes, [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) families and youth groups attended the special event, with US first lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) even dropping by for a cup of tea.The street was transformed into a symbol of [*patriotism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/patriotism) , plastered in union jacks while British produce was served up to guests.It’s thought more than 67,000 of the celebratory lunches have been planned across the UK this weekend.Watch here:[*Rishi Sunak and wife host Big Lunch at Downing Street in honour of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/coronation-big-lunch-rishi-downing-street-b2334393.html) Prince and Princess of Wales share behind-the-scenes footage from coronation15:43 , Tara Cobham The Prince and Princess of Wales have shared behind-the-scenes footage from the coronation of King Charles III.Following King Charles and Queen Camilla’s coronation on 6 May, Prince William and Princess Kate took to social media to thank those who made the historic event possible. “What. A. Day,” the royal couple captioned the post. “Thank you to everyone who made it happen.”The video showed sweet moments of the Waleses and their three children – Prince George, nine, Princess Charlotte, eight, and Prince Louis, four – from their time at the coronation. The clip began with their only daughter dressed in her white Alexander McQueen dress and cape sporting a wide smile, before the family hopped into cars to take them to Westminster Abbey.Watch the video here:[*Prince and Princess of Wales share behind-the-scenes footage from coronation: ‘What. A. Day.’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-william-kate-video-b2334389.html) Prince William handed royal-themed ale by royal fan15:34 , Emily Atkinson The Prince and Princess of Wales were showered with affection by concert-goers as they embarked on a spur-of-the-moment walkabout along The Long Walk in Windsor on Sunday.With many raising a toast to the new King across the country — as Britons assemble for street parties and lunches – one royal fan felt Prince William should join in, handing him a royal-themed ale. William was pictured holding a can of what appears to be [*‘Return of the King’ ale*](https://www.beerguild.co.uk/news/return-of-the-king/) – a beer created to celebrate the coronation from Windsor & Eton Brewery.The ale, made using organic barley from the local Royal Farm and organic English hops, is emblazoned with a bust of King Charles, and described by its creators as a fitting tribute to his “lifetime of service to the country and his passionate support of the environment.”Prince William and Princess Kate joke with children as they greet royal fans at Windsor Castle15:17 , Emily Atkinson[*The Prince*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-prince) and Princess of Wales surprised royal fans waiting at [*Windsor Castle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor-castle) for an impromptu walkabout ahead of the coronation concert this evening (7 May).Kate and William arrived at the Long Walk this afternoon sipping gin and beer, as fans, who have waited out for hours, ran over to greet them.One little girl got so overwhelmed that she burst into tears upon meeting the royals, while William could be heard telling another group to “enjoy the concert”.More on this from our video team here:[*Prince and Princess of Wales joke with children during Windsor Castle walkabout*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/windsor-castle-william-kate-walkabout-b2334380.html) Big Lunch highlights15:06 , Emily Atkinson Street parties are in full swing across the country, as the festivities to mark the crowning of King Charles III continue.In a jolly addition to yesterday’s proceedings, Britons are joining together to share in a day of eating, drinking and, later, music – with the coronation concert set to strike up later this evening.Here are some of the highlights from Britain’s bunting-lined streets:In a jolly addition to yesterday’s proceedings, Britons are joining together to share in a day of eating, drinking and, later, music – with the coronation concert set to strike up later this evening.Jill Biden spotted at Downing Street coronation lunch14:17 , Tara CobhamWatch live as Prince William and Princess Kate do a walkabout in Windsor14:09 , Tara Cobham Watch live as the Prince and Princess of Wales meet royal fans in Windsor on a walkabout on Sunday, 7 May.Prince William and Princess Kate are chatting to well-wishers who have lined the streets after King Charles III's coronation.Read more and watch here:[*Watch live: William and Kate meet royal fans on walkabout in Windsor after coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-king-charles-william-kate-windsor-b2334369.html) Rishi Sunak arrives at lunch in Downing Street to celebrate coronation13:53 , Tara Cobham Rishi Sunak has arrived at a lunch in Downing Street to celebrate the King’s coronation.Alongside his wife Akshata Murty and daughters Anoushka and Krishna, he walked out of the famous Number 10 door saying: “Hello, how are you?”He then began mingling with the invited guests.His two daughters and his wife Akshata Murty are also hosting the event.Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh attending Coronation Big Lunch in Cranleigh, Surrey13:50 , Tara CobhamPrince of Wales to give speech at coronation concert13:49 , Tara Cobham The Prince of Wales will take to the stage and give a speech at the coronation concert, Kensington Palace has said.The Palace also tweeted footage of William walking up to a microphone during behind-the-scenes preparations.A voice can be heard saying: “OK, Prince of Wales. It’s time for your rehearsal” before William strides out towards the microphone.Final preparations for this evening’s [*#Coronation*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Coronation?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Concert… [*pic.twitter.com/3bc8yfiiV8*](https://t.co/3bc8yfiiV8) — The Prince and Princess of Wales (@KensingtonRoyal) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/KensingtonRoyal/status/1655187914668625922?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Guests arrive at Downing Street for coronation lunch with Prime Minister13:27 , Tara Cobham Guests have begun arriving in Downing Street for a lunch with the Prime Minister and his wife to mark the King’s coronation.There was a hum of excited chatter as those invited – including volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and youth group members – sipped fruit drinks and took photos in front of the famous Number 10 door as they awaited the arrival of Rishi Sunak.The street was bedecked in Union flag bunting and music was being played by the RAF Northolt brass quintet.Mr Sunak and Akshata Murty are hosting the event as part of the Big Lunch celebrations taking place across the country over the coronation weekend.King and Queen “deeply touched” by nation’s celebration of coronation13:20 , Tara Cobham The King and Queen were “deeply touched” by the nation’s celebration of their historic coronation, Buckingham Palace has said.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.”In pictures: Coronation celebrations on day after ceremony13:17 , Tara CobhamAnti-monarchy group head labels arrests ‘direct attack on our democracy’12:59 , Tara Cobham The head of an anti-monarchy group arrested ahead of a planned protest on coronation day has labelled the detention of him and others as a "direct attack on our democracy".Graham Smith, chief executive of Republic, was released by the Metropolitan Police at around 11pm on Saturday after being detained in the morning before the King's procession to Westminster Abbey.In a statement, he said: "Yesterday, as we prepared for a peaceful and lawful protest, a number of Republic's team were arrested and detained for the rest of the day."These arrests are a direct attack on our democracy and the fundamental rights of every person in the country. Each and every police officer involved on the ground should hang their heads in shame. They showed no judgement, no common sense and no basic decency. This was a heavy handed action which had the appearance of a pre-determined arrest that would have occurred regardless of the evidence or our actions."The right to protest peacefully in the UK no longer exists. Instead we have a freedom to protest that is contingent on political decisions made by ministers and senior police officers."The right to dissent and protest is one of the most profound and important rights in a democracy. Many people will disagree with what we were protesting about, but that right to protest must be protected. Anyone may find themselves wanting to protest against a government policy, a grave injustice or in solidarity with victims of a visiting world leader. Such protests must always be freely conducted as a matter of right, not on the basis of permission from the state."What time do the pubs close today?12:54 , Tara Cobham Keen to raise a late-night [*toast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/toast) to[*celebrate the coronation,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html) or just because you’re enjoying the bank holiday weekend? Depending on what part of the UK you are in, you may well be in luck.[*Pubs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pubs) in [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) and [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) will be able to continue serving customers for two hours beyond their usual closing time, [*with the extended licensing hours applying from 11pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-updates-charles-camilla-harry-b2333653.html). There won’t be extended licensing hours on the bank holiday Monday (8 May) but you can expect events and activities happening across England and Wales to celebrate the weekend.Ellie Muir reports.[*What time do the pubs close today?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/pubs-closing-time-today-bank-holiday-b2334339.html) Is there a bank holiday tomorrow for the coronation?12:51 , Tara Cobham[*Is there a bank holiday tomorrow for King Charles’ coronation?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/is-tomorrow-a-bank-holiday-in-uk-b2334336.html) Queen’s coronation bouquet laid in Westminster Abbey12:38 , Tara Cobham The Queen’s coronation bouquet has been laid at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior, Buckingham Palace has said.The flowers were placed on the grave at Westminster Abbey at Camilla’s request following Saturday’s coronation service at the church.A tweet from the King and Queen’s official twitter account – @RoyalFamily – shows a delicate bouquet of yellow, white and pink flowers sitting on the tomb.It is a simple-tied bunch of English spring flowers including auriculas and lily of the valley – both of which featured in the Queen’s wedding bouquet in 2005 – along with hellebores, which the King wore in his buttonhole during the couple’s wedding 18 years ago and are a particular favourite of his.Weather set to warm up for Coronation Big Lunches12:31 , Tara Cobham Sunday looks set to be the hottest day of the year so far as coronation celebrations continue with Big Lunches across the country.Highs of 23C are forecast for the East Midlands and down to London, beating the previous high for this year of 21.2C on April 17.Some showers are predicted across eastern England and Scotland, but the vast majority of the country can expect sunny spells throughout the day, the Met Office said.The warmest temperatures are expected in the late afternoon, when many Britons will be out enjoying their Coronation Big Lunches.It will be welcome news for many royal fans who spent Saturday standing in the heavy rain in central London to catch a glimpse of the coronation procession.However, many said even the wet weather could not dampen their spirits.Natalie Mahone, 32, camped overnight on The Mall with her mother and said she would be out to see the coronation “come rain or shine”.“Come rain or shine we have come to see the coronation and King Charles,” she said. “Everyone I’ve spoken to has said ‘If it rains we’ll get wet, we’ll dry out’ – the weather is not going to put a lot of people off.”Royal fans arrive in Windsor hours before coronation concert starts12:26 , Tara Cobham Royal fans have started arriving in Windsor hours before the coronation concert at 8pm.People draped with Union flags and dressed in Union flag dresses have been flooding off trains at the station.Garry and Donna Howarth travelled down from Bolton after winning tickets to the event.Mr Howarth, dressed in a Union flag blazer, said: “We are here just for the concert. We have come down for the weekend.“We are about 10 hours early but we will have a look around and see what we can.”Mrs Howarth said: “I’m so excited to be here.”The pair are keen to see opera singers perform at the concert and decided to avoid the coronation on Saturday because of the rain.The adorable prince who reinvented the royal wave... how Louis stole the show again12:23 , Tara Cobham Prince Louis may only be five years old, but he’s already perfected the art of an iconic balcony moment.The young prince, who hit the headlines last year when he kept the crowd entertained at his great-grandmother’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations, once again stole the show with an adorable double handed wave when he appeared on the Palace balcony after his grandfather’s crowning moment.Eleanor Noyce and Emily Atkinson report.[*The adorable prince who reinvented the royal wave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-louis-wave-charles-coronation-b2334269.html) Coronation celebrations in pictures12:13 , Tara Cobham Across the country, coronation celebrations continue, with many taking part in Big Lunches.Penny Mordaunt speaks out after viral moment at King’s coronation12:05 , Tara Cobham Penny Mordaunt has addressed her starring moment at the coronation of King Charles III.The politician, 50, who is the Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was, for many people, the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce teal outfit and robust sword-bearing skills.Mordaunt has now addressed her viral moment at the coronation on Twitter, writing: “Honoured to be part of the coronation with thousands of others who played their part.“I’m very aware that our armed forces, police officers and others have been marching or standing for hours as part of the ceremony or to keep us all safe. In comparison, my job was rather easier.“Huge and heartfelt thanks to all who made this so remarkable. I’m so proud of you all and the King and Queen today.”Ellie Muir reports.[*Penny Mordaunt speaks out after viral coronation moment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/penny-mordaunt-coronation-sword-blue-b2334308.html) Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath11:56 , Tara Cobham Buckingham Palace Mall could be seen littered with rubbish including tents and flags in the aftermath of King Charles III’s coronation.Some royalists had been out there for as long as a week, and had left their soggy belongings behind after a day of bad weather.ITV’s Chris Ship, who filmed the clip, described the scene as ‘an abandoned campsite after a wet weekend at Glastonbury’.Today’s coronation celebrations (7 May), will take place at Windsor Castle, with the coronation concert happening this evening.Watch here:[*Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/coronation-mall-aftermath-litter-tents-b2334318.html) Royal fans spot Queen Camilla had names discreetly embroidered on coronation dress11:42 , Tara Cobham Queen Camilla had the names of her children and grandchildren discreetly embroidered onto the bottom of her coronation dress, alongside a tribute to her rescue dogs.The 75-year-old wore an elegant Bruce Oldfield couture gown to the coronation ceremony on Saturday.Eagle-eyed royal fans spotted the dress appeared to feature the names of her two children, Tom and Laura, along with those of her grandchildren, Gus, Freddy, Louis, Eliza and Lola. They also noticed two puppies embroidered onto the grown, thought to represent Charles and Camilla's Jack Russell Terrier rescue dogs, Beth and Bluebell.Peak TV audience of over 20 million watched coronation11:28 , Tara Cobham The King’s coronation service at Westminster Abbey was watched by more than 18 million viewers in the UK, provisional figures have shown.The lavish ceremony on Saturday which saw Charles and Camilla crowned was broadcast simultaneously on a range of channels between about 11am and 1pm, including BBC One and Two, ITV and Sky News.An average of 18.8 million people watched across 11 channels and services, with audience figures peaking at 20.4 million when the King was crowned just after midday, according to overnight ratings released by the research organisation Barb.The bad weather in much of the UK could have boosted the viewing figures for the coronation by forcing people to stay indoors.Although the figure is not quite as high as the ratings for the funeral service of the late Queen last September which was seen by 26.5 million people across more than 50 TV channels.Follow The Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here11:12 , Tara Cobham A day after King Charles III’s coronation, much of the UK is turning its attention to Windsor Castle, where an extravagent concert is being held in the new monarch’s honour.The line-up of performers for the event includes Take That, Lionel Richie, and Katy Perry.Festivities begin at 8pm. Those not in attendance who wish to do so will be able to watch the concert live on the BBC.The concert will be staged on the East Lawn of the castle’s grounds, marking the first time an event like this has taken place on the property.As well as the acts mentioned above, the night also sees acts such as Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli, Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel, and classical-soul composer Alexis Ffrench perform.FollowThe Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here.[*Coronation concert – live: Katy Perry and Take That prepare to perform as Zoe Ball drops out at last minute*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-latest-live-katy-perry-b2334290.html) Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery11:09 , Tara Cobham Lionel Richie has revealed he has a joke with King Charles III about getting a ‘Hollywood’-style makeover to remain youthful.The pair are 73 and 74-years-old respectively, and became friends after Richie did some work with the Prince’s Trust.“We have a little joke between us”, the singer began.“He says, ‘How do you look the way I look and I look the way I look?’, I said, ‘You come to Hollywood and I can help you’.”Richie is performing at tonight’s coronation concert (7 May).Watch here:[*Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-botox-lionel-richie-b2334296.html) How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of the coronation10:47 , Tara Cobham Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce outfit and stoney-faced sword-bearing.Mordaunt on Saturday 6 May became the first woman to carry the sword of state – a symbol of the new king’s authority – during the procession at Westminster Abbey.Her part in the ceremony included carrying the heavy sword for a full 51 minutes, which weighs eight pounds (3.6kg), before exchanging it for the jewelled sword of offering and presenting that to Charles. Mordaunt kept a serious face and did not break a sweat while she was watched by thousands of people.As part of an ancient custom, Mordaunt then “bought back” the glittering sword – part of the new King’s regalia or collection of objects which symbolise his responsibilities as monarch – from the Archbishop of Canterbury in exchange for 100 newly-minted 50p pieces bearing an effigy of Charles.[*Her appearance at the crowning ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/best-dressed-coronation-king-charles-b2333740.html) impressed royal fans on Twitter, with one person wondering: “Who had ‘Penny Mordaunt overshadowing everything’ on their bingo card?”Read more here: [*How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/penny-mordaunt-conservative-mp-outfit-designer-b2334257.html) Everything you need to know about coronation concert10:42 , Tara Cobham King Charles III’s coronation is well and truly upon us, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations in full swing.The official coronation took place yesterday, on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place this evening (Sunday 7 May).Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.Last summer, a royal concert was staged at Buckingham Palace for the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, titled the Party at the Palace concert. Rod Stewart, Diana Ross and Queen were among those to perform.Here’s everything you need to know:[*Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-line-up-what-time-performers-b2334286.html) Zoe Ball ‘absolutely gutted’ as sickness forces her to pull out of coronation concert10:34 , Tara Cobham Zoe Ball has said she is “absolutely gutted” as she has been forced to pull out of King Charles III's coronation concert due to sickness.The BBC Radio 2 presenter announced on social media on Sunday morning that she is “heading back to bed” instead of covering the concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday evening.The 52-year-old tweeted: “Absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me. Was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the coronation concert on BBC Radio 2 later.”She added Dermot O'Leary and Scott Mills would be covering for her as she recovers from her illness.absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the [*#coronationconcert*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/coronationconcert?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on [*@BBCRadio2*](https://twitter.com/BBCRadio2?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) later [*@radioleary*](https://twitter.com/radioleary?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@scott\_mills*](https://twitter.com/scott_mills?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) have got you covered i’m heading back to bed ️— Zoe Ball (@ZoeTheBall) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall/status/1655106691157876741?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Culture Secretary denies police went too far in policing the coronation

The Culture Secretary has denied that police went too far in policing the coronation, saying they got the “balance right” and she has “huge confidence” in them.

Lucy Frazer also said police should take into account the context of events in determining their response.

She told Sky News: “What they have to do is balance the right to protest, which is important in a democracy. At the same time there’s the right of all those other people to enjoy what was a fabulous day. I think, overall, they managed to get that balance right.”

Asked whether she trusted the police to use new laws to prevent disruptive protests, she said: “Yes, I do trust them to use those new powers. I have huge confidence in the police.

“I think it’s absolutely right that they have the powers that they need in order to ensure that people can go to go on their day-to-day lives at the same time as respecting people’s rights to protest.”

She added: “I think it is really important that they take into account the context of the event because this was an event that would have raised questions about national security. This was an event on the world stage.”

Prince Harry shuns British brands to wear Dior to coronation

The Duke of Sussex eschewed British fashion brands to wear a suit by French label Dior to his father’s coronation, fuelling speculation he may be about to sign an endorsement deal with the company.

Prince Harry was photographed in a suit with a waistcoat for the ceremony, at which he sat in the third row.

Harry, who left swiftly after the coronation to catch a flight from Heathrow, wore his dark morning suit and tie with his Afghanistan and Jubilee medals pinned to his suit jacket.

He also wore a Royal Victorian Order star and neck decoration.

Luxury fashion house Dior tweeted that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born Kim Jones, saying to do so was an “honour”.

The brand has often been a go-to choice for Harry’s wife, Meghan, who wore a Dior outfit to the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations last summer.

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports women’s safety volunteers arrested at coronation

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The Metropolitan Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the Soho area of central London on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s nightlife safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

The three people – a 37-year-old woman, a 59-year-old woman and a 47-year-old man – were taken to a south London police station, where they were questioned.

The 47-year-old man was also further arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods, police said.

All three have since been released on bail pending further inquiries.

**Load-Date:** May 7, 2023

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin installs ‘Devil’s Teeth’ defence visible from space ahead of spring offensive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:683S-6G21-DY4H-K0VJ-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 6148 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh,Martha McHardy and Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Kremlin troops occupying Ukrainian town dig in ahead of expected spring offensive

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has installed a ‘Devil’s Teeth’ anti-tank defence barricade on the front line head of a planned counter-offensive by [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in the spring.

The anti-tank ditches near Ukraine’s occupied southeastern town of Polohy stretch for 30 km (19 miles).

Behind are rows of concrete "Devil’s Teeth" barricades. Further back are defensive trenches where Russia’s troops will be positioned.

The defences visible in satellite imagery taken by Capella Space are part of a vast network of Russian fortifications sweeping down from western Russia through eastern Ukraine and on to Crimea built in readiness for a major Ukrainian attack.

Earlier, Russian forces pounded the city of [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , the months-old focal point of their attempts to capture the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas, and the head of Russia’s [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) mercenary force said Ukrainian troops were pouring in ahead of an “inevitable” counter-offensive.

The general staff of Ukraine’s armed forces, in a report on Facebook, said fighting gripped Bakhmut and nearby areas. It said Russian forces had failed to advance on two villages to the northwest. At least a dozen localities came under Russian fire.

Key points

Putin installs ‘Devil’s Teeth’ defence on front line ‘We are on the verge of a new world war,’ Russia’s Medvedev says Putin’s troops using ‘Syrian tactics’ in destruction of Bakhmut Russian troops trying to steal 'as much as they can' in Kherson Iran shipped one million rounds to Russia via Caspian Sea – report Casualties among Putin’s troops drop, says UK Ministry of Defence

Russia digs in as Ukraine prepares to attack

The anti-tank ditches near Ukraine’s occupied southeastern town of Polohy stretch for 30 km (19 miles). Behind are rows of concrete “dragon’s teeth” barricades. Further back are defensive trenches where Russia’s troops will be positioned.

The defences visible in satellite imagery taken by Capella Space are part of a vast network of Russian fortifications sweeping down from western Russia through eastern Ukraine and on to Crimea built in readiness for a major Ukrainian attack.

Thousands of Ukrainian troops have been training in the West to use different military assets on the battlefield in a combined way ahead of a counteroffensive Ukrainian officials say will come when its forces are ready.

Reuters has reviewed satellite images of thousands of defensive positions inside both Russia and along Ukrainian front lines that show it is most heavily defended in the southern Zaporizhzhia region and the gateway to the Crimean Peninsula.

Six military experts said the defences, mostly built in the wake of Ukraine’s rapid autumn advances, could make it harder for Ukraine this time and that progress would hinge on its ability to carry out complex, combined operations effectively.

“It’s not the numbers for the Ukrainians. It’s can they do this kind of warfare, combined arms operations?” said Neil Melvin, an analyst at the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). “The Russians have shown they can’t do it and they’ve gone back to their old Soviet method of attrition.”

Putin, Erdogan speak by phone before inauguration of Turkish nuclear plant

Russian President Vladimir Putin and Turkey’s President Tayyip Erdogan held talks by telephone on Thursday, their offices said, before the two countries marked the inauguration of Turkey’s first nuclear power reactor.

The Akkuyu nuclear power plant in Turkey’s southern Mersin province has been built by Russia’s state nuclear energy company Rosatom.

Erdogan thanked Putin during their call for his help on the power plant, the Turkish leader’s office said. They also discussed the Black Sea grain initiative and the situation in Ukraine, it said.

Putin said they agreed to deepen economic, trade and agricultural cooperation.

Both presidents took part virtually in a ceremony marking the loading of nuclear fuel into the first power unit at Akkuyu.

Russia rejects US request to visit detained reporter over visa snub

Russia’s Foreign Ministry said on Thursday it had rejected a request from the US embassy to visit detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich in response to Washington’s refusal to grant visas to a group of Russian journalists.

The ministry said it had summoned a senior US diplomat to hand over a formal note of protest against a decision by the United States to not grant visas to a group of Russian journalists meant to accompany Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov to the United Nations in New York this week.

There was no immediate comment on the Russian move from the US Embassy.

Ukraine wants pope to help get children back from Russia

Ukraine’s prime minister said he has asked Pope Francis during a private Vatican audience to help facilitate the return of Ukrainian children forcibly taken to Russia.

Denys Shmyhal, briefing reporters on his half-hour audience with the pontiff, said he has also invited Francis to visit Ukraine.

"I asked the Vatican and the Holy Father for help in getting back children taken by force by Russia," the prime minister said.

Kremlin welcomes Xi-Zelensky call

The Kremlin said on Thursday it welcomed anything that could bring the end of the Ukraine conflict closer when asked what it thought of a phone call a day earlier between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky

But it said it still needed to achieve the aims of its "special military operation" in Ukraine.

NATO allies send 1,500 combat vehicles, 230 tanks to Ukraine

NATO countries have delivered more than 98% of the combat vehicles promised to Ukraine amid its war with Russia, the military alliance’s chief said Thursday, giving Kyiv a bigger punch as it appears poised to launch a counteroffensive.

Along with more than 1,550 armored vehicles, 230 tanks and other equipment, member nations have sent Ukraine "vast amounts of ammunition" and also trained and equipped more than nine new Ukrainian brigades, NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said.

More than 30,000 troops are estimated to make up the new brigades.

"This will put Ukraine in a strong position to continue to retake occupied territory," Stoltenberg told reporters in Brussels.

Russian Defence Ministry says forces take four blocks in Bakhmut -RIA

Russia’s Defence Ministry said on Thursday that its forces had taken four blocks in north-western, western and south-western Bakhmut, Russia state-owned news agency RIA reported.

Reuters could not independently confirm the claim. Russian forces have been struggling for months to capture the city in eastern Ukraine.

Bakhmut fighting in pictures

Military object found in Poland probably belongs to Polish army-RMF FM

The military object found in a forest in Poland was probably not fired from another country, but belonged to the Polish army, private broadcaster RMF FM reported on Thursday quoting unofficial information.

Polish authorities said earlier on Thursday that the remains of a military object were found in northern Poland near the city of Bydgoszcz, confirming earlier media reports of the discovery of some kind of object in the area.

Russians pound frontline positions in Bakhmut, Ukraine military says

Russian forces pounded the city of Bakhmut, the months-old focal point of their attempts to capture the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas, and the head of Russia’s Wagner mercenary force said Ukrainian troops were pouring in ahead of an "inevitable" counter-offensive.

The general staff of Ukraine’s armed forces, in a report on Facebook, said fighting gripped Bakhmut and nearby areas. It said Russian forces had failed to advance on two villages to the northwest. At least a dozen localities came under Russian fire.

Separately, Serhiy Cherevatiy, spokesman for Ukraine’s eastern group of forces, told national television on Wednesday that in the past 24 hours, Russian forces had attacked 324 times using artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

"The Russians are destroying buildings in Bakhmut to prevent our soldiers from using them as fortifications," Cherevatiy said.

‘Hyundai Motor to exit Russia, selling its plants’

South Korea’s Hyundai Motor Co plans to exit Russia and sell its manufacturing plants there to a Kazakh company, South Korean media reported yesterday.

South Korean TV network MBC reported that negotiations to sell Hyundai’s factories in Russia are in the final stage, adding that the automaker has been waiting for a final approval from the Russian government.

“It is true that there are ongoing discussions regarding the sale, but nothing has been decided,” Hyundai Motor said, according to the TV network.

Hyundai Motor suspended operations at its Russian operation last year. In March, the automaker said it was reviewing “various options” for its Russian operation.

In a statement to Reuters, Hyundai Motor said it was reviewing various scenarios for the future of its business in Russia, adding no decision had been made so far.

Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats

Workers at the [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) nuclear power plant yesterday marked the 37th anniversary of the world’s worst nuclear disaster amid an ongoing war and nuclear threats, somberly laying flowers at a monument for victims.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky used the day to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , drawing a parallel between the Chernobyl accident in 1986 to Moscow’s brief seizure of that plant and its radiation-contaminated exclusion zone following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“Last year, the occupier not only seized the (Chernobyl) nuclear power plant, but also endangered the entire world again,” Mr Zelensky said in a Telegram post in English.

Report:

[*Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-chernobyl-ukraine-russia-moscow-b2327456.html)

Why is China trying to act as mediator in Russia’s war with Ukraine

Chinese leader Xi Jinping yesterday said that [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) will send an envoy to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to discuss a possible “political settlement” to Russia’s war with the country.

Beijing has previously avoided involvement in conflicts between other countries but appears to be trying to assert itself as a global diplomatic force after arranging talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March that led to them restoring diplomatic relations after a seven-year break.

Mr Xi told Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky in a phone call that a Chinese envoy would visit Ukraine and “other countries” to discuss a possible political settlement, according to a government statement reported by state TV.

But why does this matter? Read this report to find out:

[*China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/china-ap-beijing-ukraine-russia-b2327343.html)

What is the significance of the Ukraine-China call

China said it will not “add fuel to fire” in the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

[*China*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/china) is the only major government that has friendly relations with Moscow as well as economic leverage as the biggest buyer of Russian oil and gas after the United States and its allies cut off most purchases.

Beijing, which sees Moscow as a diplomatic partner in opposing U.S. domination of global affairs, has refused to criticise the invasion and used its status as one of five permanent U.N. Security Council members to deflect diplomatic attacks on Russia.

Zelensky earlier said he welcomed a Chinese offer to mediate.

Xi’s government has pursued a bigger role in global diplomacy as part of a campaign to restore China to what the ruling Communist Party sees as its rightful status as a political and economic leader and to build an international order that favours Beijing’s interests.

That is a sharp reversal after decades of avoiding involvement in other countries’ conflicts and most international affairs while it focused on economic development at home.

In March, Saudi Arabia and Iran issued a surprise announcement, following talks in Beijing, that they would reopen embassies in each other’s capitals following a seven-year break. China has good relations with both as a big oil buyer.

Last week, Foreign Minister Qin Gang told his Israeli and Palestinian counterparts that his country is ready to help facilitate peace talks.

Wednesday’s statement warned against the dangers of nuclear war, suggesting Beijing might also have been motivated by what it sees as the growing danger of a more destructive conflict.

Mediating between Ukraine and Russia would increase China’s presence in Eastern Europe, where Beijing has tried to build ties with other governments. That has prompted complaints by some European officials that China is trying to gain leverage over the European Union.

US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine’s grain exports

US and European officials yesterday toured Ukraine’s southern port of Izmail that’s important in bringing Ukrainian grain to the world – and could become critical if a deal with Russia to allow grain exports from Ukrainian Black Sea ports expires.

From Izmail, which has been upgraded since the start of the war with the help of US and other funding, grain is taken by barge down a branch of the Danube through Romania to its Black Sea port of Constanta for shipment onward.

US ambassador Bridget Brink said after looking over the port facilities with Ukrainian and EU officials, as well as Ukrainian grain companies, that they were exploring ways to increase the exports from Danube ports.

More in this report:

[*US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine's grain exports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-black-sea-europe-russia-b2327579.html)

Bianca Jagger hails Independent TV’s ‘powerful and moving’ Ukraine documentary after UK premiere

[*Bianca Jagger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bianca-jagger) attended the UK premiere of Independent TV’s [*documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/documentary) on [*war crimes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war-crimes) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) on Tuesday evening, hailing it as a “powerful and moving” piece of reporting.

The 77-year-old veteran human rights defender joined more than 100 people at the Frontline Club in central London to watch [*The Body in the Woods*](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wC-jaAeI5gI&ab_channel=TheIndependent).

The film follows the story of international correspondent Bel Trew’s bid to find out the identity of a young Ukrainian man shot dead by Russian soldiers. She stumbled across his corpse lying in woodland with his hands tied behind his back.

Jagger said the documentary made her draw comparisons between Ukraine’s efforts to identify its victims and build war crimes cases with the decades of work spent documenting atrocities in countries that made up former Yugoslavia.

Tara Cobham reports:

[*Bianca Jagger hails Independent TV’s ‘powerful’ Ukraine documentary at UK premiere*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-war-bianca-jagger-independent-documentary-b2327121.html)

Russians pound frontline positions in Bakhmut, Ukraine military says

Russian forces pounded the city of Bakhmut, the months-old focal point of their attempts to capture the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donbas, the Ukraine armed forces said.

The general staff of Ukraine’s armed forces, in a report on Facebook, said fighting gripped Bakhmut and nearby areas. It said Russian forces failed to advance on two villages to the northwest. At least a dozen localities came under Russian fire.

Separately, Serhiy Cherevatiy, spokesperson for Ukraine’s eastern group of forces, told national television yesterday that in the past 24 hours Russian forces had attacked 324 times using artillery and multiple rocket launchers.

“The Russians are destroying buildings in Bakhmut to prevent our soldiers from using them as fortifications,” Mr Cherevatiy said.

On Tuesday, he said there had been a record number of attacks on a section of the front further north -near the city of Kupiansk, in northeastern Ukraine.

The governor of the southern Ukrainian region of Mykolaiv said Russian missiles had hit an apartment building and a private house in the city of the same name.

One person was killed and 15 were injured, Vitaliy Kim wrote on the Telegram messaging app.

Belarusians wary of being drawn into war with Ukraine

For Ruslan, an engineer in the [*Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/belarus) capital of Minsk, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war in neighboring [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) suddenly seemed closer than ever when a conscription office recently sent him a summons for military training.

It’s part of an effort that will see thousands of men in Belarus attend drills amid fears that the staunch Moscow ally could be drawn into the fighting.

“They are telling us that Belarus won’t enter the war against Ukraine, but I hear Russian warplanes roar over my house heading to the Machulishchi air base outside Minsk,” the 27-year-old told The Associated Press in a telephone interview. He asked not to be fully identified out of concern for his personal safety.

Read the full story:

[*Belarusians wary of being drawn into war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/belarus-ap-alexander-lukashenko-ukraine-russia-b2326997.html)

Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn

[*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***.

Read the full story:

[*Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-2023-ukraine-russia-lta-aeltc-b2326454.html)

Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability

The Ukrainian government is launching an initiative Wednesday to streamline and promote innovation in the development of drones and other technologies that have been critical during [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war in Ukraine.

As part of the initiative dubbed BRAVE1, the government hopes to bring state, military, and private sector developers working on defense issues together into a tech cluster that would give Ukraine a battlefield advantage.

“Considering the enemy that is right next to us and its scale, we definitely need to develop the military tech so that we can defend ourselves,” Mykhailo Fedorov, Ukraine’s minister of digital transformation, said.

Read the full story:

[*Ukraine launching tech cluster to boost military capability*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-crimea-kyiv-b2327015.html)

In pictures: Destruction in Bakhmut as war rages in

Russian airstrike destroys Ukrainian history museum

At least one person died and 10 people were injured after a Russian missile hit a history museum in Kupiansk, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , on Tuesday (25 April), [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) said.

“There are still people under the rubble... All those guilty of these war crimes will definitely be brought to justice,” the Ukrainian president said.

Mr Zelensky posted footage on social media showing devastated buildings and emergency services on scene.

At least three people were hospitalised, Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said.

Tucker Carlson receives a job offer from Russian state TV after Fox News firing

It didn’t take long for [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) to land a job offer after [*losing his primetime slot*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-leaves-fox-news-fired-rupert-murdoch-dominion-b2326141.html) on the most-watched cable news network in the country.

Within hours after [*Fox News*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fox-news) announced that the network agreed to “part ways” with the far-right nationalist pundit on Monday morning, Russian state media personalities and propaganda outlets opened their doors.

[*RT*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rt) – the Russian state broadcaster formerly known as [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) Today, which is banned in dozens of countries, inducing across Europe – offered him a platform. “Hey @TuckerCarlson, you can always question more with @RT\_com,” the outlet[*wrote*](https://twitter.com/RT_com/status/1650530808585932800) on Twitter.

Read the full story:

[*Russian state-owned media offers Tucker Carlson a job*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-russian-state-tv-job-offer-b2327099.html)

US and Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine’s grain exports

U.S. and [*European*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/europe) officials on Wednesday toured Ukraine’s southern port of Izmail that’s important in bringing Ukrainian grain to the world — and could become critical if a deal with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) to allow grain exports from Ukrainian [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) ports expires.

From Izmail, which has been upgraded since the start of the war with the help of U.S. and other funding, grain is taken by barge down a branch of the Danube through Romania to its Black Sea port of Constanta for shipment onward.

U.S. Ambassador Bridget Brink told The Associated Press after looking over the port facilities with Ukrainian and EU officials, as well as Ukrainian grain companies, that they were exploring ways to increase the exports from Danube ports.

Ukrainian grain supplies are critical to millions of people around the world, and Wednesday’s visit comes after Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov again this week threatened to abandon the Black Sea Grain Initiative, a deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey last July.

Read the full story:

[*US, Europe eyeing ways to improve Ukraine's grain exports*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-black-sea-europe-russia-b2327579.html)

House members propose resolution calling for bold victory in Ukraine

A bipartisan group of House lawmakers are introducing a resolution calling for the United States to support an outright victory for Ukraine in its war against Russia.

Republican Representative Joe Wilson of South Carolina emphasised the need to not make the mistakes of history.

“We must not repeat the error of Sept. 1, 1939,” he said in reference to efforts to prevent the Nazis from invading Poland. The resolution would require a full review from the House Foreign Affairs Committee before it goes to the House floor. Yahoo! News first [*reported on the resolution.*](http://go.redirectingat.com/?id=44681X1458326&url=https%3A%2F%2Fnews.yahoo.com%2Fexclusive-house-lawmakers-to-introduce-resolution-for-bold-ukraine-victory-terms-160006684.html&sref=https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/house-resolution-bold-victory-ukraine-b2327297.html)

Read the full story:

[*House members introduce resolution defining what victory in Ukraine would look like*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/house-resolution-bold-victory-ukraine-b2327297.html)

Italian reporter hurt and Ukrainian fixer killed in Kherson ambush

A reporter for the Italian newspaper La Repubblica was injured and his Ukrainian fixer died on Wednesday when they were ambushed in southern Ukraine, most likely by Russian snipers, the paper said in an article on its website.

La Repubblica said correspondent Corrado Zunino and fixer Bogdan Bitik were fired on near a major bridge in the southern city of Kherson after passing through a series of Ukrainian checkpoints. Russian forces left the western part of the city last year but regularly shell it from the eastern portion.

La Repubblica said the two men had been ambushed, “most likely by Russian snipers”.

Separately, the office of Ukraine’s prosecutor-general said a foreign reporter had been injured and a Ukrainian civilian died but did not name them. It said Russians shelled Kherson, and the reporter received a gunshot wound to the shoulder.

Zunino said in the article he had been injured in four places and was being treated in a Kherson hospital. The newspaper published a photo of what it said was his bullet proof vest, with damage from a projectile clearly visible.

Russia’s defence ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

At least five journalists have died since Russian forces invaded Ukraine in February 2022

Jailed Russian opposition leader Navalny to face new trial

A court in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) held a hearing Wednesday to set the stage for imprisoned Russian opposition leader Alexei [*Navalny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/navalny) to face a new trial on extremism charges that he has described as a Kremlin-ordered effort to extend his time behind bars.

Navalny, who exposed official corruption and organized massive anti-[*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) protests, was arrested in January 2021 upon returning to Moscow after recuperating in [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) from nerve-agent poisoning that he blamed on the Kremlin.

He initially received a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence for a parole violation. Last year, he was sentenced to a nine-year term for fraud and contempt of court. He is currently serving time at a maximum-security prison 250 kilometers (150 miles) east of Moscow.

Read the full story:

[*Jailed Russian opposition leader Navalny to face new trial*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/navalny-ap-kremlin-moscow-germany-b2327164.html)

Italy's Meloni urges quick start of Ukraine's EU entry talks

[*Italian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/italian) Premier [*Giorgia Meloni*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/giorgia-meloni) on Wednesday urged European allies to accelerate [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s European Union membership bid, as Rome hosted a bilateral conference on the war-torn country’s reconstruction attended by hundreds of Italian and Ukrainian businesses.

“The future of Ukraine must include an always wider capacity of integrating with the European dynamics and institutions,” Meloni said, in joint statements with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on the sidelines of the conference.

“The smartest way to thank Ukrainians for what they are doing is to accelerate their chance of being part of the European institutions. We need to acknowledge Kyiv’s enormous efforts to reform its system and bring it closer to targets required by the EU Commission,” Meloni added, urging a quick start of negotiations needed to grant Ukraine full EU membership.

Read the full story:

[*Italy's Meloni urges quick start of Ukraine's EU entry talks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/giorgia-meloni-ap-ukraine-kyiv-italian-b2327344.html)

Fire damages Russian cultural centre in Cyprus as Moscow cites ‘terrorist attack’

A fire damaged a Russian cultural centre in the Cypriot capital Nicosia on Wednesday, prompting Moscow to denounce what it called a “terrorist attack.”

The cause of the fire was under investigation, fire brigade spokesman Andreas Kettis said.

The fire broke out around noon in the complex, which is in the heart of the commercial centre of Nicosia, sending plumes of black smoke into the sky. It was contained in just under two hours.

The centre, which was being renovated, is thought to have strong links to the Russian embassy in Cyprus, and is a popular venue for art exhibitions and plays.

Yevgeny Primakov, head of Rossotrudnichestvo, the Russian government’s cultural promotion agency, said foul play was clearly responsible, TASS reported.

“We qualify this as a terrorist attack since it is an attack on a civilian, peaceful building, clearly with the aim of not only causing damage, but also intimidating both our employees and the people who come to this cultural centre,” it cited him as telling the Russia-24 TV channel.

Earlier this month Cyprus said it was investigating how a number of its nationals ended up on U.S. and British sanctions lists over allegations of cooperating with Russians under sanctions. Some of those restrictions were imposed following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

Brazil's Lula stands ground on Ukraine in Spain

[*Brazilian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brazil) President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva met with [*Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/spain) ‘s prime minister Wednesday for talks aimed at making progress on an intercontinental trade deal, but his differences with the European Union on the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) remained evident.

The 27-member EU completed negotiations in 2019 on a wide-ranging trade deal with [*Mercosur*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mercosur) , a South American bloc that includes Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay. But ratification stalled during the presidency of Lula’s predecessor, Jair Bolsonaro, due to concerns over environmental standards and price protections for European farmers.

Lula and Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez held a news conference after the signing of bilateral agreements Wednesday. The warmth between the two left-wing leaders was evident, but their divergent views on Ukraine left a note of tension in the room.

Read the full story:

[*Brazil's Lula stands ground on Ukraine in Spain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/luiz-inacio-lula-da-silva-ap-ukraine-brazil-spain-b2327292.html)

Watch: British and German warplanes intercept Russian spy jets flying over Baltic Sea

Xi holds first call with Zelensky since Russia’s invasion – and promises delegation to Kyiv

China’s President [*Xi Jinping*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/xi-jinping) has held his first call with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s President [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) , since [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) invaded – offering to send an envoy to Kyiv and other capitals for talks on resolving the war.

Beijing has not condemned the invasion – or shied away from its close ties with Moscow – and Mr Zelensky quickly played up the significance of the “long and meaningful” call in which Mr Xi is said to been willing to help facilitate peace talks aimed at achieving a ceasefire as soon as possible. Kyiv also announced the appointment of a new ambassador to Beijing.

Mr Zelensky tweeted: “I believe that this call, as well as the appointment of Ukraine’s ambassador to China, will give a powerful impetus to the development of our bilateral relations.”

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Xi holds first war call with Zelensky – and promises delegation to Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-china-xi-zelensky-b2327504.html)

In pictures: Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster

Watch: Volodymyr Zelensky pays tribute to victims of Chernobyl disaster on 37th anniversary

France joins US in welcoming Ukraine-Chinal call

France has joined the US in welcoming the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

President Emmanuel Macron’s office said the French leader had pushed Xi to hold this call with Zelenskiy during his visit to Beijing this month.

Russia changes head of peacekeepers in Karabakh

Russia appointed a new head of its peacekeeping force in Nagorno-Karabakh, the RIA news agency said on Wednesday, citing the Russian defence ministry.

No reason for the change was given. Russia sent peacekeepers to the South Caucasus region in 2020 when it brokered a truce in a war between Armenia and Azerbaijan, but tensions between the two countries remain high

Ukrainians mark Chernobyl disaster amid nuclear threats

Workers at the [*Chernobyl*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/chernobyl) nuclear power plant on Wednesday marked the 37th anniversary of the world’s worst nuclear disaster amid an ongoing war and nuclear threats, somberly laying flowers at a monument for victims.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky used the day to repeat his warnings about the potential threat of a new atomic catastrophe in Ukraine amid the war with [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , drawing a parallel between the Chernobyl accident in 1986 to Moscow’s brief seizure of that plant and its radiation-contaminated exclusion zone following its full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

“Last year, the occupier not only seized the (Chernobyl) nuclear power plant, but also endangered the entire world again,” president Zelensky said in a Telegram post in English.

UN confirms JPMorgan processed payment for Russian bank

The United Nations confirmed on Wednesday that JPMorgan processed a payment for the Russian Agricultural Bank.

“I wouldn’t dispute that there was that there was a transaction involving JPMorgan that happened that happened earlier this month, but I don’t have any details to provide about that at this stage,” Deputy U.N. spokesperson Farhan Haq told reporters.

The United States gave JPMorgan permission to process payments for agricultural exports via the Russian Agricultural Bank, but the arrangement was no substitute for reconnecting the bank to the SWIFT system, two Russian sources told Reuters earlier on Wednesday.

Russian fighter jet crashes into lake after bursting into flames

A Russian [*fighter jet*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fighter-jet) has crashed into a lake after bursting into flames during a training exercise, according to Russian state media.

The MiG-31 fighter jet crashed in the northern Murmansk region on Wednesday, TASS news agency said, citing Russia’s defence ministry.

The incident took place 10km away from the town of Monchegorsk, near Russia’s Rizh-Guba island.

One of the plane’s two jet engines exploded during a training exercise and the pilot then lost control before the plane plummetted into a nearby lake, state media reported.

Emily Atkinson reports:

[*Russian fighter jet crashes into lake after bursting into flames*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-fighter-jet-crash-murmansk-b2327430.html)

China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine

Chinese leader Xi Jinping said on Wednesday that [*Beijing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/beijing) will send an envoy to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) to discuss a possible “political settlement” to Russia’s war with the country.

Beijing has previously avoided involvement in conflicts between other countries but appears to be trying to assert itself as a global diplomatic force after arranging talks between Saudi Arabia and Iran in March that led to them restoring diplomatic relations after a seven-year break.

Xi told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in a phone call that a Chinese envoy would visit Ukraine and “other countries” to discuss a possible political settlement, according to a government statement reported by state TV.

Read the full story:

[*China tries to act as mediator in Russia's war with Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/china-ap-beijing-ukraine-russia-b2327343.html)

Ukrainians will get arms in time for counter-offensive, US general says

Ukraine’s military will get the weaponry it needs in time for an upcoming counter-offensive against invading Russian forces, the top U.S. general in Europe told Congress on Wednesday.

General Christopher Cavoli, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, cited as an example that more than 98 percent of the combat vehicles promised to Kyiv had already been delivered.

“I am very confident that we have delivered the materiel that they need and we’ll continue a pipeline to sustain their operations as well,” general Cavoli told a hearing at the House Armed Services Committee.

‘Anything could be discussed’ once Russia and Ukraine sit down to talk peace -Brazil’s Lula

Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Wednesday called again for a “peace group” to broker an agreement between Russia and Ukraine, saying anything could be discussed once the nations sat down to talk peace.

“There are a lot of things to be discussed -Crimea, other territories, NATO,” president Lula said during a trip to Spain when asked about Crimea. He said it was not up to him to say who owned Crimea. “That is a discussion between Russia and Ukraine.”

China says it won’t ‘add fuel to fire’ in first war call with Zelensky

China says it will not “add fuel to fire” in the first call between Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky and Chinese president Xi Jinping since the Russian invasion.

During the phone call, which president Zelensky described as “long and meaningful”, the Chinese president told Mr Zelensky that China would send special representatives to Ukraine and hold talks with all parties seeking peace, Chinese state media reported.

“As a permanent member of the UN Security Council and a responsible major country, we will neither sit idly by, nor pour oil on fire, still less seek to profit from it,” the Chinese president said.

President Xi, the most powerful world leader to have refrained from denouncing Russia’s invasion, said China will focus on promoting peace talks, and make efforts for a ceasefire as soon as possible

The White House welcomed the call, which it said it had no advanced knowledge of, but said it was too soon to tell whether it would lead to a peace deal.

“That’s a good thing,” White House national security spokesperson John Kirby said. “Now, whether that’s going to lead to some sort of meaningful peace movement, or plan, or proposal, I just don’t think we know that right now.”

President Xi made a state visit to Moscow last month and since February, he has promoted a 12-point peace plan for Ukraine, greeted sceptically by the West but cautiously welcomed by Kyiv as a sign of Chinese interest in ending the war.

**Load-Date:** April 27, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Drone attack south of Moscow after two killed in Kherson shelling*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697R-B4V1-DY4H-K330-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Highlight:** Russia’s air defence systems repelled a drone attack over the Tula region near Moscow

**Body**

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s air defence systems repelled a drone attack over the Tula region near [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , Russia’s RIA news agency reported early on Monday.

Two of Moscow’s major airports, Vnukovo and Domedovo, directed flights to other destinations, the TASS state news agency said.

The incident came after two people were killed and at least eight injured when [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces shelled southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) region on Sunday.

Kherson governor Oleksandr Prodkudin, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said shelling from the Russian-held eastern bank of the Dnipro River had hit private homes in Beryslav, on the Ukrainian-held west bank. A man was killed in the nearby village of Lvove.

The General Staff of Ukraine’s Armed Forces said the country’s forces had repelled Russian attacks on two villages near Bakhmut, where [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) has been trying to regain ground lost when the city fell to Moscow’s forces in May.

And North Korea has hit out at South Korean president Yoon Suk Yeol after he criticised its cooperation with Moscow following leader Kim Jong Un’s Russia visit, saying it is “natural” and “normal” for neighbours to keep close relations.

Key Points

Ukrainian missile strikes Sevastopol US ‘to give Kyiv ATACMS long-range missiles’ Ukrainian counteroffensive pushes through Putin’s final line of defence Putin’s spies ‘hacking Ukrainian files for Russian war crimes evidence’ Two dead in Russian shelling of southern Ukraine -governor Russia's Tula region under drone attack -Russia's RIA

‘Panic’ among Putin’s forces as they face “real threat” of Ukrainian forces encircling Russian forces

A Russian VDV source warned that there is a “real threat” of Ukrainian forces reaching and encircling the 56th VDV Regiment near Novofedorivka.

The source said on September 22 that Ukrainian forces were within 7km of encircling the 56th VDV Regiment and that the regiment would be in a difficult position if its commander did not make a decision to withdraw from Novofedorivka to other previously prepared positions.

Russian sources also reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

Three Russian divisions actively defending against Ukrainian assaults

Elements of three Russian divisions are actively defending against Ukrainian assaults around the Orikhiv area in southern Ukraine.

On September 24, Ukrainian forces launched attacks in three directions within the Orikhiv salient from Robotyne against Novoprokopivka, directly into Verbove’s western side and north of Verbove.

Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 76th Air Assault Division and 7th Air Assault Division are have been deployed to defend against the assaults.

The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are defending at the southernmost point of the Ukrainian salient and are engaging Ukrainian forces in Novoprokopivka while the Russian 76th Air Assault Division have been deployed to the western flank near Kopani towards Robotyne and counterattacking there. The 7th Air Assault Division are deployed on the eastern flank near the Verbove-Novopokrovka line and are counterattacking there also.

Ukrainian forces occupying half of Verbove after successful advance on Russian village

Russian sources report that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24.

Geolocated combat footage posted on September 24 shows a Ukrainian BMP operating within Verbove’s westernmost village limits

A Russian VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove for the first time on September 22 and continued pushing east. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

The source also accused the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) of trying to conceal Ukraine’s tactical progress in Verbove, rhetorically stating: “For how long can Shoigu’s MoD hide the breakthrough in Verbove?”

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on September 24.

Ukrainian drones destroyed by Russian air defence overnight

Russia’s defence ministry said on Monday that it’s air defence systems destroyed four Ukraine-launched drones over the northwestern part of the Black Sea and over the Crimean Peninsula.

Separately, the ministry said that four other drones were destroyed overnight over Russia’s Kursk and Belgorod regions.

According to reports, Ukraine’s drone attack on the Kursk region damaged several private houses and an administrative building

It was not immediately known whether there was any damage or injuries as a result of the reported attacks.

Russian overnight missile attack injures one in southern Ukraine

One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.

“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.

They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.

Ukraine‘s Air Force said that its air defence systems destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones, 11 cruise missiles and two hypersonic missiles that Russia launched on Ukraine overnight, vast majority directed at Odesa. Three other drones were destroyed earlier on Sunday, it said.

Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region, said that a woman was taken to a hospital after a shrapnel injury in result of the blast wave. Ukraine‘s south military command posted on its Telegram messaging app several pictures showing a high-rise building with blown up windows and severe damage to its structure.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attack.

ICYMI: What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s military has reportedly succeeded in driving [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) through [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s defensive line in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War, [*a major breakthrough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces spent the winter establishing a tough obstacle course of [*anti-tank ditches, artillery nests and other obstructions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html).

The institute could not confirm that Ukrainian troops had followed suit at the breakthrough point near Verbove but the news is nevertheless a welcome indication that Kyiv’s counteroffensive is bearing fruit as it seeks to drive the invader from its territory.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) is currently in North America seeking to shore up support from his US counterpart [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and Canadian prime minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and has already flown out of Washington with the promise of a new $325m military aid package for his country that will include air defence systems and other weaponry to help it through what promises to be another trying winter of combat.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month

Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine’s [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) province, the region’s governor reported Sunday as the war in Ukraine entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of Lvove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

Samya Kullab has more:

[*Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kherson-poland-kyiv-b2417577.html)

Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’

Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.

In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html).

One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html)

One injured as Russia fires cruise missiles on Odesa

One woman was injured and port infrastructure was damaged in southern Ukraine’s Odesa as Russia launched an overnight missile and drone attack, officials said.

A fire broke out in a non-residential high-rise in the city of Odesa, the administrative centre of the Odesa region, as a result of the attack, but was promptly extinguished, Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region in southern Ukraine, said on his Telegram channel.

The scale of the attack and the full extent of the damage were not immediately clear.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

ICYMI: Russia’s Lavrov rubbishes Ukraine peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has rubbished Ukraine’s 10-point peace plan and warned the conflict will be resolved on the battlefield if the West stuck to it.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Mr Lavrov dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible”.

In a letter to Mr Lavrov last month, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the UN could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertiliser exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

Read more:

[*Russia rubbishes Kyiv peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimea-black-sea-b2417322.html)

Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the “martyrdom” of Ukraine’s people in Russia’s war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery.

Francis appeared to refer to Poland’s recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.

Francis acknowledged he was frustrated that the Vatican’s diplomatic initiatives hadn’t borne much fruit. But he said behind the Russia-Ukraine conflict was also the weapons industry.

Nicole Winfield reports:

[*Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-ukraine-poland-russia-b2417354.html)

Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) says its missile strike on the headquarters of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s Black Sea fleet in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) successfully targeted a meeting of senior naval officials, with “top” commanders among “dozens of dead and wounded”.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.

Read more:

[*Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html)

ICYMI: Back in full force, UN General Assembly shows how the most important diplomatic work is face to face

There are two opposing theses about the U.N. General Assembly: It’s a place that shows the true power of words, where leaders inspire action with rousing speeches on the urgent issues of our times; or it’s a talking shop, where leaders perform for domestic audiences with political rhetoric on the cause of the day.

These dueling viewpoints were tested when the coronavirus pandemic shut down much in-person diplomacy for several years. After three years of virtual, then hybrid General Debates, the scores of top leaders who attended the annual U.N. summit this week exhibited the return of in-person diplomacy, and provided ammunition to those who advocate for its importance.

Read more:

[*Back in full force, UN General Assembly shows how the most important diplomatic work is face to face*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/un-general-assembly-ap-united-nations-manhattan-technology-b2417420.html)

North Korea says cooperation with Russia 'natural' for neighbours -KCNA

North Korea on Monday slammed South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol for criticising its cooperation with Moscow following leader Kim Jong Un’s Russia visit, saying it is “natural” and “normal” for neighbours to keep close relations.

Yoon, speaking at the U.N. General Assembly last week, said that if Russia helped North Korea enhance its weapons programmes in return for assistance for its war in Ukraine, it would be “a direct provocation.”

In a piece carried by KCNA news agency, the North denounced Yoon for “malignantly” slandering its friendly cooperation with Russia, and said Yoon was serving as a “loudspeaker” for the United States.

“It is quite natural and normal for neighbouring countries to keep close relations with each other, and there is no reason to call such practice to account,” it said.

Kim returned home last week from a week-long trip to Russia in which he and Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed to boost military and economic cooperation.

U.S. and South Korean officials have expressed concern that Russia could be trying to acquire ammunition from the North to supplement its dwindling stocks for the war in Ukraine while Pyongyang seeks technological help for its nuclear and missile programmes.

A Kremlin critic was transferred to a Siberian prison and placed in a 'punishment cell,' lawyer says

An imprisoned Russian opposition figure has been transferred to a maximum security prison in Siberia and placed in a tiny “punishment cell,” his lawyer said Sunday.

Vladimir Kara-Murza Jr., 42, earlier this year was convicted of treason for publicly denouncing Russia’s war in Ukraine and sentenced to 25 years in prison as part of the Kremlin’s relentless crackdown on critics. On Thursday, he arrived at IK-6 — a maximum security penal colony in the Siberian city of Omsk, his lawyer Vadim Prokhorov said in a Facebook post Sunday.

Dasha Litvinova has more:

[*A Kremlin critic was transferred to a Siberian prison and placed in a 'punishment cell,' lawyer says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kremlin-ap-estonia-tallinn-boris-nemtsov-b2417659.html)

Two dead in Russian shelling of southern Ukraine -governor

Russian forces shelled southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region on Sunday, killing two people and injuring at least eight, the region’s governor said, as Ukraine‘s armed forces said they were keeping in check Russian advances in the east and south.

President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, newly returned from a visit to the United States and Canada, praised Ukrainian forces for successes in both areas of a three-month-old counteroffensive, but he gave no indication any new movement forward.

Kherson governor Oleksandr Prodkudin, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said shelling from the Russian-held eastern bank of the Dnipro River had hit private homes in Beryslav, on the Ukrainian-held west bank. A man was killed in the nearby village of Lvove.

An air strike on Kherson, the region’s main town, injured at least five people and caused considerable damage to buildings.

The Russian military abandoned positions on the west bank of the river and in Kherson city late last year.

The General Staff of Ukraine‘s Armed Forces said the country’s forces had repelled Russian attacks on two villages near Bakhmut, where Kyiv has been trying to regain ground lost when the city fell to Moscow’s forces in May.

Russia's Tula region under drone attack -Russia's RIA

Russia’s air defence systems were engaged in repelling a drone attack over the Tula region that borders Moscow’s region to its north, Russia’s RIA news agency reported early Monday.

Citing the ministry of regional security, the agency reported that according to preliminary information, there was no damage or injuries as a result of the attack.

Two of Moscow’s major airports, however, the Vnukovo and Domedovo, limited air traffic, directing flights to other airports, the TASS state news agency reported.

UNGA Briefing: There's one more day to go after a break — but first, here's what you missed

It’s almost the end of the U.N. General Assembly high-level meeting that brings world leaders together at U.N. headquarters in [*New York*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-york). Here are the highlights of what happened Saturday at the [*United Nations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-nations) and what to keep an eye on Tuesday, the last day (Monday’s off for Yom Kippur).

Read here:

[*UNGA Briefing: There's one more day to go after a break — but first, here's what you missed*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/sergey-lavrov-ap-united-nations-new-york-morocco-b2417404.html)

ICYMI: Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech

Russia’s top diplomat lashed out at the U.S. and the West on Saturday as self-interested defenders of a fading international order, but he didn’t discuss his country’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly.

“The U.S. and its subordinate Western collective are continuing to fuel conflicts which artificially divide humanity into hostile blocks and hamper the achievement of overall aims. They’re doing everything they can to prevent the formation of a genuine multipolar world order,” Foreign Minister [*Sergey Lavrov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergey-lavrov) said.

“They are trying to force the world to play according to their own self-centred rules,” he said.

More here:

[*Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-sergey-lavrov-ukraine-united-nations-joe-biden-b2417285.html)

Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees

Zug, [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) ’s wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have fled their war-torn country.

“They were bombing my city last night,” explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.

“This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege,” she says.

Paddy Dowling has more:

Zelensky says he met top businessmen during U.S. visit

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said on Sunday he met leading American entrepreneurs and financiers during a visit this week to the United States, where investment opportunities in Ukraine were discussed.

Zelensky said the businessmen, who included Michael Bloomberg, Larry Fink and Bill Ackman, were prepared to make major investments in rebuilding Ukraine after its war with Russia.

“The American entrepreneurs and financiers confirmed their readiness to make large-scale investments in our country immediately after the end of the war and the receipt of security guarantees,” he posted on Telegram, along with photos of the meeting.

“We are working for the victory and reconstruction of Ukraine.”

On a trip to the U.S. and Canada this week, Zelensky sought continued military and financial support for Kyiv’s effort to fend off Russia’s 19-month-old invasion.

Russian-installed head of Donetsk imposes 5-hour curfew

The Russian-installed head of the Russian-annexed Ukrainian region of Donetsk has imposed a curfew, according to a decree published on Sunday.

Denis Pushilin banned the presence of civilians on streets and public places from 11 p.m. until 4 a.m. on Mondays-Fridays, according to the decree.

The decree forbade assemblies, rallies and demonstrations as well as other mass events in Russia-controlled parts of Donetsk region unless they were permitted by Operational Headquarters for Military Threat Response in Donetsk People’s Republic.

The decree signed by Pushilin on September 18 introduced “military censorship of postal mail and messages transmitted via telecommunications systems as well as control of telephone conversations”.

Among other steps entailed by Pushilin’s order was the establishment of checkpoints and security posts at borders with Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions.

Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again

This is the heartwarming moment a six-year-old [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) girl who lost her leg to a Russian missile strike learns to ride a bike again with the help of her prosthetic leg she named Kesha.

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) posted footage of brave Marinya cycling a small tricycle through cones as she recovers from the bombing of Kherson in May last year.

The girl, the first Ukrainian child to be fitted with a prosthetic since the Russian invasion, manages to complete the course solo under the watchful eye of physiotherapists at The Kyiv Institute of Rehabilitation.

Barney Davis has the full story:

[*Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-girl-leg-bike-b2417499.html)

Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’

Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.

In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html).

One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html)

Russian airstrike on Kherson kills two

Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine’s Kherson province, the region’s governor reported Sunday as [*the war in Ukraine*](https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-train-front-line-russia-war-4e0547023d456e9f1a0c33372704cdf3) entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of Lvove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

The communities hit both are located in the Ukrainian-controlled part of the Kherson region, where the Dnieper River that bisects the province has marked a battle line since [*Russian troops withdrew*](https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-europe-business-46c1061fc44458c903cf12fa442c57e1) across it in November 2022, a retreat that boosted the invaded country’s morale.

Kindergarten struck in another wave of Russian missiles on Nikopol and Sumy

Ukrainians were injured by shrapnel after Russia initiated a fresh wave of artillery assaults on the Nikopol region.

The city of Nikopol itself suffered severe damage to a department store building and a kindergarten, according to local reports.

These attacks resulted in the injury of a 25-year-old man who has since been hospitalised with shrapnel wounds and is currently fighting for his life according to Serhii Lysak, the head of the military administration in the Dnipropetrovsk region.

Despite more strikes across the neighbouring regions, the Sumy regional military administration did not receive any reports of injuries.

Heartbreaking images of a Ukrainian train taking soldiers away from family to the frontline

Associated Press has been recording the heartbreaking separations of soldiers and their families as they board the same train line to take them to the frontline.

Every day, around seven in the morning, passengers on the Kyiv-Kramatorsk route leave the relative safety of the capital and head east to frontline areas where battles between Ukrainian forces and Russian troops rage and Russian strikes are frequent with imprecise missiles that slam into residential areas.

The passengers are a mix of men and women that offer up a slice of Ukrainian society these days. They include soldiers returning to the front after a brief leave, women making the trip to reunite for a few days with husbands and boyfriends serving on the battlefields, and residents returning to check on homes in the Donetsk region.

The connection was suspended for six months early in the war. The halt in April last year followed a Russian missile strike on the Kramatorsk railway station while passengers were waiting for evacuation. The strike killed 53 people and wounded 135 others in one of the deadliest Russian attacks.

Local media reports another air strike on the Russian city of Kursk

Ukrainian media is claiming another strike on the Russian city of Kursk hours after a drone strike hit an administrative building.

Black smoke can be seen pouring out of a large warehouse-type building in the bordering region.

There is currently no clear information on the scale of destruction or casualties with the attack coming on Kursk City Day.

The fresh strike came after [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) fired at least 19 “lethal” drones over the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea) and the Crimean peninsula, and three more over other regions of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) , on Thursday.

Another strike in [*#Kursk*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Kursk?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). [*pic.twitter.com/PB0n2gewld*](https://t.co/PB0n2gewld) — NEXTA (@nexta\_tv) [*September 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/nexta_tv/status/1705891890472661152?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) The Russian anti-aircraft units intercepted and destroyed over a dozen drones in the region, the ministry said on its [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) channel.“In the night an attempt by the Kyiv regime to commit a terrorist attack with lethal drones on sites in the Russian Federation was intercepted,” the ministry said.Russia imposes overnight curfew on Ukrainians living in DonetskSunday 24 September 2023 11:30 , Barney Davis The Russian-installed head of the Russian-annexed Ukrainian region of Donetsk has imposed an overnight curfew, according to a decree published on Sunday.Denis Pushilin banned the presence of civilians on streets and public places from 11 p.m. until 4 a.m. on Mondays-Fridays, according to the decree.The decree forbade assemblies, rallies and demonstrations as well as other mass events in Russia-controlled parts of Donetsk region unless they were permitted by Operational Headquarters for Military Threat Response in Donetsk People’s Republic.Ukraine’s ministry of defence post heartwarming footage of bomb victim learning to ride bike againSunday 24 September 2023 10:50 , Barney Davis A Ukrainian girl who lost her leg in a Russian bombing raid has taken her first steps to recovery in heartwarming footage.Maryna, 6, was filmed learning to ride a bike again by doctors helping her rehabilitation after she lost her leg in a missile strike in Kherson in May last year.According to local reports, after suffering from severe trauma she initially refused to use the prosthetic left leg, but was talked around by doctors and even named it Kesha.Maryna is Ukraine's first child to be fitted with a pediatric prosthesis.In May 2022, a Russian missile struck the house in which she lived with her parents in the Kherson region. The child's leg was amputated above the knee at a hospital in Kryvyi Rih.Today, 6-year-old Marina… [*pic.twitter.com/IoZ2zKsBim*](https://t.co/IoZ2zKsBim) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*September 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1705874260156199031?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Zelensky reveals he met top US businessmen to help rebuild Ukraine after Russian war

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Sunday he met leading American businessmen and financiers during a visit to the United States, where investment opportunities in Ukraine were discussed.

Zelenskiy said the businessmen, who included Michael Bloomberg, Larry Fink and Bill Ackman, were prepared to make major investments in rebuilding Ukraine after its war with Russia.

“The American entrepreneurs and financiers confirmed their readiness to make large-scale investments in our country immediately after the end of the war and the receipt of security guarantees,” he posted on Telegram, along with photos of the meeting.

Zelensky warned ‘not to insult Poland again' over UN speech

Poland’s Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki warned Volodymyr Zelensky to never “insult Poles again” after the Ukrainian leader suggested his country was playing political theatre over a long-standing frain dispute.

The Polish leader flashed a warning at Zelensky after the Ukrainian President offered a veiled criticism of Poland at the United Nations saying the dispute was “political theatre” and that “some of our friends in Europe” have “made a thriller from the grain.”

Poland decided last week to extend a ban on Ukrainian grain imports, shaking Kyiv’s relationship with a neighbour that has been one of its staunchest allies since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year.

At a rally Morawiecki hit back: “I want to tell President Zelensky never to insult Poles again, as he did recently during his speech at the UN.

“The Polish people will never allow this to happen, and defending the good name of Poland is not only my duty and honor, but also the most important task of the Polish government” he added.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s military has reportedly succeeded in driving [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) through [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s defensive line in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War, [*a major breakthrough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces spent the winter establishing a tough obstacle course of [*anti-tank ditches, artillery nests and other obstructions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html).

The institute could not confirm that Ukrainian troops had followed suit at the breakthrough point near Verbove but the news is nevertheless a welcome indication that Kyiv’s counteroffensive is bearing fruit as it seeks to drive the invader from its territory.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) is currently in North America seeking to shore up support from his US counterpart [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and Canadian prime minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and has already flown out of Washington with the promise of a new $325m military aid package for his country that will include air defence systems and other weaponry to help it through what promises to be another trying winter of combat.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the “martyrdom” of Ukraine’s people in Russia’s war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery.

Francis appeared to refer to Poland’s recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.

Francis acknowledged he was frustrated that the Vatican’s diplomatic initiatives hadn’t borne much fruit. But he said behind the Russia-Ukraine conflict was also the weapons industry.

Nicole Winfield reports:

[*Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-ukraine-poland-russia-b2417354.html)

Ex-Wagner commander arrested in Norway for attempting return to Russia

Norwegian police have arrested a former commander of the Wagner mercenary group on suspicion that he tried to illegally cross the border back into Russia after seeking asylum in Norway earlier this year, the man’s lawyer said on Saturday.

Andrei Medvedev, who escaped Russia in January via its Arctic border with Norway, has described running as Russian guards fired shots at him. He has spoken about his time fighting in Ukraine as part of the Wagner group.

Police said in a statement late on Friday that a man in his 20s had been taken into custody for attempting to illegally cross the Russian border, but did not name him. An officer with the Finnmark local police declined to give the arrested man’s identity.

Crossing the border to Russia is only allowed at designated points. But Medvedev’s arrest was due to a misunderstanding, his Norwegian lawyer Brynjulf Risnes told Reuters.

“He was up there to see if he could find the place where he crossed (into Norway in January). He was stopped when he was in a taxi. He was never near the border ... It was never his intention to cross the border (into Russia),” Risnes said.

At the time of his arrival in Norway, Medvedev said he was seeking asylum because he feared for his life after witnessing the killing and mistreatment of Russian prisoners brought to the frontline in Ukraine.

Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech

Russia’s top diplomat lashed out at the U.S. and the West on Saturday as self-interested defenders of a fading international order, but he didn’t discuss his country’s war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in his speech to the U.N. General Assembly.

“The U.S. and its subordinate Western collective are continuing to fuel conflicts which artificially divide humanity into hostile blocks and hamper the achievement of overall aims. They’re doing everything they can to prevent the formation of a genuine multipolar world order,” Foreign Minister [*Sergey Lavrov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergey-lavrov) said.

“They are trying to force the world to play according to their own self-centered rules,” he said.

Read more:

[*Russian foreign minister lambastes the West but barely mentions Ukraine in UN speech*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-sergey-lavrov-ukraine-united-nations-joe-biden-b2417285.html)

Russia’s Lavrov rubbishes Ukraine peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has rubbished Ukraine’s 10-point peace plan and warned the conflict will be resolved on the battlefield if the West continues its involvement.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Mr Lavrov dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible”.

In a letter to Mr Lavrov last month, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the UN could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertiliser exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

Read more:

[*Russia rubbishes Kyiv peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimea-black-sea-b2417322.html)

Cracks in Western wall of support for Ukraine emerge as Eastern Europe and US head toward elections

Once rock-solid, the support that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has gotten from its biggest backers for its fight against Russia is showing cracks.

Political posturing in places like Poland and Slovakia, where a trade dispute with Ukraine has stirred tensions, and Republican reticence in the United States about Washington’s big spending to prop up Ukraine’s military have raised new uncertainties about the West’s commitment to its efforts to expel Russian invaders more than 18 months into the war.

And Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) , who hopes to outlast allied backing for Kyiv, will be ready to capitalize if he sees Ukraine is running low on air defense or other weapons.

Read more:

[*Cracks in Western wall of support for Ukraine emerge as Eastern Europe and US head toward elections*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/ukraine-ap-poland-vladimir-putin-eastern-europe-b2417070.html)

Double blow for Putin as Black Sea navy attacked and Ukrainian forces ‘punch through Russian front line’

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s Black Sea fleet headquarters [*were in flames after a missile attack on Friday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) , bringing yet more woe to Vladimir Putin after [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) reportedly broke through his final line of defence in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia).

Photographs show firefighters battling the blaze in the port city of Sevastopol while the Russian defence ministry confirmed one serviceman was missing in action as a result of the assault.

The attack took place less than 24 hours after Ukrainian armoured vehicles reportedly advanced over the front line – known as the Surovikin line – in western Zaporizhzhia for the first time, [*signalling a major breakthrough for*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-us-visit-washington-ukraine-war-b2416423.html) [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) ’s counteroffensive in the region.

Alex Ross has more:

[*Double blow for Putin as navy attacked and Ukraine forces ‘punch through front line’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html)

Ukraine targets key Crimean city a day after striking the Russian navy headquarters

Ukraine on Saturday morning launched another missile attack on Sevastopol in occupied Crimea, a Russian-installed official said, a day after an attack on the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet left a serviceman missing and the main building smouldering.

Sevastopol was put on air raid alert for about an hour after debris from intercepted missiles fell near a pier, Gov. Mikhail Razvozhayev wrote on the messaging app Telegram. Ferry traffic in the area was also halted and later resumed.

Loud blasts were also heard near Vilne in northern Crimea, followed by rising clouds of smoke, according to a pro-Ukrainian Telegram news channel that reports on developments on the peninsula. Crimea, illegally annexed by Russia in 2014, has been a frequent target for Ukrainian forces since Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ordered a full-scale invasion of the neighbouring country almost 19 months ago.

Read more:

[*Ukraine targets key Crimean city a day after striking the Russian navy headquarters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-vladimir-putin-zaporizhzhia-b2417182.html)

Trudeau pledges Canada's support for Ukraine and punishment for Russia

Canadian Prime Minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) has announced several support measures for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , including military, economic and humanitarian assistance, while also pledging an additional show of diplomatic backing through steps intended to punish [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) over the war.

“We’re continuing to impose costs on Russia and ensuring that those responsible for this illegal, unjustifiable invasion do not benefit from it,” Trudeau said Friday during during a joint news conference with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in Ottawa, the Canadian capital.

Zelenskyy also addressed [*Canada*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/canada) ‘s Parliament on Friday. He flew into Ottawa late Thursday after meetings with U.S. President Joe Biden and lawmakers in Washington. He spoke at the U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday.

Brian P.d. Hannon reports:

[*Trudeau pledges Canada's support for Ukraine and punishment for Russia*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/justin-trudeau-ap-canada-ukraine-russia-b2417217.html)

Ukraine’s Zelensky stops over in Poland to award two volunteers

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky awarded two Polish volunteers state awards during a stopover on Saturday, but did not meet any officials as relations between the two countries are strained over grain imports.

Poland decided last week to extend a ban on Ukrainian grain imports, shaking Kyiv’s relationship with a neighbour that has been one of its staunchest allies since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year.

Poland’s prime minister told Zelensky on Friday not to “insult” Poles, maintaining harsh rhetoric towards Kyiv ahead of elections on October 15. The ruling Law and Justice (PiS) party has been criticised by the far right for what it says is the government’s subservient attitude to Ukraine.

Zelensky angered his neighbours when he told the United Nations General Assembly in New York that Kyiv was working to preserve land routes for grain exports, but that the “political theatre” around imports was only helping Moscow.

On Saturday, on his way back home, he handed awards to Bianka Zalewska, a journalist who helped transport wounded children to Polish hospitals, and Damian Duda, who gathered a medical team to help wounded soldiers near the front line.

Zelensky thanked all Poles who “from the first days opened their families, their homes, opened themselves up and helped”.

Latest pictures from the frontline

Slapping West as ‘empire of lies’, Russia’s Lavrov dismisses U.N. bid to revive Black Sea grain deal

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov on Saturday dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the latest U.N. proposals to revive the Black Sea grain initiative would not fly because they do not deliver on promises made to Moscow.

Lavrov spoke after a week of intense global diplomacy at the annual gathering of world leaders at U.N. headquarters in New York where Ukraine and its Western allies sought to drum up support for Kyiv as it fights against Russia’s invasion.

In a letter to Lavrov last month, U.N. secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the U.N. could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertilizer exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

“We explained to the secretary general why his proposals won’t work. We don’t reject them. They’re simply not realistic. They cannot be implemented,” Lavrov said.

He said a 10-point peace plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible” and that the conflict would be resolved on the battlefield if Ukraine and the West stuck to it.

Lavrov added that Moscow left the Black Sea grain initiative because promises made to Russia -including on removing sanctions on a Russian bank and reconnecting it to the global SWIFT system -had not been met.

ICYMI: Senior Russian generals injured in Friday’s missile strike on Crimea

Senior Russian generals were injured in Friday’s missile strike on Crimea, Ukraine’s intelligence chief has claimed.

Kyrylo Budanov told Voice of America on Saturday that at least nine people were killed and 16 injured as a result of Kyiv’s attack on the Black Sea Fleet on Friday.

He claimed that Alexander Romanchuk, a Russian general commanding forces along the key southeastern front line, was “in a very serious condition” following the attack. He added that chief of staff, Lieutenant General Oleg Tsekov is also unconscious.

Budanov’s claim could not be independently verified.

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin’s Black Sea fleet commander ‘killed in attack on Crimea navy HQ’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6980-49H1-DY4H-K1X8-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Athena Stavrou

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces also claimed that 105 others were injured

**Body**

Ukraine have claimed that the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, was killed in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.

The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that he was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the Black Sea fleet headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.

The Russian defence ministry initially said that Friday’s strike killed one service member at the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, but later issued a statement that he was missing. They have not yet commented on the latest claims.

Kyiv launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting. On Saturday morning, it followed this up with another missile attack on Sevastopol, according to a local Russian-installed official.

The strike sent plumes of black smoke billowing from the building. The special forces added that: “The headquarters are beyond repair.”

Key Points

Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claims Ukrainian forces ‘occupying half of Verbove in counteroffensive breakthrough' US ‘to give Kyiv ATACMS long-range missiles’ Ukrainian counteroffensive pushes through Putin’s final line of defence

Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claim

Ukraiane has claimed that the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, was killed in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.

The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that he was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.

Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.

Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Crimea’s Sevastopol

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has launched a fresh missile attack on a military airfield in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) ’s Sevastopol, officials said.

Sevastopol, a vulnerable Russian target in Crimea where [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) parks its Black Sea Fleet, has come under repeated targeting in recent months as Ukraine looks to destroy [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s logistics and infrastructure on the peninsula that Russia had illegally annexed in 2014.

Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield in the late hours on Monday, Russian-backed governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said on his official [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) channel early Tuesday.

Sevastopol remained under an air raid alert starting around 11.30pm on Monday, as per Mr Razvozhayev’s Telegram message. It continued for an hour, covering midnight, as Russian air defence systems were activated.

Arpan Rai reports here:

[*Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Sevastopol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sevastopol-strike-crimea-putin-missile-attack-b2418473.html)

Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees

Zug, [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) ’s wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have fled their war-torn country.

“They were bombing my city last night,” explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.

“This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege,” she says.

Paddy Dowling has more:

[*Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/photography/switzerland-ukraine-refugees-zug-monastery-b2413698.html)

Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again

This is the heartwarming moment a six-year-old [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) girl who lost her leg to a Russian missile strike learns to ride a bike again with the help of her prosthetic leg she named Kesha.

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) posted footage of brave Marinya cycling a small tricycle through cones as she recovers from the bombing of Kherson in May last year.

The girl, the first Ukrainian child to be fitted with a prosthetic since the Russian invasion, manages to complete the course solo under the watchful eye of physiotherapists at The Kyiv Institute of Rehabilitation.

Barney Davis reports:

[*Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-girl-leg-bike-b2417499.html)

ICYMI: Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine

Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.

Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html).

The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.

Read more:

[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html)

Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs

Flying above enemy lines, a Ukrainian reconnaissance drone sends a clear image back to soldiers hiding in a basement a few kilometres away: A Russian armoured vehicle is idling along a key logistics route, looking like easy prey in the artillery-scarred green landscape.

Then, in a flash, the image disappears, and the drone operator’s screen is replaced by a jumble of black and white pixels.

“Snow,” says a calm commander known by the battlefield name Giocondo, who allowed The Associated Press to follow him and his unit of drone pilots on condition of anonymity to protect their identities. High-tech warfare cuts two ways, and the Russians use electronic beams to disable the drone’s signals.

More here:

[*Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-soviet-bakhmut-kyiv-b2417807.html)

Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracks

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.

“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.

It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html)

Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bid

Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) said Monday that his country is in no hurry to ratify [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s bid to join NATO, suggesting the [*Nordic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nordic) country could face further delays in becoming a member of the military alliance.

Speaking during the opening autumn session of Hungary’s parliament, Orbán told lawmakers that “nothing is threatening Sweden’s security,” and that Hungary was therefore in “no rush” to ratify its NATO accession.

Orbán’s statement came after other high-ranking Hungarian officials recently suggested that Sweden’s ratification may not be put on the parliamentary agenda at all during the autumn session. On Thursday, the caucus leader of Orbán’s Fidesz party, Mate Kocsis, said he saw “little chance” that parliament would vote on the matter this year.

Read more:

[*Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-ap-viktor-orban-sweden-nato-b2418227.html)

Chechen leader Kadyrov says he's proud of son for beating up prisoner

The leader of Russia’s Chechnya region, Ramzan Kadyrov, said on Monday he was proud of his teenage son Adam for beating up a prisoner accused of burning the Koran.

Kadyrov posted the comments on Telegram, accompanied by a clip in which a young man in khaki clothing is seen punching and kicking another man cowering in a chair before wrestling him to the floor and slapping him on the head.

The Chechen leader, who styles himself as a ruthless ally of President Vladimir Putin, said he was releasing the video to settle any doubts about whether the incident, first reported last month, had really taken place.

“He beat him, and he did the right thing,” Kadyrov said.

“Without exaggeration, yes, I am proud of Adam’s action,” he said, adding that he respected the boy for acquiring “adult ideals of honour, dignity and defence of his religion.”

The prisoner, Nikita Zhuravel, had complained about the attack to Russia’s human rights ombudswoman, who said last month she had referred the issue to her counterpart in Chechnya.

Kadyrov, 46, has ruled Chechnya with an iron hand since becoming president in 2007, following in the footsteps of his father Akhmat who was killed in a bomb blast in 2004. He has enjoyed generous funding from Putin to rebuild the mainly Muslim region which suffered devastation in two wars following the collapse of the Soviet Union when it tried to break away from Moscow’s control.

Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data shows

Russian crude oil supply surged 50 per cent this spring despite sanctions imposed by the [*G7*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g7) countries in the backdrop of continuing war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , data from commodities tracker and analytics company Kpler showed.

An analysis of shipping and insurance records from August showed almost three-quarters of all seaborne Russian crude flows travelled without any western insurance in August, reported the Financial Times.

The move was a lever enacted by the G7 nations, the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) and Australia which imposed a $60-a-barrel price cap last December as the coalition looked to restrict [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s ability to finance its invasion of Ukraine.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data shows*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oil-g7-price-ukraine-war-latest-b2418040.html)

How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against Russia

Ukraine’s forces have made a number of breakthroughs against Russian positions in recent weeks as intense fighting rages on in southern and northeastern parts of the country.

The counteroffensive launched by Ukraine in June had been making gradual, if slow progress, in pushing back [*Vladimir Putin’s troops from land seized since the invasion began.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-explained-b2407204.html)

But at the start of the month, there were signs that Kyiv’s troops were starting to make inroads, as they broke [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s first defensive line near [*Zaporizhzhia, in the southeast of the country.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html)

Joe Middleton reports:

[*How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counteroffensive-war-b2418170.html)

Air alert lifted in Sevastopol, missile attack thwarted -governor

Russian forces repelled an attack on the Crimean port of Sevastopol on Monday, downing one missile, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said on Telegram.

Razvozhayev, citing preliminary data, said Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield.

An air raid alert was subsequently lifted. Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula, annexed from Ukraine in 2014, was restored.

At least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol last Friday.

ICYMI: Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attack

Russian forces have pounded the city of Odesa[*in an overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html) , damaging port infrastructure, a grain silo and an abandoned hotel and injuring one person.

Ukrainian air defences destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles, the vast majority of them were directed at the Odesa region, Ukraine’s military said.

It said Russia also fired two hypersonic missiles that destroyed grain storage facilities.

Lydia Patrick reports:

[*Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/odesa-ukraine-attack-russia-putin-b2417946.html)

Russian military repels missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol -local official

The Russian military is repelling a missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev said in his Telegram channel.

“According to preliminary data, the air defense forces shot down one missile near the Belbek airfield,” Razvozhayev said.

What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?

Tensions between Serbia and [*Kosovo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kosovo) flared anew over the weekend when some 30 heavily armed Serbs barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery in northern Kosovo, setting off a daylong gunbattle with police that left one officer and three attackers dead.

Sunday’s clash was one of the worst since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. It came as the European Union and the U.S. are trying to mediate and finalize yeraslong talks on normalizing ties between the two Balkan states.

There are fears in the West of a revival of the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives and left over 1 million homeless.

More here:

[*What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/kosovo-ap-serbia-aleksandar-vucic-vladimir-putin-b2418042.html)

Sevastopol governor announces air alert, Crimean Bridge traffic halted

The Russian-installed governor of Crimea’s Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev announced an air alert in the city on Monday evening.

Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 has been temporarily suspended, the operator of the bridge said.

On 22 September at least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol.

Russian air strikes on Ukraine kill four, damage grain and port facilities

Russian air strikes and shelling killed six people in Ukraine and caused “significant damage” to infrastructure at the Black Sea port of Odesa and to grain storage facilities, Ukrainian officials said on Monday.

The air attacks were part of a campaign that has made it harder for major grain producer Ukraine to export its products since Moscow quit a deal in mid-July that had enabled Black Sea shipments and helped combat a global food crisis.

The strikes have intensified as Kyiv presses on with a counteroffensive in the south and east that has made slow gains but could be boosted by the delivery of U.S.-made Abrams tanks, announced on Monday by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

“Another massive attack on Odesa!”, Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said on X. “The attack resulted in the destruction of grain storage facilities and significant damage to the seaport.”

Oleh Kiper, the Odesa region governor, said the facilities that were hit had contained almost 1,000 tons of grain and that the bodies of two men were found under the rubble of a warehouse where grain was stored.

Ukraine‘s military said 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles were shot down overnight, most of them directed at Odesa region. The grain storage facilities that were destroyed were hit by two supersonic missiles, it said.

British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skills

British Royal Engineers sappers have given training to Ukrainian [*soldiers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soldiers) to help them disable mines, munitions and other explosive devices that are being used in the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Mines present one of the biggest obstacles to the Ukrainian Armed Forces as they seek to take back occupied land from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia).

Defence Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said: “Putin’s illegal invasion has left Ukraine’s fields and towns covered in deadly landmines and unexploded munitions, which presents an immediate danger to its citizens now and for years to come.

“The Royal Engineers are using their world-leading experience to train Ukraine’s bomb disposal experts, who can pass on these lifesaving skills to their own recruits and ensure a safer future for all Ukrainians.”

Watch:

[*British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/british-ukrainian-soldiers-mine-disposal-training-b2418160.html)

US, Poland sign $2 bln defense loan agreement, State Dept. says

The United States has signed a $2 billion direct loan agreement to support Poland’s defense modernisation program, the State Department said on Monday.

The foreign military financing deal advances the two countries’ defense cooperation as Poland seeks to boost its armed forces following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

“In addition to its central support role in facilitating international assistance to neighbouring Ukraine, Poland has demonstrated its ironclad commitment to strengthening regional security through its robust investments in defense spending,” the State Department said in a statement on Monday.

Poland is a top U.S. ally and has topped NATO’s spending charts this year. The military alliance has forecast Poland pouring 3.9% of gross domestic product into military goals, almost twice NATO’s current 2% target.

The U.S. will provide $60 million for the cost of the $2 billion loan, which will be used to help pay for Poland’s defense modernisation program with weapons purchases from the U.S., the State Department said.

Russia tells Armenian PM: you are making a big mistake by flirting with West

Russia told Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday that he had only himself to blame for Azerbaijan’s victory over Nagorno-Karabakh because he had insisted on flirting with the West rather than working with Moscow and Baku for peace.

Pashinyan said in an address to the nation on Sunday that Russia had failed Armenia by not providing more help to avert the crisis over the breakaway region, adding that he would have to transform Armenia’s security alliances.

Russia’s foreign ministry hit back with a strongly worded attack on Pashinyan.

“We are convinced that the Yerevan leadership is making a massive mistake by deliberately trying to destroy Armenia’s multi-faceted and centuries-old ties with Russia while making the country hostage to the geopolitical games of the West,” it said.

Azerbaijan seized Karabakh in a lightning offensive last week, sending thousands of ethnic Armenians fleeing into Armenia. Baku has promised to protect the rights of the roughly 120,000 Armenians who call Karabakh home but many refuse to accept its assurances.

Karabakh is internationally viewed as Azerbaijani territory.

Russia, which has about 2,000 peacekeepers in the region, said Pashinyan was trying to absolve himself “of responsibility for failures in domestic and foreign policy by shifting the blame to Moscow”.

Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracks

Vladimir Putin wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.

“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.

It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.

[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html)

US made tanks arrive in Ukraine

US made Abrams tanks have arrived in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday, Reuters reports.

“Good news from Minister (of Defence Rustem) Umerov. Abrams are already in Ukraine and are being prepared to reinforce our brigades,” he said on the Telegram messaging app.

He did not specify how many of tanks had arrived.

The jet-powered American tanks were a top demand from Ukraine until Washington finally offered more than 30 of them in January. European countries have already sent dozens of German-made Leopards and some British Challengers.

The delivery comes nearly four months into Ukraine’s big offensive to recapture Russian-occupied territory. Kyiv has reported slow, steady progress so far, capturing villages and ground that it says improves its position, but has yet to force a major Russian retreat as it did three times last year. Moscow says the Ukrainian offensive has already failed.

“I am grateful to our allies for fulfilling the agreements! We are looking for new contracts and expanding our supply geography,” Zelenskiy added.

U.S. President Joe Biden said last week that the first American Abrams tanks would be delivered to Ukraine this week.

Read more from The Independent:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Video captures fire ripping through Odesa hotel after Russian missile strike

Infrastructure near the [*port*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/port) of Odesa, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , was damaged as a result of a Russian drone and missile strike over the region last night, according to regional head Oleh Kiper.

Mr Kiper said two people working in a warehouse that was struck had been killed.

A [*fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fire) ripped through [*Hotel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotel) Odesa, which was not in use at the time, as a result of the strike. Mr Kiper said [*firefighters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/firefighters) extinguished the flames overnight.

Footage shared by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Monday morning (25 September) shows authorities working on the site.

Three confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in Beryslav

The death toll in Beryslav has risen to three according to Ukrainian officials, following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.

Earlier, the governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.

He reported via the Telegram messaging app on Monday afternoon that one more person, a 55-year-old man, has also died. He added that another woman is injured and in hospital.

Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine. He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.

Unfortunately, it became known about the death of a 55-year-old man who was hit by enemy aircraft in Beryslav. Doctors fought for his life in the morning, but the injuries were too severe. In total, the Russian airstrike on the city claimed the lives of three people, and another woman is in the hospital. Governer of Kherson Oblast Oleksandr Prokudin via Telegram messageWhat happened in Sevastopol?Monday 25 September 2023 15:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine have claimed to have killed the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.Kyiv launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.On Saturday morning, it followed this up with another missile attack on Sevastopol, according to a local Russian-installed official.The Ukrainian military said the air force conducted 12 strikes on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, targeting areas where personnel, military equipment and weapons were concentrated. It said two anti-aircraft missile systems and four Russian artillery units were hit.The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that Admiral Viktor Sokolov was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.Canadian parliament House speaker issues apology after accidentally honouring NaziMonday 25 September 2023 14:00 , Athena Stavrou Canada’s House of Commons gave a standing ovation to a Ukrainian veteran who had served in a Nazi SS unit during the Second World War -without realising who he was.Yaroslav Hunka, 98, was sitting in the gallery when he was described as a “Ukrainian hero” and a “Canadian hero” to applause from prime minister Justin Trudeau and president Volodymyr Zelensky.House speaker Anthony Rota has since apologised after it emerged that Hunka served in the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, a voluntary unit made up mostly of ethnic Ukrainians under Nazi command.[*Canadian parliament accidentally honours Nazi -with Zelensky and Trudeau applauding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-justin-trudeau-canada-nazi-b2418001.html) Russia tortured some victims to death, UN Human Rights Council hearsMonday 25 September 2023 13:20 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s torture methods in parts of Ukraine it occupied have been so brutal that it tortured some of its victims to death, the head of a United Nations mandated investigative body said on Monday.The Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, Erik Mose, told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva his team had “collected further evidence indicating that the use of torture by Russian armed forces in areas under their control has been widespread and systematic”.He added: “In some cases, torture was inflicted with such brutality that it caused the death of the victim.”Mose’s commission visited parts of Ukraine formerly held by Russian forces such as in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. It found that torture was committed mainly in detention centres operated by the Russian authorities, Reuters reports.The commission has previously said that violations committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture, may constitute crimes against humanity.Russia denies committing atrocities or targeting civilians in Ukraine. Russia was given an opportunity to respond to the allegations at the council hearing but no Russian representative attended.Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in UkraineMonday 25 September 2023 12:50 , Athena Stavrou Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html). The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.Read more:[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html) Devastating damage to Odesa hotelMonday 25 September 2023 12:20 , Athena Stavrou Before and after pictures of a hotel in Odesa show the devastating impact of the Russian attack.At least two people have been killed in the strike and at least one other injured as a result of the missile and drone attacks carried out last night.Odesa hotel in the harbor before and after tonight's Russian attack [*pic.twitter.com/Bc0VYksnrG*](https://t.co/Bc0VYksnrG) — Maria Avdeeva (@maria\_avdv) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/maria_avdv/status/1706175047033888878?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Two warehouse workers killed following Russian missile and drone attackMonday 25 September 2023 11:50 , Athena Stavrou Two people have been confirmed dead in Odesa following Russian missile and drone attacks overnight.Odesa’s regional governor, Oleh Kiper, wrote on the Telegram messaging service that the bodies of two people working in the grain warehouse have been found under the rubble.The warehouse, where 1,000 tons of grain was reportedly stored, was hit by Russian missiles during last night’s attacks.Suspilne, Ukraine’s state broadcaster, wrote on Telegram: “The body of a second worker who died due to a Russian missile hitting a grain warehouse was found in Odesa, said the head of the Regional Military Administration Kiper.”The governer wrote on Telegram: “I express my condolences to the family.”1,000 tons of grain stored in facilities attacked by RussiaMonday 25 September 2023 11:30 , Athena Stavrou Almost 1,000 tons of grain was stored in facilities attacked by Russia overnight in Odesa, regional governor Oleh Kiper said on Monday.The port was attacked by Russian missiles during the night. The south command of Ukraine’s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app earlier that: “The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage.”Two confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in BeryslavMonday 25 September 2023 11:15 , Athena Stavrou The death toll in Beryslav has risen to two following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning. Governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.He also confirmed via the Telegram messaging app that two more people, a 55-year-old man and a 59-year-old woman were injured.Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine.He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.Monday 25 September 2023 10:55 , Athena Stavrou Photos released by Ukraine’s Regional Prosecutor’s Office show destroyed buildings following the missile and drone strike on Odessa.One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefieldMonday 25 September 2023 10:35 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine’s advance on the southern frontline’s Verbove area has triggered “panic” for a Russian source affiliated to Vladimir Putin’s elite military unit VDV, according to a US-based war monitoring think-tank.The Ukrainian General Staff reported that its forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on 24 September and top general Oleksandr Tarnavsky said more breakthroughs are coming for the war-hit nation that is deep into a counteroffensive against Mr Putin’s troops.A VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on 22 September and continued attacking the settlement with armoured vehicles as of Sunday, as per The Institute for the Study of War think-tank.[*‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russian-military-bloggers-putin-latest-b2417846.html) Russia carries out controlled detonation of Black Sea Fleet headquarters in SevastopolMonday 25 September 2023 10:15 , Athena Stavrou Mikhail Razvozhaev, the governor of Sevastopol, warned residents that the next controlled detonation of the Black Sea Fleet building would be carried out this morning.He assured residents to not worry if they “hear loud noises” while the work is carried out at 11:25am.He wrote on the Telegram messaging app: “The next controlled detonation to collapse emergency structures in the Black Sea Fleet building will be carried out at 11:25. Work will continue until approximately 14.00. If you hear loud noises, don’t worry. The situation is under control.”On Friday, Ukrainian forces attacked the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. The attack left a serviceman missing.Drones attack Russia’s Tula region where thousands suffered power cutMonday 25 September 2023 09:55 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s Tula region came under drone attack in the early hours of Monday as the country engaged its air defence systems to repel strikes, officials said.The air defence was activated over the region bordering Moscow to its north, reported Russian news agency RIA.The latest morning attacks caused limitation of air traffic as two of Moscow’s major airports – the Vnukovo and Domedovo – trimmed down operations on Monday. Flights flying into these airports were redirected to other airports, the Tass state news agency reported.According to preliminary information, no damage or injuries were reported as a result of the attack, the Russian ministry of regional security said.[*Drones attack Black Sea, Crimea and Russian city where thousands suffered power cuts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/drones-attack-russia-s-tula-region-where-thousands-suffered-power-cut-b2417789.html) One person killed in southern Ukraine following aerial bomb attackMonday 25 September 2023 09:31 , Athena Stavrou One person has been killed and several others are injured in southern Ukraine following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.Oleksandr Prokudin, Governor of Kherson Oblast, shared the news following attacks on Beryslav.He wrote on Telegram: “In the morning, Russian aviation attacked Berislav. The occupiers dropped four aerial bombs on the city. One of them hit the building of the housing and exploitation office. So far, it is known about one dead and several injured. Another aerial bomb destroyed a residential building.”Ukrainian Ministry of Defence call Odesa attack a “pathetic attempt at retaliation"Monday 25 September 2023 09:25 , Athena Stavrou The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence has called the Russian missile attack on Odessa a “pathetic attempt at retaliation”.In a tweet, Ukraine claimed this morning’s attack was a retaliation to it’s own strike on the Russian Black Sea fleet headquarters in Sevastopol on Friday.Last week’s attack saw “dozens dead”, according to Ukraine, while Russia say only one soldier is missing.Russia has not commented on the claims that last night’s attack was a direct retaliation.russian missiles struck a hotel in Odesa last night.A pathetic attempt at retaliation for our successful hit on the russian Navy HQ in Sevastopol. Andrey Stavnitser [*pic.twitter.com/I9nlq0HYHD*](https://t.co/I9nlq0HYHD) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1706193779940581503?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Pictures show damage caused in Odesa after Russian missile attack

Ukrainian military and emergency services have issued photos of damage to infrastructure in Odesa following Russian missile attacks overnight.

Three Russian divisions actively defending against Ukrainian assaults

Elements of three Russian divisions are actively defending against Ukrainian assaults around the Orikhiv area in southern Ukraine according to US-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War.

On September 24, Ukrainian forces launched attacks in three directions within the Orikhiv salient from Robotyne against Novoprokopivka, directly into Verbove’s western side and north of Verbove.

Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 76th Air Assault Division and 7th Air Assault Division are have been deployed to defend against the assaults.

The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are defending at the southernmost point of the Ukrainian salient and are engaging Ukrainian forces in Novoprokopivka while the Russian 76th Air Assault Division have been deployed to the western flank near Kopani towards Robotyne and counterattacking there. The 7th Air Assault Division are deployed on the eastern flank near the Verbove-Novopokrovka line and are counterattacking there also.

‘Panic’ among Putin’s forces as they face “real threat” of Ukrainian forces encircling Russian forces

A Russian VDV source warned that there is a “real threat” of Ukrainian forces reaching and encircling the 56th VDV Regiment near Novofedorivka.

The source said on September 22 that Ukrainian forces were within 7km of encircling the 56th VDV Regiment and that the regiment would be in a difficult position if its commander did not make a decision to withdraw from Novofedorivka to other previously prepared positions.

Russian sources also reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

Ukrainian forces occupying half of Verbove after successful advance on Russian village

Russian sources reported to aUS-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War, that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24.

Geolocated combat footage posted on September 24 shows a Ukrainian BMP operating within Verbove’s westernmost village limits.

A Russian VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove for the first time on September 22 and continued pushing east. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

The source also accused the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) of trying to conceal Ukraine’s tactical progress in Verbove, rhetorically stating: “For how long can Shoigu’s MoD hide the breakthrough in Verbove?”

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on September 24.

Ukrainian drones destroyed by Russian air defence overnight

Russia’s defence ministry said on Monday that it’s air defence systems destroyed four Ukraine-launched drones over the northwestern part of the Black Sea and over the Crimean Peninsula.

Separately, the ministry said that four other drones were destroyed overnight over Russia’s Kursk and Belgorod regions.

According to reports, Ukraine’s drone attack on the Kursk region damaged several private houses and an administrative building

It was not immediately known whether there was any damage or injuries as a result of the reported attacks.

Russian overnight missile attack injures one in southern Ukraine

One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.

“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.

They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.

Ukraine‘s Air Force said that its air defence systems destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones, 11 cruise missiles and two hypersonic missiles that Russia launched on Ukraine overnight, vast majority directed at Odesa. Three other drones were destroyed earlier on Sunday, it said.

Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region, said that a woman was taken to a hospital after a shrapnel injury in result of the blast wave. Ukraine‘s south military command posted on its Telegram messaging app several pictures showing a high-rise building with blown up windows and severe damage to its structure.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attack.

ICYMI: What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s military has reportedly succeeded in driving [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) through [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s defensive line in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War, [*a major breakthrough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces spent the winter establishing a tough obstacle course of [*anti-tank ditches, artillery nests and other obstructions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html).

The institute could not confirm that Ukrainian troops had followed suit at the breakthrough point near Verbove but the news is nevertheless a welcome indication that Kyiv’s counteroffensive is bearing fruit as it seeks to drive the invader from its territory.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) is currently in North America seeking to shore up support from his US counterpart [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and Canadian prime minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and has already flown out of Washington with the promise of a new $325m military aid package for his country that will include air defence systems and other weaponry to help it through what promises to be another trying winter of combat.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month

Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine’s [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) province, the region’s governor reported Sunday as the war in Ukraine entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of Lvove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

Samya Kullab has more:

[*Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kherson-poland-kyiv-b2417577.html)

Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’

Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.

In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html).

One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html)

One injured as Russia fires cruise missiles on Odesa

One woman was injured and port infrastructure was damaged in southern Ukraine’s Odesa as Russia launched an overnight missile and drone attack, officials said.

A fire broke out in a non-residential high-rise in the city of Odesa, the administrative centre of the Odesa region, as a result of the attack, but was promptly extinguished, Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region in southern Ukraine, said on his Telegram channel.

The scale of the attack and the full extent of the damage were not immediately clear.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

ICYMI: Russia’s Lavrov rubbishes Ukraine peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has rubbished Ukraine’s 10-point peace plan and warned the conflict will be resolved on the battlefield if the West stuck to it.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Mr Lavrov dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible”.

In a letter to Mr Lavrov last month, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the UN could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertiliser exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

Read more:

[*Russia rubbishes Kyiv peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimea-black-sea-b2417322.html)

Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the “martyrdom” of Ukraine’s people in Russia’s war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery.

Francis appeared to refer to Poland’s recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.

Francis acknowledged he was frustrated that the Vatican’s diplomatic initiatives hadn’t borne much fruit. But he said behind the Russia-Ukraine conflict was also the weapons industry.

Nicole Winfield reports:

[*Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-ukraine-poland-russia-b2417354.html)

Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) says its missile strike on the headquarters of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s Black Sea fleet in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) successfully targeted a meeting of senior naval officials, with “top” commanders among “dozens of dead and wounded”.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.

Read more:

[*Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html)

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[*Russia-Ukraine war – live: Putin ally warns of nuclear world war as Kyiv raids Dnipro River*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6838-KXR1-JBNF-W1XC-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Arpan Rai,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Andy Gregory

**Highlight:** ‘The world is sick and quite probably is on the verge of a new world war,’ former Russian president says

**Body**

An ally of Russia’s president [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has warned that the world is probably on the verge of a new world war as the risks of a nuclear battle escalate.

“The world is sick and quite probably is on the verge of a new world war,” former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev told a conference in Moscow.

He said such a new world war was not inevitable but that the risks of a nuclear confrontation were growing – and more serious than concerns about climate change.

It comes as Ukrainian forces based on the western side of the River Dnipro begin frequently carrying out raids on the eastern bank near the city of Kherson to try to dislodge Russian troops, a regional official said on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) accused Moscow of deploying the kind of war tactics used in [*Syria*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/syria) to level [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , as heavy fighting for control of the salt mining city continues.

Key points

‘We are on the verge of a new world war,’ Russia’s Medvedev says Putin’s troops using ‘Syrian tactics’ in destruction of Bakhmut Russian troops trying to steal 'as much as they can' in Kherson Iran shipped one million rounds to Russia via Caspian Sea – report Casualties among Putin’s troops drop, says UK Ministry of Defence

‘We are on the verge of a new world war,’ Russia’s Medvedev says

An ally of Russian President Vladimir Putin warned on Tuesday that the world was probably on the verge of a new world war, cautioning that the risks of a nuclear confrontation were also rising, though neither scenario was inevitable.

“The world is sick and quite probably is on the verge of a new world war,” former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who serves as deputy chairman of Putin’s powerful security council, told a conference in Moscow.

He said such a new world war was not inevitable but said the risks of a nuclear confrontation were growing -and more serious than concerns about climate change.

Three Russian aircraft intercepted over Baltic Sea -German air force

Three Russian military aircraft flying without transponder signals have been intercepted in international airspace over the Baltic Sea, Germany’s Luftwaffe said today.

German and British forces were deployed to identify the two Sukhoi Su-27 fighter aircraft and one Ilyushin Il-20 aircraft, the German air force said on Twitter.

It posted several images of the Russian aircraft mid-flight.

Aufklärungsflieger abgefangen. und [*#Eurofighter*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Eurofighter?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) wurden alarmiert, um 3 Militärmaschinen zu identifizieren. Die zwei SU-27 Flanker und eine IL-20 aus flogen erneut ohne Transpondersignal im int. Luftraum über der Ostsee. [*#SecuringTheSkies*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/SecuringTheSkies?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*#VAPB*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/VAPB?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@NATO*](https://twitter.com/NATO?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*@GermanyNATO*](https://twitter.com/GermanyNATO?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) … [*pic.twitter.com/sOY4CPkrbe*](https://t.co/sOY4CPkrbe) — Team Luftwaffe (@Team\_Luftwaffe) [*April 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Team_Luftwaffe/status/1651061629285462016?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Heavy, short-range combat grips Bakhmut, fighting seen on outskirts – UK MoD 07:08 , Arpan Rai Heavy, short-range combat continues in the western districts of the contested Donetsk oblast town of Bakhmut, the The British Ministry of Defence said. “A key development over the last week has been fighting on the outskirts of the town, especially near the village of Khromove, as Ukraine seeks to maintain control of its 0506 supply route,” the ministry said in its latest intelligence update. It added that Ukraine’s other resupply options into Bakhmut are likely complicated by muddy conditions on unsurfaced tracks.“With the town having now been under attack for over 11 months, the Ukrainian defences of Bakhmut have now been integrated as one element of a much deeper defensive zone, which includes the town of Chasiv Yar to the west,” it said. Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -26 April 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/wtiXllWpl9*](https://t.co/wtiXllWpl9) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/olhe70Sfw5*](https://t.co/olhe70Sfw5) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*April 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1651101460745035778?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Wimbledon set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn06:59 , Andy Gregory Wimbledon will offer substantial financial support to Ukrainian players and causes this summer after reversing the ban on Russian and Belarusian athletes, reportsEleanor Crooks.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 set to make £500,000 Ukraine donation after Russian ban U-turn*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/wimbledon-2023-ukraine-russia-lta-aeltc-b2326454.html) Wagner chief says relations with Russian military have not improved06:38 , Arpan Rai Russian mercenary Wagner Group’s chief Yevgeny Prigozhin has denied that relations with Russian military have improved after intelligence assessments indicated that Vladimir Putin and Moscow’s miltiary have worked on their internal conflict. Kremlin-backed private mercenary Wagner Group boss Yevgeny Prigozhin called the Institute for the Study of War’s assessment a “fake,” the think tank reported on 25 April.The Wagner chief added that he “wouldn’t exchange ammunition for (his) guys even for friendship with God.”Russia’s Lavrov warns EU becoming militarised now like Nato06:28 , Arpan Rai Russian foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has warned European Union “is becoming militarised at a record rate” and aggressive in its goal of containing Russia.Mr Lavrov said he has no doubts that there is now “very little difference” between the EU and Nato.Vladimir Putin has long complained about Nato’s expansion, especially toward his country, and partly used that as a justification for invading Ukraine.Russia’s Lavrov was asked whether the war in Ukraine was a miscalculation since Moscow strongly opposed Nato’s expansion and the invasion sparked Finland’s membership, with Sweden next and Ukraine hoping for a road map to join. “Nato never had any intention of stopping,” the Russian minister replied, pointing to the recent EU-Nato declaration and actions in recent years that saw non-Nato members Sweden and Finland “increasingly taking part in Nato military exercises and other actions that were meant to synchronise the military programs of Nato members and neutral states.” Mr Lavrov said Russia was promised on several occasions that Nato would not expand, but said “those were lies.” “Unbiased assessments that our political scientists as well as those abroad made is that Nato sought to break Russia apart,” he said, “but in the end it only made it stronger, brought it closer together. So, let’s not make any hasty conclusions now as to what this will all end in.”FBI, US companies collecting war crime evidence in Ukraine06:17 , Arpan Rai Ukraine is working with the US Federal Bureau of Investigation and American companies to collect evidence of war crimes by Russians, such as geolocation and cellphone information, senior officials said.Ukrainian authorities are collecting digital information from battlefields and Ukrainian towns ravaged by the war since Russia invaded the country last February, said Alex Kobzanets, a FBI special agent who previously worked as a legal attache for the agency in Ukraine.“Collection of that data, analysis of that data, working through that data is something the FBI has experience working through,” Kobzanets said at the RSA cybersecurity conference in San Francisco.That work includes looking into cellphone information, forensic analyses of DNA samples, as well as analysis of body parts collected off battlefields, he said.“The next step is working with national US service providers, and transferring that information...obtaining subscriber information, obtaining geolocation information, where possible,” Mr Kobzanets added.The work reflects deepening collaboration between the US and Ukraine on the cyber front, where Russia has been a common adversary for both nations.The Russian government did not immediately respond to a request for comment.Lavrov quizzed over detained WSJ reporter Evan Gershkovich05:59 , Andy Gregory Russia’s foreign minister was asked about detained Wall Street Journal reporter Evan Gershkovich during a UN press conference on Tuesday. Sergei Lavrov told reporters that he was not involved in talks on any potential prisoner swap.Tucker Carlson receives a job offer from Russia after Fox News exit05:34 , Arpan Rai It didn’t take long for Tucker Carlson to land a “job offer” after losing his primetime slot on the most-watched cable news network in the country.Within hours after Fox News announced that it had agreed to “part ways” with the right-wing nationalist anchor on Monday morning, Russian state media personalities and propaganda outlets sought to mock American media by offering him a job.RT, the Russian state broadcaster formerly known as Russia Today, which is banned in dozens of countries, seemingly offered him a platform.“Hey @TuckerCarlson, you can always question more with @RT\_com,” the outlet tweeted. Analysts, however, said the apparent offer has not been made seriously.[*Russian state-owned media figures offer Tucker Carlson a job*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/tucker-carlson-russia-ukraine-fox-b2326832.html) Ukraine boosting ‘Army of Drones’ on frontline – report05:28 , Arpan Rai Officials in Ukraine have confirmed a rapid spike in production of drones amid growing demand from troops on the frontline.The Volodymyr Zelensky administration has relaxed import laws and scrapped taxes for drone parts and equipment, reported BBC.It added that the expansion of drone production is being funded by the Army of Drones campaign.Under the initiative which has seen support from celebrities like Mark Hamill, Ukraine has raised more than $108m (£87m).The money is also being spent on training new pilots for the front line.Chances of Putin ‘backing down’ in response to Kyiv’s counterattack ‘less than zero’ – US think tank05:10 , Arpan Rai Vladimir Putin will remain defiant on negotiations to a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive expected to start soon, senior US and EU officials assessed, a US-based think tank has said.Citing a report by The New York Times, the Institute for the Study of War has said that a senior European official stated that the chances of Putin “backing down” in response to a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive are “less than zero.”“The official stated that Putin would likely mobilize more soldiers to fight in Ukraine. US assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs Celeste Wallander said that there is ‘very little evidence’ to suggest that Putin would alter his strategic goal of subjugating Ukraine ‘politically, if not fully militarily’,” the ISW said in its latest assessment on the continuing Russian invasion of Ukraine.It also pointed to the comments by the US National Security Council spokesperson John Kirby stating that the US is increasing security assistance to Ukraine because the US expects that Russia will attempt to go on the offensive as the weather improves.War criminals could visit UK without prosecution fear unless law changed, MP warns04:50 , Andy Gregory Russian generals responsible for war crimes in Ukraine could visit the UK without fear of prosecution unless a legal loophole is closed, MPs have been told.Brendan O’Hara of the SNP raised concerns with existing legislation as he introduced his Universal Jurisdiction (Extension) Bill, which seeks to implement the calls to “tighten up” existing legislation and bring to justice those responsible for the “world’s most heinous crimes”.[*War criminals could visit UK without prosecution fear unless law changed – MP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/war-criminals-mps-bill-george-clooney-ukraine-b2326461.html) UK sent thousands of Challenger 2 ammunition to Ukraine, says minister04:45 , Arpan Rai The United Kingdom has sent “thousands of rounds of Challenger 2 ammunition to Ukraine, including depleted uranium armor-piercing rounds,” UK armed forces minister James Heappy said.He added: “For operational security reasons, we will not comment on Ukrainian usage rates for the rounds provided.” Mr Heappey was responding to written inquiries from Kenny MacAskill, House of Commons member from Scottish Alba Party.The minister said that while the UK carried “no obligation” to clear up depleted uranium rounds fired from Challenger 2 tanks by the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the UK remains “committed to helping Ukraine emerge from this war secure, prosperous and free and we are supporting a range of activities to meet Ukraine’s immediate needs, restore essential infrastructure and services, and lay the groundwork for its longer-term recovery and post-war reconstruction.”Top Ukraine minister argues for place in Nato: ‘New raison d’être’04:29 , Arpan Rai Ukraine’s foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba has penned a sharp op-ed and argued for a place in Nato for the war-hit nation despite multiple apprehensions, stating that entry of Finland confirms that fears around Russian retaliation are “unwarranted”.“Russia’s war on Ukraine is about more than killing Ukrainians and stealing our land. President Vladimir Putin is trying to destroy the very foundations of the European security order formed after 1945. This is why the stakes are so high, not only for Ukraine but for the entire Euro-Atlantic community,” Mr Kuleba wrote. He added: “Ukraine did not choose this battle. Nor did the United States and its Nato allies. Russia started this war. But it falls to Ukraine and its Western partners to bring the conflict to an end, winning a just victory that guarantees peace and stability in Europe for generations to come.”Zelensky condemns Kharkiv attack: ‘Russia killed two women’03:55 , Arpan Rai Volodymyr Zelensky has slammed Russia for carrying out a missile strike on civilian neighbourhood in Ukraine’s Kharkiv which killed two people. “Throughout the day today, the rubble in the city of Kupyansk, Kharkiv region, was being cleared after a Russian attack with S-300 missiles. Attack on an ordinary civilian neighborhood. The terrorists targeted the local history museum and nearby houses. Russia killed two women with this strike,” Mr Zelensky said. He extended condolences to the families and friends of the victims, and added that 10 people have also been wounded in the attack.“In total, more than 60 museums and galleries in different regions of our country have been destroyed or damaged by the occupier,” Mr Zelensky said in his nightly address. Watch: The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary03:42 , Andy Gregory It was a month into Vladimir Putin’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Russian forces had withdrawn from around Kyiv and in their wake Bel Trew and her team stumbled on a body by an abandoned Russian camp.His hands were tied. He had been burned and shot in the back. Soldiers said he was a teenager.As Bel tried to find out who he was and what had happened, she uncovered a nightmare world: a nation struggling to find thousands of its missing and to identify its dead.The Body in the Woods by Bel Trew is[*streaming now on Independent TV and on your smart TV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/independent-tv-download-smart-tv-how-b2287476.html). [*The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-documentary-crimes-b2291759.html) New York lawyer pleads guilty to dealing with sanctioned Russian oligarch02:33 , Andy Gregory A lawyer in New York has admitted to making $3.8m in payments to maintain properties that were beneficially owned by a Russian oligarch under US sanctions.Washington imposed sanctions in 2018 on billionaire Viktor Vekselberg – who owns the Renova group of energy companies – over allegations of Russian interference in the US election won by Donald Trump, and again in 2022 over his ties to Vladimir Putin.Robert Wise admitted to receiving wire payments from a shell company controlled by an associate of Vekselberg, and then using the funds to pay taxes, insurance and other fees on various properties, including two apartments on Park Avenue and an estate in the Hamptons.“Admission to the bar carries with it a public trust that attorneys will act with honesty and integrity – a trust that Robert Wise chose to betray in exchange for an easy, illicit paycheck,” Andrew Adams, who leads a US Department of Justice unit targeting Russia-related sanctions violations, told Reuters.Nasa chief ‘expects' US-Russian collaboration at ISS to continue until 203001:21 , Andy Gregory Nasa administrator Bill Nelson has said that he expects Russians and Americans to work together on the International Space Station (ISS) until it is decommissioned.American-Russian space cooperation was put in doubt after the invasion of Ukraine, with the chief of Russia’s space agency Yuri Borisov surprising Nasa by announcing in July that Moscow intended to leave the partnership “after 2024 – only to backtrack a day later.During a visit to Ottawa, Mr Nelson underscored the history of US and Soviet collaboration in space during the Cold War, and said he expects it to continue despite the war in Ukraine.“We are completely at odds with President Putin’s aggression” that is “slaughtering people and invading an autonomous sovereign country,” Nelson told Reuters in an interview in Ottawa.But the collaboration aboard the ISS “continues in a very professional manner between astronauts and cosmonauts without a hitch”, he said, adding: “I expect that to continue all the way through the end of the decade, when they we will then de-orbit the space station.”Video report: Sweden expels five Russian Embassy employees on suspicion of spyingWednesday 26 April 2023 00:09 , Andy GregoryRussia hands ex-police officer seven years in prison for criticising war in tapped phone call to friendsTuesday 25 April 2023 23:03 , Andy Gregory A court in Russia has convicted a former police officer of publicly spreading false information by criticising the war in Ukraine in a phone call with his friends, which officials tapped.Semiel Vedel was sentenced to seven years in prison under a censorship law the Kremlin brought in days after invading Ukraine. During three phone conversations with friends last year, Mr Vedel referred to Russia as a “murderer country”, used “Glory to Ukraine” as a greeting, and claimed that Russia was suffering “huge losses” in Ukraine, according to the case prosecutor.Officials deemed the conversations public because Mr Vedel’s phone was tapped and an investigator listened in on the calls. That reasoning – which Mr Vedel’s lawyer rejected as absurd – hadn’t been previously used in cases involving spreading misinformation charges.Dasha Litvinovahas the full report:[*Russia convicts ex-police officer over Ukraine war criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-russia-ukraine-tallinn-estonia-b2326577.html) European politicians urge Olympics ban on Russian and Belarusian athletesTuesday 25 April 2023 21:59 , AP European politicians have urged the International Olympic Committee to exclude Russian and Belarusian athletes from the 2024 event instead of seeking ways to let them compete as neutrals, reportsGraham Dunbar.The 46-nation Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE)’s panel for sports issues held a two-hour session in Strasbourg to help draft a future report on the question of barring the two countries’ athletes and officials from the Olympic movement because of Russia’s war.With 15 months until the opening ceremony in Paris, Olympic sports bodies are weighing the IOC’s formal request — a reversal of its advice last year for exclusion — to look at reintegrating some Russians and Belarusians into games qualifying as individuals, but not in team events.“Imposing a war has to have a clear consequence. Sport also has to take its responsibility,” Danish politician Mogens Jensen said, adding the “only one clear message to send” was excluding athletes.The Council of Europe was created after the Second World War to advocate for freedom and protection of minorities. It expelled Russia as a member last year.[*European lawmakers urge for Olympics ban on Russia, Belarus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/international-olympic-committee-ap-thomas-bach-russia-sport-b2326700.html) ‘I do not see anyone talking about peace’: Lula criticises ‘insane war'Tuesday 25 April 2023 20:55 , Andy Gregory Brazilian president Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has criticised Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but insisted that no one is talking about peace in what he called an “insane war”.The left-wing leader angered many in the West this month when he called for the US and European allies to stop supplying arms to Ukraine and prolonging the war – prompting the White House to accuse him of “parroting Russian and Chinese propaganda”.After the backlash, Lula toned down his comments and while visiting Portugal and Spain in recent days he has condemned Russia’s violation of Ukraine’s territorial integrity.In Spain, Lula again called for more peace efforts “so that Ukraine can keep its territory”, backtracking on a recent suggestion that Kyiv should make concessions to end the war and that Russia should return recently invaded territory but could keep Crimea.Speaking at a business conference in Spain on Tuesday, he said: “I understand the European view of this war. It is unacceptable that one country invades another, but it is a war in which I do not see anyone talking about peace.”Black Sea grain deal situation has reached ‘deadlock’, says LavrovTuesday 25 April 2023 20:01 , Andy Gregory The situation surrounding the Black Sea grain export deal has reached a deadlock, Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has said.The pact was renewed for 60 days last month, but Russia has signalled it may well not agree to extend it further unless the West removes obstacles to the exports of Russian grain and fertiliser. During a news conference at the United Nations, Mr Lavrov told reporters on Tuesday that there are still obstacles blocking Russian exports – after Latvia moved to release a batch of grain seized from Russia last year, soothing one of the key points of contention souring Russia’s view of the deal.Ukraine ‘conducting raids’ across Dnipro river to dislodge Russian troops ahead of expected offensiveTuesday 25 April 2023 19:11 , Andy Gregory Officials have said that Ukrainian forces are frequently carrying out raids across the River Dnipro near the southern city of Kherson to try to dislodge Russian troops, reportsOlena Harmash.Russian forces have held the eastern side of the Dnipro near Kherson since retreating from the city in November after months of occupation, but Ukraine is expected to launch a spring counteroffensive to try to recapture more territory.Yuriy Sobolevskiy, deputy head of the Kherson regional administration, said the raids were intended to reduce the combat capability of Russian troops who have been shelling Kherson city since being forced to retreat. “Our military visit the left [eastern] bank very often, conducting raids. The Ukrainian armed forces are working, and working very effectively,” Mr Sobolevskiy told Ukrainian television.“The results will come as they did on the right bank of the Kherson region when, thanks to a complex and long operation, they were able to liberate our territories with minimal losses for our military. The same thing happens now on the left bank.”Russia seized the Kherson region soon after its full-scale invasion of Ukraine 14 months ago, and has continued since then to hold all of the region’s territory east of the Dnipro.[*Ukrainian forces ‘conducting raids’ across Dnipro river to dislodge Russian troops*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dnipro-kherson-b2326605.html) South Africa’s ANC seeks to repeal ICC membership ahead of possible Putin visitTuesday 25 April 2023 18:20 , Andy Gregory South Africa’s governing African National Congress will aim to repeal the country’s membership of the International Criminal Court (ICC), president Cyril Ramaphosa has announced for the second time.The party’s decision at a weekend meeting of its national executive committee came after the ICC issued an arrest warrant for Russia’s president Vladimir Putin, who is mulling whether to attend a summit of BRICS nations in South Africa in August.“The governing party, the African National Congress, has taken that decision that it is prudent that South Africa should pull out of the ICC, largely because of the manner in which the ICC has been seen to be dealing with [these] type of problems,” Mr Ramaphosa said, during a state visit by Finland’s president.The arrest warrant against Mr Putin – for alleged war crimes – was issued after he had already received his invite from South Africa to the BRICS summit in August, and it would oblige South Africa to hand him over to The Hague court if he set foot in the country.The Kremlin said on Monday that Mr Putin will decide whether to attend the summit in person nearer the time, while the South African official in charge of the relationship with BRICS countries told Reuters that the Russian president “has indicated attendance”.Rescuers comb wreckage after Russian airstrike destroys Ukrainian history museumTuesday 25 April 2023 17:28 , Andy Gregory A Russian missile has killed two women and injured 10 others as it struck a museum in the centre of Kupiansk, Ukraine’s state emergency service has said.Footage showed rescue workers at the wrecked remains of the building in the aftermath of the attack.Bid launched to repeal Russian censorship law banning criticism of Ukraine warTuesday 25 April 2023 16:59 , Andy Gregory Russian human rights groups are seeking to repeal the law banning citizens from speaking out against Moscow’s invasion of Ukraine.OVD-Info, one of the groups involved in the appeal to Russia’s Constitutional Court, said the aim was to abolish the legal article banning “public actions aimed at discrediting the use of the armed forces of the Russian Federation to defend the interests of the Russian Federation”.“This article should not exist at all since it prohibits criticising the state, which is unacceptable in a democratic society,” Violetta Fitsner, a lawyer for OVD-Info, told Reuters.While the chances of repealing the censorship law – part of a package ushered in eight days after last year’s invasion – are remote, a rejection of the appeal would signal that human rights and the constitution no longer matter in Russia, Ms Fitsner said.“In any case, we want to draw attention to the problem of persecution in Russia for anti-war positions and pacifist beliefs and state that such persecution is absolutely illegal.”Sweden expels 5 Russian Embassy staff on suspicion of spyingTuesday 25 April 2023 16:33 , AP Sweden has informed Russia that five employees of the Russian Embassy in Stockholm were asked to leave the country because they were suspected of spyingSwedish foreign minister Tobias Billström said the alleged activities of the five were “incompatible” with their diplomatic status. Billström said Russia’s ambassador to Sweden, Viktor Tatarintsev, was informed of the expulsions.The Swedish Security Service, which is known by the acronym Sapo, recently received a list of names of a number of suspected Russian intelligence officers, Swedish broadcaster SVT reported.The domestic security agency has said that “every third Russian diplomat in Sweden is an intelligence officer.”Sweden also expelled three Russian Embassy staff members a year ago. Neighboring Norway said two weeks ago that it was expelling 15 Russian diplomats accused of spying.[*Sweden expels 5 Russian Embassy staff on suspicion of spying*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/sweden-ap-stockholm-norway-svt-b2326504.html) Denmark signs 5-year energy deal with UkraineTuesday 25 April 2023 15:59 , Andy Gregory Denmark has signed a 5-year agreement with Ukraine which aims to help Kyiv rebuild destroyed wind capacity and strengthen its independence from Russian energy.“The new 5-year collaboration will contribute to Ukraine being able to further expand its electricity supply with wind energy,” Denmark’s climate ministry said, adding that its cooperation with Ukraine on energy dates back to 2014.“Danish authorities will, among other things, help Ukrainian authorities develop a regulatory framework that can promote onshore and offshore wind,” it said.In the short term, the deal aims to help get existing capacity destroyed in Russia’s war back up and running, and to expand onshore wind further. Long-term, the collaboration will investigate the potential for offshore wind power, the ministry said.“We are now even more committed to ensuring Ukraine can access electricity and get the opportunity for a green rethink of its energy infrastructure,” said climate minister Lars Aagaard.Ukraine plans for 'complete transformation' of six war-hit townsTuesday 25 April 2023 15:32 , Andy Gregory Ukraine will seek the “complete transformation” of six towns which have suffered “terrible destruction” in Russia’s war, in a reconstruction programme announced today by prime minister Denys Shmyhal.The project is part of a broader plan to fast-track reconstruction even though the war is not over, with Kyiv’s allies preparing to give billions of pounds to support such efforts.Mr Shmyhal said the towns of Borodianka and Moshchun near the capital Kyiv, Yahidine in the north, Trostianets and Tsyrkuny in the east, and Posad-Pokrovske in the south would be rebuilt “comprehensively and according to new principles” under an experimental programme“This means that particular houses and buildings will not be rebuilt, but everything -with a system approach, new planning and a complete transformation of these settlements,” he told a government meeting.Two killed after Russian missile strikes Kupiansk museum, Ukraine saysTuesday 25 April 2023 14:11 , Andy Gregory A Russian missile has killed two women and injured 10 others as it struck a museum in the centre of Kupiansk, Ukraine’s state emergency service has said.Rescue workers dug through mounds of rubble to retrieve the bodies after the local history museum was hit by what president Volodymyr Zelensky’s chief of staff and Kharkiv’s regional governor said was a Russian S-300 missile.Mr Zelensky posted a video of a devastated building that had spewed out rubble and debris into the street. Its windows were smashed and a section of the wall and roof was destroyed.“The terrorist country is doing everything to destroy us completely,” he said. “Our history, our culture, our people.”Kupyansk, local history museum. missile strike. So far, it is known about the dead employee of the museum and ten wounded. There are still people under the rubble.The terrorist country is doing everything to destroy completely. We have no right to forget about it for a… [*pic.twitter.com/U2bt5RtxnL*](https://t.co/U2bt5RtxnL) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*April 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1650769182286331905?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russia did not immediately comment on the attack, but frequently denies deliberately targeting civilians – despite gruesome and repeated evidence to the contrary.

Kupiansk, an important rail hub with a pre-war population of 26,000, was occupied by Russian forces for months after they invaded Ukraine, but were chased out in Kyiv’s rapid September counteroffensive.

Russia expels Moldovan diplomat in retaliatory move

Moscow has said it will expel a Moldovan diplomat, in what its foreign ministry cast as retaliation for the expulsion last week of a Russian diplomat in Moldova over fears of possible interference in a regional election.

The ministry said it had summoned Moldova’s ambassador in Moscow to announce the expulsion, as well as to protest against what it called “unfriendly steps towards Russia” and “regular anti-Russian statements” from Chisinau.

Moldovan foreign minister Nicu Popescu called the move “hostile” and said it was the latest episode in decades of Russian efforts to hold back Moldova’s development as an independent state.

Announcing the initial expulsion last week, Moldova cited the actions of Russian embassy staff towards Moldovan border guards who had denied entry to a regional Russian politician at Chisinau airport.

Moldovan police said that Tatarstan governor Rustam Minnikhanov had wanted to visit Moldova to boost support for a pro-Russian candidate in a regional election.

Hungary wants Ukrainian grain ban until end-2023, minister says

Hungary and other east European countries want to maintain an import ban on Ukrainian grain put in place last week until the end of 2023, Farm Minister Istvan Nagy said on Facebook on Tuesday.

“We would like the (European) Commission to accept our measures as we aim to uphold them until the end of the year, to allow our farmers to harvest and store their crop,” said Nagy, who is attending a meeting with European Union counterparts in Luxembourg.

Hungary last week banned imports of Ukrainian grain and agricultural products after Poland took the same measure to counter an influx of cheaper products that has put domestic pressure on the government to shield local farmers.

Slovakia and Bulgaria also followed suit.

The countries, with others in central and eastern Europe, have said EU measures are needed to tackle the problem. Hungary has called for “progressive” aid from the EU to help move Ukraine‘s grain through central European countries.

The countries became transit routes for Ukrainian grain that could not be exported through the country’s Black Sea ports after Russia‘s invasion. But bottlenecks trapped millions of tonnes of grains in countries like Hungary and Poland that border Ukraine.

Watch: The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary

It was a month into Vladimir Putin’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Russian forces had withdrawn from around Kyiv and in their wake Bel Trew and her team stumbled on a body by an abandoned Russian camp.

His hands were tied. He had been burned and shot in the back. Soldiers said he was a teenager.

As Bel tried to find out who he was and what had happened, she uncovered a nightmare world: a nation struggling to find thousands of its missing and to identify its dead.

The Body in the Woods by Bel Trew is[*streaming now on Independent TV and on your smart TV*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/independent-tv-download-smart-tv-how-b2287476.html).

[*The Body in the Woods | An Independent TV Original Documentary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-war-russia-documentary-crimes-b2291759.html)

Kremlin dismisses 'lies' that Putin has doubles and sits in a bunker

The Kremlin rejected what it said were lies that President Vladimir Putin had lookalike body doubles who stood in for the 70-year-old leader and that he spent much of his time shielding in a nuclear bunker.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov listed what he said were fabrications about Russia in a speech that touched on the country’s history since the 1991 fall of the Soviet Union, the causes of the Ukraine war and the alleged perfidy of Western society.

“You have probably heard that he (Putin) has very many doubles who work instead of him while he sits in a bunker,” Peskov said at a Moscow conference, before chuckling: “Yet another lie.”

“You see yourselves what our president is like: he always was, and is now, mega-active -those who work next to him can hardly keep up with him,” he said.

“His energy can only be envied. His health can, God willing, only be wished for. Of course, he doesn’t sit in any bunkers. This is also a lie,” Peskov added.

The Kremlin has repeatedly dismissed speculation that Putin, Russia‘s paramount leader since 1999, is ill.

During a state visit to Moscow last month, Chinese President Xi Jinping told Putin he was convinced voters would support the Russian leader again in a presidential election due in 2024. Putin has not yet said whether he will seek another term.

When he first came to power, Putin vowed to end the chaos that gripped post-Soviet Russia in the 1990s, but the invasion of Ukraine is the most serious military crisis any Kremlin chief has faced since the Soviet-Afghan war of 1979-89.

The conflict in Ukraine has ushered in the gravest confrontation with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, while Putin has vowed to pivot away from the West towards China.

Ukraine stages raids across Dnipro River as counteroffensive looms

Ukrainian forces based on the western side of the River Dnipro are frequently carrying out raids on the eastern bank near the city of Kherson to try to dislodge Russian troops, a regional official said on Tuesday.

Russian forces have held the eastern side of the Dnipro near Kherson since retreating from the southern city in November after months of occupation, but Ukraine is expected to launch a spring counteroffensive to try to recapture more territory.

Yuriy Sobolevskiy, deputy head of the Kherson regional administration, said the raids were intended to reduce the combat capability of Russian troops who have been shelling Kherson city since being forced to retreat. “Our military visit the left (eastern) bank very often, conducting raids. The Ukrainian armed forces are working, and working very effectively,” Sobolevskiy told Ukrainian television.

“The results will come as they did on the right bank of the Kherson region when, thanks to a complex and long operation, they were able to liberate our territories with minimal losses for our military. The same thing happens now on the left bank.”

Kremlin remains downbeat on state of Black Sea grain deal

The Kremlin reaffirmed its position on Tuesday that the Black Sea grain deal is not working for Moscow, a day after the head of the United Nations handed Russia a letter with proposals to improve and expand it.

“Despite the fact that so much time has passed, (the deal) has not yet been implemented, it has not come together as a package, the conditions that concerned us have still not been realised,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

“Therefore, while the circumstances don’t add up in favour of this deal, we continue to observe,” he said.

The deal was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations last July to allow Kyiv to resume grain exports from its Black Sea ports that had been severed after Russia invaded Ukraine five months earlier.

Russia has signalled that it will not allow the deal to be extended beyond May 18 unless obstacles to its own food and fertiliser exports are removed.

On Monday, a U.N. spokesperson said United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres had proposed to Russian President Vladimir Putin a “way forward aimed at the improvement, extension and expansion” of the agreement.

The proposal was outlined in a letter that Guterres asked Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov to deliver to Putin.

The grain deal was aimed at alleviating a global food crisis, as both Ukraine and Russia are major exporters of grain.

Peskov, however, played down the extent to which shortfalls of grain from both countries had contributed to the crisis.

“We all know that the genesis of the global food crisis has other roots. And it is not a direct consequence of the loss of Ukrainian grain from the market,” he said.

“Of course, the loss of Ukrainian grain and Russian grain from the market may be one of the factors, but not decisive.”

UN chief and West berate Russia's top diplomat over Ukraine

The United Nations chief and representatives from Western nations berated Russia’s top diplomat as he chaired a U.N. meeting Monday, accusing Moscow of violating the U.N. Charter by attacking [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and occupying part of its territory.

Russia’s foreign minister responded by defending his country’s military action and accusing the U.S. and its allies of undercutting global diplomacy, the foundation of the United Nations, which was created to prevent a third world war.

Secretary-General [*Antonio Guterres*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antonio-guterres) called cooperation among the U.N.’s 193 member nations the organization’s “beating heart” and “guiding vision,” and he warned the Security Council that global collaboration is under the greatest strain since the creation of the United Nations in 1945 on the ashes of World War II.

[*UN chief and West berate Russia's top diplomat over Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-antonio-guterres-sergey-lavrov-b2326003.html)

Long days of gravediggers tell story of Ukraine's war dead

The graves are dug in the morning. Four plots, each two meters deep in the section of a cemetery in a central Ukrainian city devoted to the nation’s fallen soldiers.

The day begins for Oleh Itsenko, 29, and Andrii Kuznetsov, 23, shortly after dawn, when the two diggers report for the grueling work. A day in their lives tells the story of Ukraine’s mounting war dead. They won’t be finished until sunset.

With a tractor equipped with an earth auger they bore into the ground. Armed with shovels, they go about carving out perfect rectangles with precision, the final resting place for the country’s soldiers killed in fierce battles on Ukraine’s eastern front.

[*Long days of gravediggers tell story of Ukraine's war dead*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-bakhmut-kyiv-russia-b2326270.html)

Ukrainian museum worker killed and 10 injured in Russian attack

A Russian missile has hit a museum building in a Ukrainian city, killing a worker and injuring 10 other people.

The Russian military used S-300 air defence missiles to attack Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region, hitting the museum of local history in the centre of the city.

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky posted a video from the site that shows the ruined building and emergency personnel examining the damage.

“The terrorist country is doing everything to destroy us completely,” Mr Zelensky said. “Our history, our culture, our people. Killing Ukrainians with absolutely barbaric methods.”

Kharkiv regional governor Oleh Syniehubov said that three people were admitted to hospital, seven received minor injuries and two others were believed to remain under the debris. Emergency responders were working to rescue them.

Kupiansk was captured by Russian forces in the earlier stages of the Russian invasion and reclaimed by Ukrainian forces in a surprise counter-offensive in September that saw the Russians driven out of broad swathes of the Kharkiv region.

A woman also died in Russian shelling of the town of Dvorichna, near Kupiansk, and two civilians were killed in the eastern Donetsk region, according to the Ukrainian presidential office.

The Ukrainian military is now preparing for a massive counter-offensive, relying on the latest supplies of Western battle tanks and other weapons, and fresh troops who were trained in the West.

Ukraine‘s military intelligence chief, Major General Kyrylo Budanov, in an interview with RBC-Ukraine released on Monday, described the planned counter-offensive as a “landmark battle in Ukraine‘s modern history” that will see the country “reclaim significant areas”.

**Load-Date:** April 26, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Ukraine makes frontline gains as rain threatens counteroffensive*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69BP-XNK1-JBNF-W00J-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:29

**Length:** 8070 words

**Byline:** Namita Singh,Athena Stavrou and Nick Ferris

**Highlight:** Weather conditions in southern Ukraine appear to be deteriorating, making it difficult for Kyiv to advance it’s counteroffensive

**Body**

Ukrainian forces have made small gains over the weekend along multiple points of the frontline as “heavy rain” threatens to slow down Kyiv’s counteroffensive.

Geolocated images showed Ukrainian infantry roughly 300 metres north of Novoprokopivka, south of Robotyne, which is the deepest they have been seen inside Russian-occupied territory as part of that attack.

This line has emerged as [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s main axis of the counteroffensive in the past month, though progress slowed after the liberation of Robotyne at the end of August.

The Ukrainian General Staff also claimed on Sunday that Ukrainian forces had achieved “partial success” near Bakhmut, though that remains unconfirmed.

It comes as “heavy rain” was reported in both the Bakhmut and Zaporizhzhia, which is the region in which Robotyne is located.

At the start of September, the-then top-ranking US military officer General Mark Milley said he believed Ukraine had about “30 to 45 days' worth of fighting weather left”.

One Russian military blogger claimed that “weather conditions have deteriorated very much” in the past few weeks, adding that there were “no significant enemy movements … due to poor visibility”.

Ukrainian eastern group of forces spokesperson Captain Ilya Yevlash admitted that the poor weather, and the subsequent low visibility, may affect drone and aviation but it will not halt the counteroffensive, according to comments published by the Institute for the Study of War.

Key Points

Record number of Russian drone attacks expected this winter Ukraine gains ground in counteroffensive near Bakhmut A community remembers its dead after heavy bombing kills 52 people Russian missile strike on Ukraine village kills over 50 during memorial service Russian forces carried out 59 attacks on Kherson provence

Ukraine repels Russian attacks on five fronts as Putin resorts to old weaponry and reserves

[*Ukrainian forces beat attacks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-latest-putin-kupiansk-lyman-b2425115.html) on five points across the war frontline on Sunday as [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s troops resorted to using old weapons and equipment while shelling the frontline, military officials said in the latest update from the battlefield.

At least two people were killed and a dozen more injured in Russia’s shelling of the southern Kherson region.

The attacks were repelled in five areas of the eastern front – Kupiansk, [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , Lyman, Avdiivka, and Marinka – along the 1,000km-long (600mile) front, the general staff of the Armed Forces of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) said in its evening report.

A total of 33 skirmishes were recorded during the day by [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-losses-putin-war-latest-b2426043.html) , the battlefield update added.

You can read the full story below.

[*Ukraine repels Russian attacks on five fronts as Putin uses old weaponry and reserves*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-latest-putin-shelling-kherson-b2426345.html)

Ukraine working to prevent Russian drone production

Ukrainian attempts to prevent Russia from producing lethal drones are underway, according to a top official.

Andriy Yermak, the top advisor to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, claimed that US sanctions against the military-industrial complex to prevent further drone production have been “strengthened”.

Russia drones, including the Lancet, ZALA and Orlan, have proved highly effective on the battlefield.

Denmark PM urges West to avoid ‘war fatigue’ with Ukraine

The Danish prime minister has called on Kyiv’s western allies not to suffer “war fatigue” over Ukraine.

Leaders of Ukraine’s allies are meeting today in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, to discuss continued support for Kyiv, among other topics, as part of a Nato parliamentary assembly.

In her opening remarks, the prime minister of Denmark, called on her colleagues to stand with Ukraine “to the bitter end”.

She said: “Brave Ukrainian men and women are fighting on the battlefield. They are the face of right against wrong, of good against evil.

“This [invasion] is a threat to the ideas our alliance is built on – freedom, democracy, the rule of law.

“We must be with Ukraine to the bitter end. None of us can claim war fatigue while Ukraine continues its tireless fight. Let us decide that war fatigue will not take place in our transatlantic community.”

Her comments reflect a difficult point in Ukraine’s fight against Russia: while Kyiv’s counteroffensive looks to have slowed in the past fortnight (though marginal gains are still being made), the chaos in Congress last week has cast into doubt the continued military support of the US.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will address those in Copenhagen later today.

Majority of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet no longer in main Crimean port

Significant portions of Russia’s prized Black Sea Fleet (BSF) have been moved to secondary locations in Crimea and further afield, showing that Ukraine poses a “serious threat” on the peninsula.

The port of Sevastopol, on the southeastern tip of the peninsula, had been a main base for the BSF, but after months of heavy air and naval drone attacks, Russia has been forced to pull many of its vessels further back.

At least 70-80 percent of its fleet is now spread among other locations, Olga Korbut, an expert on military activity on the Black Sea, told The Independent.

Last week, satellite images showed at least 10 vessels in the port of Novorossiysk; they had been moved more than 200 miles west from Sevastopol after another week of Ukrainian attacks.

It was also announced that Russia would open a new naval base in the breakaway state of Abkhazia, further west still.

According to Ms Korbut, Russia is now operating, or intending to operate, bases in Novorossiysk, Kerch and Feodosiya (both in Crimea) and Abkhazia.

“It is worth noting that Ukraine has been very creative and successful in using the innovative concept of an army of drones (naval drones in this case) against Russia while having extremely poor traditional fleet capabilities,” Ms Korbut added.

“This again proves that an adequate response to Russian aggressive actions in the Black Sea is possible.”

[*pic.twitter.com/YuCxcpilXo*](https://t.co/YuCxcpilXo) — MT Anderson (@MT\_Anderson) [*October 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/MT_Anderson/status/1710482842193649734?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russian troops shell 8 regions of Ukraine, Kyiv claims 08:30 , Tom Watling Russian forces have shelled eight different regions of Ukraine in the past 24 hours, according to the latest information from Kyiv’s military media centre. In a statement on Telegram, the Military Media Centre wrote: “According to the information provided by the Situation Center of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, during the past 24 hours, Russian troops shelled the territory of 8 regions of Ukraine.“In general, from various types of weapons -mortars, tanks, artillery, MLRS, UAVs and tactical aviation -77 settlements and 54 infrastructure objects were attacked.“There are dead and wounded among civilians, the number of victims is being specified.” Explosions reported in Kherson08:24 , Tom Watling Explosions have been reported in the southern region of Kherson, according to Suspilne. Air alerts were in place from roughly 6.30am (GMT) this morning, according to posts from the Ukrainian Air Forces. Terror has opened far too many fronts against humanity, says Zelensky08:19 , Tom Watling Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has drawn comparisons between the war in the Middle East and Eastern Europe. In his nightly update on Sunday, he said it was imperative to “be strong … and to confront terror”, in Israel just as in Ukraine. “Being a large country is not enough. Being a wealthy country is not enough. It's not enough to have ambitions,” he said. “Being strong means helping to protect people and life against any form of terror. Helping. That is the way.”Terror has opened far too many fronts against humanity. The war against Ukraine. The war in the Middle East. Terrible destabilizations throughout Africa. Constant attempts to cause a crisis on the global food market.Being strong under such circumstances is to confront terror.… [*pic.twitter.com/1EUc3eeU4G*](https://t.co/1EUc3eeU4G) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 8, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1711100774590083148?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia is seeking to return to UN rights body07:00 , Athena Stavrou Russia will attempt to return to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Tuesday, after being ousted when the country invaded Ukraine in 2022.The UN General Assembly is set to elect 15 new members to the Geneva-based UN body, for terms running from 2024 to 2026.Moscow’s candidacy has drawn criticism, and comes days after a Russian missile attack on the Ukrainian village of Groza killed more than 50 people.“We hope UN members will firmly reject (Russia’s) preposterous candidacy,” a State Department spokesperson told AFP.Russian shelling kills at least two in Ukraine, say Ukraine officials06:30 , Athena Stavrou Russian forces shelled southern Kherson region and other parts of Ukraine on Sunday, killing at least two people and injuring a dozen more, Ukrainian officials said.Oleksandr Prokudin, governor of Kherson region, said a man had died in Russian shelling in the northern part of the region. Prokudin had earlier reported that a dozen people were wounded in attacks on different localities.Russian troops abandoned the city of Kherson and the western bank of the Dnipro River in the region late last year but now regularly shell those areas from positions on the eastern bank.In northeastern Kharkiv region, Governor Oleh Synehubov said a man had died in shelling near the Russian border.Reuters could not verify reports from either side.Record number of Russian drone attacks expected this winter, says Ukraine06:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine‘s air force expects a record number of Russian drone attacks on its soil this winter, its spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said on Sunday, as Kyiv girds for a second winter of mass bombardment of its energy facilities.Ihnat said that data for September showed the use by Russia of Iranian-designed Shahed kamikaze drones would smash last year’s figure.“This autumn and winter ... is already a record in terms of the number of Shahed drones. Over 500 (were used) in September,” Ihnat said in an interview on national television.He contrasted this number with Russia’s air strike campaign on Ukraine last winter, when he said about 1,000 Shahed drones were used in six months.Train traffic between North Korea and Russia ‘dramatically increases’ following summit05:30 , Athena Stavrou Train traffic between North Korea and Russia has “dramatically increased”, suggesting a “likely” transfer of arms, according to a new report by the Beyond Parallel group, who are Washington-based analysts.Satellite imagery reveals at least 70 freight cars at North Korea’s border Tumangang rail facility, which is a number described as “unprecedented”.Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un met for a summit in Russia’s far East in September, where Kim offered his firm support for the Kremlin’s “sacred fight” against the “hegemonic forces” that oppose it.Two Ukrainian women among those killed in Israel04:30 , Athena Stavrou Two Ukrainian women were among those killed in Israel after Hamas invaded the country on Saturday, the Ukrainian embassy has told news agency Interfax-Ukraine.The identities of the two women have not been confirmed, but officials said the women had lived in Israel for a long time.“The Embassy of Ukraine received confirmation from the Israeli police regarding the death of two Ukrainian citizens”, said the embassy in a statement on Sunday.“Measures are being taken to organise the repatriation of the bodies of the deceased. There is currently no information on the presence of Ukrainian citizens among the wounded or missing.”The expat community of Ukrainians in Israe is estimated to stand at around 500,000 people, according to the Ukrainian foreign ministry.Kremlin ‘to exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel’03:30 , Athena Stavrou Russia will exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel to spread propaganda supporting its invasion of Ukraine, according to the American think tank The Study of War.The Kremlin has already blamed the West for “neglecting conflicts” in the Middle East by concentrating efforts in Ukraine, according to the group.Now Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chair of the Russian Security Council claims the Us and its allies should have been working on the Palestinian and Israeli issue, rather than “intefering” with Russia.The group added: “These Kremiline narratives target Western audiences to drive a wedge in military support for Ukraine, seek to demoralize Ukrainian socity by claiming Ukraine will lose international support, and intend to reassure Russian domestic audiences that the international society will ignore Ukraine’s war effort.”Ukraine village reels after deadly missile strike: ‘Everything was burning’02:30 , Athena Stavrou Every family in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s northeastern village of Hroza was affected afte[*r a missile strike killed 52 people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kharkiv-dna-b2425635.html) on Thursday, obliterating a sixth of the local population, say locals.Read More:[*Ukraine village reels after deadly missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-missile-strike-horza-b2425696.html) Uefa torn over plans to reinstate Russian youth teams01:30 , Athena Stavrou The fall-out from [*Uefa*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uefa) ’s plans to reinstate Russian underage teams to European competition is causing a huge split within the governing body, putting president [*Aleksander Ceferin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aleksander-ceferin) under immense pressure to “revisit” the issue at this week’s Executive Committee meeting.The controversy has already caused the confederation vice-president Karl-Erik Nilsson to resign as boss of the Swedish Sports Confederation and led Denmark to become the latest association to say they will not play Russian sides to go with England, Ireland and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). The Independent has been told that there is tension within some national associations that didn’t immediately reject the idea out of hand.New Ukraine ambassador wears kilt for first meeting with ZelenskyMonday 9 October 2023 00:30 , Athena Stavrou The UK’s new ambassador for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) wore a kilt for his first meeting with President Vlodymyr Zelensky.Father-of-three Martin Harris, 54, previously served from 2003 to 2008 in [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) as deputy head of mission and consul general, and raised his children in Ukraine.Mr Harris, who grew up in [*Scotland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/scotland) , wore his family’s [*Ferguson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ferguson) tartan for his initiation into the role, which was admired by President Zelensky.[*New Ukraine ambassador wore a kilt for first meeting with Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-scotland-kyiv-volodymyr-zelensky-moscow-b2426277.html) Two Ukrainian nationals died in unrest in IsraelSunday 8 October 2023 23:20 , Alex Ross President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Sunday that two Ukrainian nationals had died [*in unrest in Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-palestine-conflict-2023-hamas-gaza-latest-b2426118.html%22%20title=%22Israel-Palestine%20conflict%20live:%20Over%20250%20bodies%20recovered%20from%20music%20festival%20as%20US%20positions%20warships) and that more than 100 citizens had contacted the country’s embassy.“Unfortunately, the deaths of two Ukrainian citizens have been confirmed,” Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.Zelenskiy said he spoke on Sunday to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and expressed “solidarity with Israel, which is enduring a brazen, large-scale attack”.‘Ukraine forever'Sunday 8 October 2023 22:21 , Alex Ross The UK’s new ambassador for Ukraine wore a kilt for his first meeting with President Vlodymyr Zelensky -and got “solidarity” tartan created after the outbreak of war.Father-of-three Martin Harris, 54, previously served from 2003 to 2008 in Kyiv as deputy head of mission and consul general, and raised his children in Ukraine.Mr Harris, who grew up in Scotland, wore his family’s Ferguson tartan for his initiation into the role, which was admired by President Zelensky.After the war broke out in February 2022, in a gesture of solidarity with the stricken country, Mr Harris got a new tartan created, named “Ukraine Forever”, and has a tie made from it.Earlier this year, Mr Harris spent a month in Lviv to refresh his fluent Ukrainian. He went on holiday to Scotland recently and was moved to see the Ukrainian flag flying in rural Shetland.Mr Harris said: “The Ukrainians express their national identity strongly through traditional clothing, so I wanted to wear my national dress as the UK’s new ambassador. President Zelensky noted my kilt and many Ukrainians have complimented me.”Mr Harris will lead the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) at the British Embassy in Kyiv, after taking over from Dame Melinda Simmons.A community remembers its deadSunday 8 October 2023 19:01 , Alex Ross The community of Hroza in the Kharkiv region pay tribute to those who lost their lives when a missile hit a cafe on Friday.Volodymyr Zelensky described the attack as “a demonstrably brutal Russian crime – a rocket attack on an ordinary grocery store, a completely deliberate act of terrorism. My condolences to all those who have lost loved ones.”Ukraine’s minister of internal affairs, Ihor Klymenko, said the death toll stood at 51 and that “debris analysis is ongoing”. The village has a population of 330.Centre for Civil Liberties calls for Russian war crimes to be documentedSunday 8 October 2023 17:10 , Nick Ferris The head of the Centre for Civil Liberties in [*Ukraine*](https://www.theguardian.com/world/ukraine) , Oleksandra Matviichuk, has made a heartfelt speech calling for the documentation of Russian war crimes on Sunday.Speaking at the Lviv Book Forum, which was streamed online by the UK’s Hay Festival, Matviichuk said: “Every survivor, every affected person has to get a shot at justice because if we say that every life matters, then we have to turn it into our practice.”She added that she had been developing strategies to ensure “every person in Ukraine who has suffered from Russian aggression gets a shot at justice, regardless of who the person is, their social standing, the type of crime they were a victim of, what type of violence they experienced, whether international organisations care about their fate or not, or international media care about their fate or not.”For justice.For everyone.Nobel Peace Prize-winner [*@avalaina*](https://twitter.com/avalaina?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on the urgent need to document war crimes, in conversation at Lviv BookForum earlier.Catch up &gt; [*https://t.co/FyJSz5hzeF*](https://t.co/FyJSz5hzeF) [*pic.twitter.com/J9UovNuzzG*](https://t.co/J9UovNuzzG) — Hay Festival (@hayfestival) [*October 8, 2023*](https://twitter.com/hayfestival/status/1711018860697251968?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kremlin ‘to exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel'Sunday 8 October 2023 16:50 , Alex Ross Russia will exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel to spread propaganda supporting its invasion of Ukraine, according to the American think tank The Study of War.The Kremlin has already blamed the West for “neglecting conflicts” in the Middle East by concentrating efforts in Ukraine, according to the group.Now Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chair of the Russian Security Council claims the Us and its allies should have been working on the Palestinian and Israeli issue, rather than “intefering” with Russia.The group added: “These Kremiline narratives target Western audiences to drive a wedge in military support for Ukraine, seek to demoralize Ukrainian socity by claiming Ukraine will lose international support, and intend to reassure Russian domestic audiences that the international society will ignore Ukraine’s war effort.”Ukraine liberated 125 sq km of territory over summer, says UK MoDSunday 8 October 2023 16:20 , Nick Ferris Ukraine has “almost certainly liberated at least 125 sq km of territory” in eastern areas of the country over summer, according to the British Ministry of Defence.They cautioned, though, that while “this axis has stabilised, Russian forces likely remain in a defensive posture to guard against possible future Ukrainian offensive operations”.Ukraine’s army, meanwhile, claims Russia has suffered 282,280 losses since the war began in February last year.Israeli PM Netanyahu speaks to Ukraine’s Zelensky on SundaySunday 8 October 2023 15:50 , Nick Ferris Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday spoke with the leaders of Germany, Ukraine, Italy and Britain on Sunday. Leaders of all four countries expressed support for Israel’s right to defend itself “as much as it takes,” said a statement from Netanyahu’s office. Ukraine’s relations with Israel have been tense since Russia’s invasion began in February 2022.Although Irael has sent tons of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, Israel’s President Netanyahu has consistently refused to supply weapons to Kyiv.Israel, a major US partner, has some of the closest ties with Russia among countries politically aligned with the West.Two Ukrainian women among those killed in IsraelSunday 8 October 2023 15:10 , Nick Ferris Two Ukrainian women were among those killed in Israel after Hamas invaded the country on Saturday, the Ukrainian embassy has told news agency Interfax-Ukraine.The identities of the two women have not been confirmed, but officials said the women had lived in Israel for a long time.“The Embassy of Ukraine received confirmation from the Israeli police regarding the death of two Ukrainian citizens”, said the embassy in a statement on Sunday. “Measures are being taken to organise the repatriation of the bodies of the deceased. There is currently no information on the presence of Ukrainian citizens among the wounded or missing.”The expat community of Ukrainians in Israe is estimated to stand at around 500,000 people, according to the Ukrainian foreign ministry.Ukrainian soldiers bid farewell to their partners before heading to frontline todaySunday 8 October 2023 14:55 , Nick FerrisICYMI: Ukraine’s armed forces claim 580 Russian troops killed in 24HSunday 8 October 2023 14:40 , Nick Ferris Ukraine’s armed forces claim that around 580 Russian troops have been killed during fighting over the last day.Posting its latest overnight summary of casualties, the Ukrainian military claims Russia has suffered 282,280 losses since the war began in February last year.The figures yet to be independently verified and are still being updated.Record number of Russian drone attacks expected this winter, says UkraineSunday 8 October 2023 14:25 , Nick Ferris Ukraine‘s air force expects a record number of Russian drone attacks on its soil this winter, its spokesperson Yuriy Ihnat said on Sunday, as Kyiv girds for a second winter of mass bombardment of its energy facilities.Ihnat said that data for September showed the use by Russia of Iranian-designed Shahed kamikaze drones would smash last year’s figure.“This autumn and winter ... is already a record in terms of the number of Shahed drones. Over 500 (were used) in September,” Ihnat said in an interview on national television.He contrasted this number with Russia’s air strike campaign on Ukraine last winter, when he said about 1,000 Shahed drones were used in six months.Russia is seeking to return to UN rights bodySunday 8 October 2023 14:10 , Nick Ferris Russia will attempt to return to the United Nations Human Rights Council on Tuesday, after being ousted when the country invaded Ukraine in 2022.The UN General Assembly is set to elect 15 new members to the Geneva-based UN body, for terms running from 2024 to 2026.Moscow’s candidacy has drawn criticism, and comes days after a Russian missile attack on the Ukrainian village of Groza killed more than 50 people.“We hope UN members will firmly reject (Russia’s) preposterous candidacy,” a State Department spokesperson told AFP.Some of Ukraine’s 19,000 amputee soldiers take part in Spartan races in Kyiv on SaturdaySunday 8 October 2023 13:55 , Nick FerrisViolence between Hamas and Israel is useful for Russia, says Poland’s presidentSunday 8 October 2023 13:40 , Nick Ferris The current violence between Hamas and Israel is useful for Russia in diverting the world’s attention, says Polish president Andrzej Duda. In an interview with private broadcaster Polsat News on Sunday, Duda said that conflict distracts international scrutiny away from Moscow’s aggression in Ukraine, and may also result in new migration pressures on Europe.“It certainly benefits Russia and Russian aggression against Ukraine. It distracts the world’s attention,” Duda said.He added: “We will likely have another wave of migrants from the Middle East, which will hit Europe... Our security, protection of Poland’s borders of course, also the borders of the European Union and the Schengen zone, becomes even more important.”Poland has been a leading supporter of Kyiv since Russia invaded in 2022, and has sheltered more than a million ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.Leading Ukrainian folk singer, Nina Matviienko, dies aged of 75Sunday 8 October 2023 13:25 , Nick Ferris Matviienko became a star in her country as the lead soloist in the Ukrainian State Folk Choir from 1966 to 1991.She toured the world singing folk songs, performing in countries such as the US, France, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Poland and FinlandHer daughter, Tonya Matvienko, announced the news by posting a portrait of her mother on instagram with the caption “mom is dead”.️Celebrated Ukrainian folk singer Nina Matviienko dies at 75.The news was shared by her daughter."The whole world could hear the Ukrainian soul in her amazing voice," Ukraine’s Ministry of Culture wrote about Matviienko's death.[*https://t.co/GyYKQ0cilS*](https://t.co/GyYKQ0cilS) — The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [*October 8, 2023*](https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1710953641585090826?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia’s Dmitry Medvedev calls for a civil war in the USSunday 8 October 2023 13:10 , Nick Ferris Dmitry Medvedev, Russia’s former leader, has called for a civil war in the US in order to stop the country causing more conflicts. Medvedev said that a civil war would be the only thing that would stop “America’s manic passion for sparking conflicts everywhere on the planet”.Medvedev added that Hamas’ surprise invasion of Israel is an “expected development”, given US involvement in the region. “This is what Washington and its allies should be busy with”, he added. “The conflict between Israel and Palestine has been going on for decades, with the US the key player in it.”Train traffic between North Korea and Russia ‘dramatically increases’ following summitSunday 8 October 2023 12:50 , Nick Ferris Train traffic between North Korea and Russia has “dramatically increased”, suggesting a “likely” transfer of arms, according to a new report by the Beyond Parallel group, who are Washington-based analysts. Satellite imagery reveals at least 70 freight cars at North Korea’s border Tumangang rail facility, which is a number described as “unprecedented”.Vladimir Putin and Kim Jong-un met for a summit in Russia’s far East in September, where Kim offered his firm support for the Kremlin’s “sacred fight” against the “hegemonic forces” that oppose it. ICYMI: Footage from inside Kharkiv apartment captures aftermath of deadly strikeSunday 8 October 2023 12:35 , Nick Ferris Terrifying footage posted on [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) on Friday shows the aftermath of a blast in [*Kharkiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kharkiv) , [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , filmed from inside an apartment.Finland’s only natural gas source is shut down due to leakSunday 8 October 2023 12:15 , Nick Ferris Finland’s only source of natural gas has been shut down after a suspected leak in the pipeline from Estonia, according to AFP.After Russia invaded Ukraine, Finland ended Russian gas imports in May 2022, leaving it totally reliant on the Balticconnector pipeline to Estonia for gas supplies.“Based on observations, it was suspected that the offshore pipeline between Finland and Estonia was leaking,” Gasgrid Finland said in a statement. “The valves in the offshore pipeline are now closed and the leak is thus stopped.” Russia stopped supplying gas after Finland refused to pay in rubles, which was a condition imposed as a way to sidestep Western financial sanctions.Four people injured in early morning rocket attack in DonetskSunday 8 October 2023 11:55 , Nick Ferris Four people -including a nine-year-old girl -have been injured in rocket attack on Konstantinivka this morning, according to the acting governor of Donetsk.Ihor Moroz said that 19 homes, 10 multi-storey buildings, a gas pipeline and a car were all damaged in the strike. He said that injuries reported had however been minor, and had been treated. Moroz added that Konstantinivka – an eastern Ukrainian city close to the front line – was “constantly experiencing enemy shelling”.“It is dangerous to stay in the city! I call on everyone: be responsible! Evacuate!” he said on Facebook.ICYMI: Ukraine village reels after deadly missile strike: ‘Everything was burning’Sunday 8 October 2023 11:40 , Nick Ferris Every family in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s northeastern village of Hroza was affected afte[*r a missile strike killed 52 people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kharkiv-dna-b2425635.html) on Thursday, obliterating a sixth of the local population, say locals.However, it may take several months before DNA analysis can identify the majority of the remains. For now, the names are scrawled on cardboard or white plastic squares, and strings mark the boundaries of the fresh graves.Read more about what has happened in Hroza below. [*Ukraine village reels after deadly missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-missile-strike-horza-b2425696.html) Denmark to restart ammunition production after 55 yearsSunday 8 October 2023 11:25 , Nick Ferris Denmark’s defence ministry has said the country will re-start ammunition production after a 55-year gap to ensure it can maintain domestic supplies. The ministry said in a statement on Saturday it had entered into an agreement to buy a mothballed arms factory in the northwest of the country, which was previously used as Denmark’s only ammo supplier from its establishment in 1676 until 1968.The ministry is to pay 19.6 million Danish crowns ($2.8 million) to buy back the plant in Elling in North Jutland that it sold for 18 million crowns in 2008, news agency Ritzau said, citing Defense Minister Troels Lund Poulsen.“Ammunition production in Europe is under severe pressure, and we should also try to find solutions in Denmark to contribute where we can based on Danish needs,” Lund Poulsen said in the statement.Russia should postpone next year’s election, says KadyrovSunday 8 October 2023 11:10 , Nick Ferris Ramzan Kadyrov, head of Russia’s Chechnya region, proposed on Saturday that a presidential election due next March should either be postponed due to the war in Ukraine or limited to one candidate: Putin.Putin, who turned 71 on Saturday, has said he will not announce if he will run before parliament calls the election, which by law it is due to do in December.The state-run RIA news agency said Kadyrov had spoken at a rally in the centre of the Chechen capital Grozny to mark Putin’s birthday. Russia and Ukraine take different stances on Israel-Palestine conflictSunday 8 October 2023 10:50 , Nick Ferris Ukraine’s relations with Israel have been tense since Russia’s invasion began in February 2022. Although Irael has sent tons of humanitarian aid to Ukraine, Israel’s President Netanyahu has consistently refused to supply weapons to Kyiv.Israel, a major U.S. partner, has some of the closest ties with Russia among countries politically aligned with the West.Nevertheless, President Zelenskiy has offered his full support to Israel as the country fights back against a surprise assault from Hamas, which has so far killed more than 200 people.“Let the value of human life and the intolerance of terror be the principles that will finally unite the whole world,” Zelenskiy said in his nightly video address.“Wherever they aim their missiles and whomever they attack, terrorists must lose. And this is important for the whole world.”In a much more restrained message than Ukraine, Russia called on both Palestine and Israel to “implement an immediate ceasefire” and said it was in contact with Israel, the Palestinians and Arab countries over the violence.Today, the entire world saw horrifying videos from Israel. Terrorists humiliate women and men, detain even the elderly, and show no mercy.In the face of such a terrorist strike, everyone who values life must stand in solidarity. We in Ukraine have a special feeling about… [*pic.twitter.com/AnBgVO2X0J*](https://t.co/AnBgVO2X0J) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1710723464414282183?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kherson experiences a ‘terrible night’, says governorSunday 8 October 2023 10:24 , Nick Ferris Russia’s barrage of airstrikes and shelling led to a ‘terrible night’ in the southern Ukrainian region Kherson, said the region’s governor on Sunday morning.A dozen people were wounded in the attack, including a 27-year-old woman and her 9-month-old baby. “The Kherson region experienced another terrible night,” Governor Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on the Telegram messaging app.Over the past 24 hours, Russian forces carried out 59 attacks on Kherson, the region’s administration said on Telegram, including 19 instances of shelling of Kherson city, the region’s administrative centre.Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Russia.Ministry of Defence latestSunday 8 October 2023 09:54 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Today’s Ministry of Defence update is focused on the Velyka Novosilka sector, west of the Donetsk Oblast town of Vuhledar, which “has become relatively quiet over the last four weeks” due to Ukraine’s effort to liberate “at least 125 square kilometres of territory on this axis” over the summer. Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 08 October 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/YMedsRlCau*](https://t.co/YMedsRlCau) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/ZyAqw8s6VY*](https://t.co/ZyAqw8s6VY) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*October 8, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1710893366387310836?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kremlin ‘exploiting’ Hamas attacks in Israel-ISWSunday 8 October 2023 09:04 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The Kremlin is “exploiting” the Hamas attacks in Israel by “blaming the West for neglecting conflicts in the Middle East in favor of supporting Ukraine,” the Institute for War (ISW) has said. In analysis of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the ISW said: “The Kremlin is already and will likely continue to exploit the Hamas attacks in Israel to advance several information operations intended to reduce US and Western support and attention to Ukraine.”It comes after deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council Dmitry Medvedev claimed the United States and its allies should have been “busy with” working on “Palestinian-Israeli settlement” rather than “interfering” with Russia and providing Ukraine with military aid. Why two of the EU’s biggest political headaches aren’t going away any time soonSunday 8 October 2023 08:43 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain European leaders came together to pick through the thorny issues of migration and how quickly Ukraine should be welcomed into the EU, writes Chris Stevenson. But divisions between nations mean progress will be hard won:A summit in [*Granada*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/granada) was supposed to be a chance for Europe to gain some clarity about two major issues – how to tackle [*migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/migration) and what to do about welcoming war-ravaged [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and other nations into the [*EU*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/eu). On Thursday, the [*European Political Community*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-ap-united-states-vladimir-putin-spain-b2424622.html) (EPC) met, with 44 heads of state or government coming together from across the continent. It included the EU member states as well as countries like the UK and Ukraine. Migration was a key issue, with EU nations split between those who want initiatives focused on distributing those who arrive into the bloc between all members in a joint act of solidarity and those nations who see such migration as a threat.[*Why two of the EU’s biggest political headaches aren’t going away any time soon*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-eu-immigration-granada-b2425459.html) Dozen injured, including baby, in Russian attack on Ukraine's Kherson -governorSunday 8 October 2023 08:11 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain A dozen people were wounded, including a 27-year-old woman and her 9-month-old baby, in a Russian attack on the southern Ukrainian region of Kherson, its governor said on Sunday.“The Kherson region experienced another terrible night,” Governor Oleksandr Prokudin wrote on the Telegram messaging app.The woman and the infant were hospitalised with moderate wounds, he said, adding that a 33-year-old Red Cross medic was also wounded.Several houses and gas pipelines were damaged in the attack.Over the past 24 hours, Russian forces carried out 59 attacks on Kherson, the region’s administration said on Telegram, including 19 instances of shelling of Kherson city, the region’s administrative centre.Reuters could not independently verify the reports. There was no immediate comment from Russia.Russia has frequently carried out air strikes and shelling on Ukraine since the start of its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Ukraine says its counteroffensive in the south and east is gradually making progress.Both sides deny targeting civilians, but thousands of civilians in Ukraine have been killed in attacks that have hit residential areas as well as energy, defence, port, grain and other facilities.A look at Russia's deadliest missile attacks on UkraineSunday 8 October 2023 07:00 , Athena Stavrou Since the start of its full-scale invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the Russian military has repeatedly used missiles to blast civilian targets across the country, with devastating consequences.One of the deadliest such attacks happened Thursday when a Russian rocket struck a village cafe and store in the village of Hroza in eastern Ukraine, killing 52 civilians.Here is a look at some of the deadliest strikes so far:[*A look at Russia's deadliest missile attacks on Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-vladimir-putin-kremlin-associated-press-b2424854.html) Russian forces ‘conduct regimental rotation’Sunday 8 October 2023 06:30 , Athena Stavrou Russian forces appear to have recently conducted a regimental rotation in the Orikhiv area, demonstrating an ability to sustain their defenses in this critical sector of the frontline, war monitoring think-tank say.The Institute for the Study of War (ISW) say that substantial elements of the 42nd Motorized Rifle Division and two VDV divisions have been rotated in and out of the frontline south of Orikhiv.This is something Russian forces have been struggling to do in recent months.Russian ex-TV journalist sentenced in absentiaSunday 8 October 2023 06:00 , Athena Stavrou Reminder: A court in Moscow has handed a former state TV journalist an 8-year prison term in absentia for protesting against Russia’s war in Ukraine:[*Former Russian state TV journalist gets 8 1/2-year sentence in absentia for Ukraine war criticism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-ukraine-moscow-kremlin-vladimir-b2423825.html) Sunday 8 October 2023 05:30 , Athena Stavrou Ukrainian officials say a 10-year-old boy has been killed and a further 20 people wounded after a Russian missile attack on a block of flats in the centre of Kharkiv on Friday.The attack came less than a day after a strike on the small village of Hroza in Kharkiv oblast, which killed 52 people on Thursday. Footage from inside Kharkiv apartment captured aftermath of deadly strike.UN investigators search for answer at site of Russian missile strikeSunday 8 October 2023 05:01 , Namita Singh UN and local investigators searched for answers on Saturday at the site of a Russian missile strike that killed nearly 52 people gathered for a dead soldier’s wake, according to president Volodymyr Zelensky and other top officials in Kyiv.Representatives from the United Nations Monitoring Mission in Ukraine (HRMMU) spent much of the day speaking with local residents and survivors in Hroza, in the northeastern Kharkiv region, according to a statement shared with the Associated Press. “My initial conversations with local residents and survivors indicate that virtually all those killed were civilians and that the target itself, a busy village cafe and store, was also clearly civilian,” Danielle Bell, who led the team that visited Hroza yesterday, was cited as saying in the UN statement.“What happened here is yet another tragic reminder of the deadly impact Russia’s invasion has had on Ukraine’s civilians,” Mr Bell added.Only six people in the cafe survived, and the town is trying to fathom why and how the wake was targeted. Dmytro Chubenko, spokesman for the regional prosecutor, said on Friday that investigators are looking into whether someone from the area transmitted the cafe’s coordinates to the Russians — a betrayal to everyone now grieving in Hroza.Russia says it shoots down two missiles over CrimeaSunday 8 October 2023 05:00 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s defence ministry said the country’s air defence systems had “detected and destroyed” two Ukrainian S-200 anti-aircraft missiles, thwarting attacks it said Kyiv attempted four hours apart on the Crimean Peninsula on Saturday.The reports by the ministry, which have not been verified, did not say where exactly the missiles were shot down over Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014.At 10:25 p.m. in Moscow, Ukrainian public broadcaster Suspilne quoted a resident as saying two explosions rang out in the area of Yevtaporiya in the west of Crimea. Earlier, other local channels carried an image of smoke over Dzhankoi in the north and reported sounds of explosions.Police identify 48 out of 52 civilians killed in Russian bomb attack on cafeSunday 8 October 2023 04:38 , Namita Singh Ukrainian police have identified 48 out of the 52 civilians killed by the missile blast, according to the chief police investigator for Kharkiv province. In a Facebook post, Serhii Bolvinov said that investigation teams were “gathering up dead bodies, literally piece by piece.”Not all of the victims have been identified. Regional police investigator Mr Bolvinov told reporters late on Thursday that authorities would have to use DNA to identify some of the victims because their remains were beyond recognition.Hand grenade fragments found in the bodies of victims in Prigozhin’s plane crashSunday 8 October 2023 04:00 , Athena Stavrou Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that hand grenade fragments were found in the bodies of people who died in the Aug. 23 crash of mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin’s plane.[*Experts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/experts) investigating the crash found no indication the private jet had suffered an “external impact,” he said. Prigozhin and two of his top lieutenants of the Wagner private military contractor were among the 10 people killed when the jet came down as it flew from [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) to St. Petersburgh.There was no way to independently verify Putin’s statement.[*Hand grenade fragments were found in the bodies of victims in Prigozhin's plane crash, Putin says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-yevgeny-prigozhin-moscow-experts-ukraine-b2424897.html) Pictures: Devastated village copes with aftermath of Russian strike on funeralSunday 8 October 2023 03:00 , Athena Stavrou UN and local investigators searched for answers on Saturday at the site of a Russian missile strike on the small Ukrainian village of in Hroza, in the northeastern Kharkiv regionThe attack days earlier turned its sole cafe to rubble and killed nearly 52 people gathered for a dead soldier’s wake, according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other top officials in Kyiv.where is Hroza?Sunday 8 October 2023 02:00 , Athena Stavrou A precision missile strike on a cafe hosting soldier’s wake killed 52 and decimated the Ukrainian village of Hroza.The village cafe was obliterated and whole families perished after the missile strike on Thursday cut short a wake for Andriy Kozyr, a soldier from Hroza who died last winter fighting Russia’s invading forces in eastern Ukraine.His son Dmytro Kozyr, also a soldier, was among those who died in the attack alongside his wife Nina, just days short of her 20th birthday, according to Ukrainian media reports. As of Saturday, Ukrainian law enforcement and the regional prosecutor’s office put the number of victims at 52.The tiny village only had a population on around 500 before the war, and many are questioning why it was targetted.Russian defence minister inspects factory for advanced missilesSunday 8 October 2023 01:00 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s defence minister Sergei Shoigu inspected a military factory producing the Sarmat intercontinental missile, saying it would soon be ready for use, his ministry posted on Telegram Saturday.The Sarmat missile will be “put on combat duty in the near future,” the ministry said in a statement, as reported by AFP.President Vladimir Putin on Thursday said Russia had almost completed work on the Sarmat, after Moscow earlier this year announced it had successfully tested the missiles. Putin said the “truly unique weapon will strengthen the combat potential of our armed forces, reliably ensure the security of Russia from external threats.”WATCH | [*#Russian*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Russian?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu inspects progress on Sarmat missile system production at Krasnoyarsk Plant, emphasizes strategic importance. [*pic.twitter.com/NrtV1qSS0R*](https://t.co/NrtV1qSS0R) — Newsline World (@NewslineWorldph) [*October 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/NewslineWorldph/status/1710616013866430832?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia attacks Nikopol three times in one daySaturday 7 October 2023 23:59 , Athena Stavrou Russia attacked the city of Nikopol in Dnipropetrovsk Oblast, southern Ukraine, three times in one day, local Governor Serhii Lysak reported on SaturdayRussian forces used heavy artillery against the city twice during the day and once in the evening, Lysak said in a Telegram post.A school, municipal enterprise, 11 homes, power lines, a gas pipeline, and nearly a dozen commercial buildings were damaged, the governor said.However, no casualties were reported, according to the local authorities.Zelenskyy condemns Hamas following attacks in IsraelSaturday 7 October 2023 23:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has condemned Hamas’ attacks on Israel.In a post on X, formerly known as Twitter, the Ukrainian PM said: “We in Ukraine have a special feeling about what has happened. Thousands of rockets in the Israeli sky... People killed just on the streets... Civilian cars shot through... Detainees being humiliated… “Our position is crystal clear: anyone who causes terror and death anywhere on the planet must be held accountable.”Today, the entire world saw horrifying videos from Israel. Terrorists humiliate women and men, detain even the elderly, and show no mercy.In the face of such a terrorist strike, everyone who values life must stand in solidarity. We in Ukraine have a special feeling about… [*pic.twitter.com/AnBgVO2X0J*](https://t.co/AnBgVO2X0J) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*October 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1710723464414282183?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia plans to reverse global nuclear test ban, announces envoySaturday 7 October 2023 22:00 , Athena Stavrou[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) plans to withdraw its ratification of the 1996 treaty that prohibited the testing of nuclear weapons, the country’s envoy to the [*Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/comprehensive-nuclear-test-ban-treaty-organisation) [CTBTO] said on Friday.Mr Ulyanov, Moscow’s envoy to the CTBTO, said on X, the social media platform formerly known as Twitter, that “#Russia plans to revoke ratification (which took place in the year 2000) of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty.”“We are disturbed by the comments of Ambassador Ulyanov in Vienna today,” a US State Department spokesperson said in a statement. “A move like this by any State Party needlessly endangers the global norm against nuclear explosive testing.”[*#Russia*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Russia?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) plans to revoke ratification (which took place in the year 2000) of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty ([*#CTBT*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CTBT?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) ). The aim is to be on equal footing with the [*#US*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/US?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) who signed the Treaty, but didn’t ratify it. Revocation doesn’t mean the intention to resume nuclear tests— Mikhail Ulyanov (@Amb\_Ulyanov) [*October 6, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Amb_Ulyanov/status/1710324981840654830?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

What are Russia’s Iskander missiles?

Following Russia’s Iskander missile attack, which killed 52 during funeral near Kharkiv, The Independent explains what the missiles are:

[*What are Russian Iskander missiles?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-iskander-missiles-kharkiv-b2425214.html)

Russian attack on village cafe kills at least 51 people, Ukraine says

UN and local investigators searched for answers at the site of a Russian missile strike on a small Ukrainian village that days earlier turned its sole cafe to rubble and killed nearly 52 people gathered for a dead soldier’s wake, according to President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and other top officials in Kyiv.

“My initial conversations with local residents and survivors indicate that virtually all those killed were civilians and that the target itself, a busy village cafe and store, was also clearly civilian,” Danielle Bell, who led the team that visited Hroza on Saturday, was cited as saying in the UN statement.“What happened here is yet another tragic reminder of the deadly impact Russia’s invasion has had on Ukraine‘s civilians,” Bell added.The village cafe was obliterated and whole families perished after the missile strike on Thursday cut short a wake for Andriy Kozyr, a soldier from Hroza who died last winter fighting Russia’s invading forces in eastern Ukraine.

His son Dmytro Kozyr, also a soldier, was among those who died in the attack alongside his wife Nina, who was just days short of her 21st birthday.

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[*Israel admits ‘serious failures’ over deadly strike but insists aid workers were mistaken for Hamas: Updates*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BPX-HKD1-DY4H-K53H-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** MIDDLE EAST,WORLD; Version:41

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**Byline:** Oliver O'Connell,Richard Hall and Maryam Zakir-Hussain

**Highlight:** Biden and Netanyahu spoke on Thursday for first time since deaths of aid workers as pressure mounts on Sunak to withdraw arms sales

**Body**

[*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) has admitted that “serious failures” were made by its forces after seven [*World Central Kitchen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-central-kitchen) (WCK) [*aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid-workers) were killed in an airstrike in Gaza.

The IDF announced on Friday that [*its internal investigation into the incident*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-aid-worker-deaths-gaza-news-b2523883.html) had concluded.

While admitting that a “grave mistake” was made, the IDF continued to claim innocence over the attack – insisting that the WCK workers were [*“misidentified” as Hamas militants.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-aid-worker-deaths-gaza-news-b2523883.html) Two military officers have been dismissed from their positions following the findings, the IDF said.

More than 220 humanitarian workers have been killed in the conflict, according to the UN. Scott Paul of [*Oxfam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxfam) said on Thursday: “The killing of aid workers in Gaza has been systemic.”

The announcement comes hours after [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) agreed to reopen [*two border crossings into Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-open-aid-crossing-gaza-joe-biden-b2523737.html) to increase the flow of humanitarian aid, after President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) warned Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in a call that future US support for Israel would be determined by its [*efforts to protect civilians and aid workers.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-netanyahu-call-israel-support-gaza-b2523455.html)

Meanwhile, former UK foreign secretary [*Alan Duncan is being investigated by Tory chiefs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-peer-israel-gaza-investigation-duncan-b2523466.html) after he said pro-Israel “extremists” in the party should be kicked out over their refusal to support international law.

Key points

Israel admits ‘grave mistake’ after seven aid workers killed in strike in Gaza Israel approves opening of two humanitarian routes into Gaza after call with Biden Calls grow for Rishi Sunak to stop UK arms trade to Israel Alan Duncan faces expulsion from Tory party for attacking ‘pro Israel extremist’ Conservatives Former officials speak out against Biden’s Israel support after aid worker killings World Central Kitchen calls for independent probe into Israeli air strike

EU's Borrell: Israel's new aid corridors are not enough to stop starvation in Gaza

Israel‘s decision to open up some new corridors for humanitarian aid in Gaza will still not be enough to prevent starvation in Gaza, said EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell on Friday.

“Following widespread condemnation of the killing of 7 @WCKitchen staffers by IDF and mounting international pressure, the Israeli gov will open some corridors for humanitarian aid. It’s not enough to prevent starvation in #Gaza,” wrote Borrell on X.

“The binding UN Security Council Resolution 2728 must be implemented. Now.” he added.

Following widespread condemnation of the killing of 7 [*@WCKitchen*](https://twitter.com/WCKitchen?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) staffers by IDF and mounting international pressure, the Israeli gov will open some corridors for humanitarian aid. It's not enough to prevent starvation in [*#Gaza*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Gaza?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). The binding UNSCR 2728 must be implemented. Now. [*https://t.co/d3oq4wrhld*](https://t.co/d3oq4wrhld) — Josep Borrell Fontelles (@JosepBorrellF) [*April 5, 2024*](https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1776268480444014951?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) UN human rights body calls for halt to weapons shipments to Israel as concerns about Gaza war mount 16:30 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The U.N.’s top human rights body called on countries to stop selling or shipping weapons to [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) in a resolution passed Friday that aims to help prevent rights violations against [*Palestinians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/palestinians) amid Israel’s blistering military campaign in [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza). The 47-member-country Human Rights Council voted 28-6 in favor of the resolution, with 13 abstentions.The sweeping measure takes aim at an array of Israeli actions such as impeding access to water and limiting shipments of humanitarian aid into Palestinian areas. It also calls on U.N.-backed independent investigators to report on shipments of weapons, munitions and “dual use” items — that have both civilian and military applications — that could be used by Israel against Palestinians.[*UN human rights body calls for halt to weapons shipments to Israel as concerns about Gaza war mount*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/israel-ap-gaza-palestinians-geneva-b2523913.html) Israel admits ‘grave mistake’ and sacks senior officers after Gaza bombing kills seven aid workers16:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) has admitted its forces made a [*“grave mistake” after seven aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-war-news-uk-us-iran-b2523842.html) with World Central Kitchen (WCK) were killed in an airstrike.The humanitarian group, which delivers [*food aid to war and disaster zones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/israel-uk-rishi-sunak-arms-trade-b2523393.html) , said the seven were returning from coordinating an aid shipment in central Gaza when their three-car convoy was struck and they were killed.Their deaths triggered a wave of international condemnation and shone a fresh spotlight on the dire conditions that Gaza’s besieged population is [*suffering from in the embattled enclave.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-war-news-uk-us-iran-b2523842.html) [*Israel admits ‘grave mistake’ after bombing kills seven aid workers in Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-aid-worker-deaths-gaza-news-b2523883.html) If ever there was a time for America to use its might to make Israel do right, it is now15:35 , Maryam Zakir-HussainEditorial:To dissuade Benjamin Netanyahu from his current deadly course in Gaza, and possibly beyond, it falls to Joe Biden to make America’s diplomatic, financial and military support firmly conditional. Depriving the US ally of its weapons of war – and adding to its international isolation – is becoming, sadly, inevitable:“Stop it – [*stop it now*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html). ” It is not just Jill Biden who is [*begging her husband to act decisively*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jill-biden-gaza-israel-hamas-joe-b2523339.html) to end the war in Gaza. The deaths of the seven heroic international aid workers have triggered a [*global howl of humanitarian anguish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html). In all likelihood, [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-war-live-world-biden-netanyahu-b2523502.html) , a compassionate and emotional man, doesn’t need Flotus to tell him what needs to be done. He has struggled with the painful dilemmas the present crisis has created for many months. He was as shocked as anyone at the atrocities committed by Hamas on 7 October.Instinctively, [*the president stood by Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-us-bibi-biden-relationship-resolution-b2519919.html). So did the world. But the president has also clearly been increasingly troubled by the conduct of the war. He has grown more outspoken about the casualties and breaches of international law. He has lifted the US veto at the UN and called for a ceasefire.[*If ever there was a time for America to force Israel to do right, it is now*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/joe-biden-benjamin-netanyahu-israel-phone-call-b2523530.html) UN chief hopes Israel effectively boosts Gaza aid access15:15 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said on Friday that he sincerely hopes Israel quickly and effectively boosts aid access to the Gaza Strip, describing the situation in the Palestinian enclave after six months of war as “absolutely desperate.”“When the gates to aid are closed, the doors to starvation are opened. More than half the population -over a million people -are facing catastrophic hunger. Children in Gaza today are dying for lack of food and water,” Guterres told reporters.“This is incomprehensible, and entirely avoidable,” he said. “Nothing can justify the collective punishment of the Palestinian people.”“The Israeli government has acknowledged mistakes,” Guterres said. “But the essential problem is not who made the mistakes, it is the military strategy and procedures in place that allow for those mistakes to multiply time and time again.”“Fixing those failures requires independent investigations and meaningful and measurable changes on the ground,” he said. “196 humanitarian workers have been killed and we want to know why each one of them was killed.”Guterres also said he was “deeply troubled” by reports that the Israeli military has been using artificial intelligence to help identify bombing targets in Gaza. The Israeli military denies AI was used to identify suspected extremists and targets.“No part of life and death decisions which impact entire families should be delegated to the cold calculation of algorithms,” Guterres said.Gaza war shatters Palestinian family and its simple dream of opening a pizzeria14:53 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Palestinian Redwan Abu Alkas lost his daughter in an Israeli airstrike. His home was destroyed and the family’s dream of opening its own business, a pizzeria in the once bustling Gaza Strip, was shattered. The family had saved up the money and bought all the equipment. That was before the Israeli bombardment of one of the most densely populated areas in the world began in the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian Hamas militants who rule Gaza. “In this war, I lost my daughter, first of all. I used to have money to start a good project. I had gained enough experience from working in restaurants in Gaza Strip -I worked in most of the restaurants in Gaza -and now there is nothing,” Redwan told Reuters at a U.N.-run school being used as a shelter for displaced Palestinians. “...I had a brother who was going to be my partner, he is now wounded. He might get better, he might not. All the money that I had for the project is gone because of price rises.” Redwan’s brother, Hamza, is confined to a wheelchair. He was wounded while trying to secure food aid.“I stopped going out and seeing people. I’m sitting in a wheelchair and in bed, being treated and sometimes circumstances prevent me from getting to the hospital to get treatment because of the occupation,” he said.Israel’s war has reached a tipping point – and risks spinning out of control14:27 , Maryam Zakir-HussainThe US has made it clear it no longer trusts Israel’s actions in Gaza, writesNomi Bar-Yaacov. The only way to get humanitarian aid safely in is with an immediate ceasefire, and an end to the war:The Israeli army’s [*killing of seven international aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html) from the World Central Kitchen serves as a terrible reminder that the Israel-Hamas war has gone on for far too long.Now is the time to end it with a comprehensive ceasefire agreement, the [*release of all the hostages*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hamas-ap-israeli-gaza-benjamin-netanyahu-b2493318.html) , a return of the displaced Gazan population to their towns and villages, and the opening of a land crossing to allow unhindered flow of humanitarian aid.Plans for the rehabilitation of Gaza coupled with a carefully mapped out plan for Palestinian statehood and Israeli normalisation with Arab states must follow suit.Read more here:[*Israel’s war has reached a tipping point – and risks spinning out of control*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/gaza-israel-war-biden-netanyahu-b2523341.html) Ireland pulls multi-million euro investment in six Israeli companies14:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The Irish government has pulled millions of euros of investment from several Israeli companies.The Irish National Treasury Management Agency (NTMA) confirmed that it had made the decision to divest almost three million euros from its global equity portfolio in the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund (ISIF).The divestment decision relates to shareholdings with a total value of 2.95 million euros in the following six companies: Bank Hapoalim BM; Bank Leumi-le Israel BM; Israel Discount Bank; Mizrahi Tefahot Bank Ltd; First International Bank and Rami Levi CN Stores.Irish finance minister Michael McGrath said it was the "correct decision".He said: "ISIF has determined that the risk profile of these investments is no longer within its investment parameters and that the commercial objectives of these investments can be achieved via other investments."The decision will be implemented as soon as possible over the coming weeks."I am advised ISIF will keep under review the alignment of relevant investments within its investment parameters and commercial objectives."While recognising the independence of ISIF in the management of the investment portfolio, I believe this is the correct investment decision in respect of the assets it manages on behalf of the State."Labour calls for government to publish evidence on how UK arms exports are being used13:35 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Labour’s shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves called for the government to publish all the evidence about how UK arms exports were being used. She said: “I think it is really important that policy is based on evidence, and it is the government’s duty to publish this evidence.“It is not just Labour MPs that are calling for this: many people across the political spectrum and beyond are saying that the government must publish this evidence so that the right decisions can be made.“UK law is really clear about this. If there is a risk that UK arms exports are going to be used in a way that risks breaching international law, the licences cannot be granted and that’s why it is now so important that they publish that evidence.”She added: “I am incredibly concerned about the scenes that we are seeing unfold in Gaza, the failure to get aid in, the attacks on the aid convoys. The situation is of utmost concern.“I was pleased to see that in the last few hours President Biden has called for an immediate ceasefire. That is right and proper. It is the only way now to get the much-needed aid into Gaza and avoid a man-made famine and it is the only way to get the Israeli hostages out of Gaza. That ceasefire must happen and it must happen now.”500 police deployed for protests in London amid tensions over Israel-Gaza war13:17 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain More than 500 officers are being deployed in central London to police an [*annual march*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/gaza-palestinian-rishi-sunak-palestine-solidarity-campaign-downing-street-b2509968.html) in support of [*Palestine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/gaza-israel-palestine-march-london-ceasefire-b2510001.html) and a pro-Isreal [*counter protest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/london-victoria-palestine-solidarity-campaign-jews-gaza-b2509986.html) outside the House of Parliament.The Metropolitan Police announced details of a major policing operation ahead of the [*demonstrations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/palestine-march-protest-sunak-warning-b2505806.html) on Friday amid tensions over the ongoing conflict in the Middle East.The force said it has been in discussion with the organisers of both demonstrations – which are each subject to conditions under the Public Order Act.[*500 police deployed for protests in London amid tensions over Israel-Gaza war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-london-protests-palestine-israel-gaza-b2523939.html) What would President Trump 2.0 look like?13:00 , Josh Marcus The US is Israel’s most important ally, and the man managing that relationship could be Donald Trump in the coming months.In our latest Behind The Headlines, we examine what another four years of Trump could look like, with reporting from Andrew Feinberg.[*What would a President Trump 2.0 look like?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/trump-election-2024-second-term-b2523272.html) World Central Kitchen demands independent probe into air worker killings12:32 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain World Central Kitchen demands the creation of an independent commission to investigate killings of its aid workers by Israel‘s Defence Forces (IDF), the aid charity said in a statement.“The IDF cannot credibly investigate its own failure in Gaza,” it said.World Central Kitchen releases statament following Israel’s investigation into death of aid workers12:21 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain In a statement after the Israeli military dismissed two officers over drone strikes that killed seven workers from World Central Kitchen, the aid organisation said: “The IDF has acknowledged its responsibility and its fatal errors in the deadly attack on our convoy in Gaza. “It is also taking disciplinary action against those in command, and committed to other reforms. These are important steps forward.“However, it is also clear from their preliminary investigation that the IDF has deployed deadly force without regard to its own protocols, chain of command and rules of engagement.“The IDF has acknowledged that our teams followed all proper communications procedures. The IDF’s own video fails to show any cause to fire on our personnel convoy, which carried no weapons and posed no threat.“Without systemic change, there will be more military failures, more apologies and more grieving families.“The root cause of the unjustified rocket fire on our convoy is the severe lack of food in Gaza.“Israel needs to dramatically increase the volume of food and medicine traveling by land if it is serious about supporting humanitarian aid.”What’s even more shocking than three Britons killed in Gaza? They take the death toll of aid workers past 20012:09 , Maryam Zakir-HussainHumanitarian volunteers have paid a terrible price for delivering vital aid to people trapped in Gaza’s danger zones. As experts say the UN has recorded the highest number of staff fatalities since the Second World War,Bel Trew assesses the chilling impact of Israeli airstrikes on the food charity convoy: The group of [*aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid-workers) were [*coming back from a long day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html) coordinating the latest delivery of supplies to [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) via a new maritime corridor to help fight a looming famine in the 42km strip. The aid, [*coordinated with Israel and Cyprus*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-war-israel-palestinians-ceasefire-rafah-b2503436.html) , was handled by [*World Central Kitchen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-central-kitchen) (WCK), a US-based charity which feeds people across the world’s front lines and disaster zones.A Palestinian aid worker back at their base in Deir al-Balah, in central Gaza, told The Independent he was waiting for the team to get home.But just after 10pm local time, Israel pounded the three-vehicle convoy, killing all seven aid workers including three British citizens. This, despite the fact they were travelling in a deconflicted zone in cars branded with the WCK logo and their movements were coordinated with the Israelis.[*The deaths of British aid workers in Gaza is part of a deadly pattern*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-israel-aid-workers-b2522592.html) Over 220 humanitarian workers killed in Israel-Gaza war11:57 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain More than 220 humanitarian workers have been killed in the conflict, according to the U.N.“Let’s be very clear. This is tragic, but it is not an anomaly,” Scott Paul, of the humanitarian group [*Oxfam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/oxfam) , said Thursday in a briefing with other relief organizations before the results of Israel’s investigation were released. “The killing of aid workers in Gaza has been systemic.”The army declined to answer questions about whether similar violations of rules of engagement have taken place during the war — in which Palestinians, aid workers and international rights groups have repeatedly accused the army of recklessly striking civilians.11:50 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Israel’s investigation into the incident was led by Yoav Har-Even, a retired military officer. He said: “The investigation’s findings indicate that the incident should not have occurred. Those who approved the strike were convinced that they were targeting armed Hamas operatives and not WCK employees.“The strike on the aid vehicles is a grave mistake stemming from a serious failure due to a mistaken identification, errors in decision-making, and an attack contrary to the Standard Operating Procedures.”What Israel claims led to the bombing of the aid trucks11:48 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Israel’s findings into the incident claim that they identified two gunmen on one of the World Central Kitchen (WCK) aid trucks. They claimed that one of their commanders assumed the gunmen were Hamas militants. Following this assumption, they did not identify the aid trucks as WCK. They then targeted the three WCK trucks. Two military officers dismissed over deadly attack on aid workers11:42 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Israel’s investigation into the bombing of seven aid workers was led by Yoav Har-Even, a retired military officer, who on Friday said two military officers have been dismissed over the drone strikes on aid workers.Israel admits ‘grave mistake’ after bombing kills seven aid workers in Gaza11:36 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) has admitted its forces made a “grave mistake” after seven aid workers with World Central Kitchen were killed in an airstrike.The humanitarian group, which delivers food aid to war and disaster zones, said the seven were returning from coordinating an aid shipment in central Gaza when their three car convoy was struck and they were killed.Follow this breaking news story here:[*Israel admits ‘grave mistake’ after bombing kills seven aid workers in Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-aid-worker-deaths-gaza-news-b2523883.html) Opinion | It’s time to put Conservatives’ links with Israel under the spotlight11:23 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Conservative Friends of Israel, the long-standing parliamentary lobby group, is [*beginning to resemble the Westminster outpost for Netanyahu’s right-wing Likud coalition*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/gaza-conservative-friends-israel-benjamin-netanyahu-b2522691.html) , says Peter Oborne. He writes: “Conservative Friends of Israel boasts that its membership includes [*80 per cent of Tory MPs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/boris-johnson-israel-war-crimes-b1832624.html). It can whistle up cabinet ministers for its lunches and dinners, and has superb access to Downing Street, Westminster and Whitehall. There are queues round the block to its famous party at the annual Tory conference. “The Conservative historian and politician Robert Rhodes James defined the CFI as ‘the largest organisation in Western Europe [*dedicated to the cause*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-ban-arms-sales-gaza-aid-workers-killed-b2522624.html) of the people of [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel). “That was 40 years ago. Its influence has [*grown substantially since*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/the-truth-about-the-uks-powerful-jewish-lobbies-9702262.html). ” Read the full article here:[*It’s time to put Conservatives’ links with Israel under the spotlight*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/gaza-conservative-friends-israel-benjamin-netanyahu-b2522691.html) Israel approves reopening of Erez crossing into Gaza11:05 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Israel said it approved the reopening of the Erez crossing into northern Gaza and the temporary use of Ashdod port in southern Israel, following U.S. demands to increase humanitarian aid supplies into Gaza. During a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Thursday night, U.S. President Joe Biden demanded “specific, concrete” steps to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, saying conditions could be placed on U.S. aid if Israel did not respond. A meeting of the security cabinet late on Thursday approved immediate steps to increase humanitarian aid to the civilian population in the Gaza Strip, a statement said. In addition to reopening the Erez crossing point, which has been closed since it was destroyed during the Oct. 7 attack on Israel, the security cabinet also approved increasing Jordanian aid through the Kerem Shalom crossing point, the statement said. The move was welcomed by U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken who said the impact of the move would have to be measured in an improved situation on the ground in Gaza, where aid agencies have warned of an increasing risk of famine. “Really the proof is in the results, and we will see those unfold in the coming days, in the coming weeks,” Blinken said, speaking alongside European Union leaders in Belgium.Three British aid workers killed by Israeli strike in Gaza named as Sunak demands investigation from Netanyahu10:40 , Maryam Zakir-HussainIn case you missed it...Three British citizens[*killed in an Israeli airstrike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/david-cameron-gaza-rishi-sunak-israeli-benjamin-netanyahu-b2522197.html) on an aid mission travelling through Gaza have been named as Rishi Sunak demanded a “thorough and transparent investigation” from Israel.James Henderson, John Chapman and James Kirby were among seven aid workers employed by charity World Central Kitchen (WCK) who [*died in the attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/prime-minister-gaza-benjamin-netanyahu-government-david-cameron-b2521983.html) on the three-vehicle convoy on Monday.On Tuesday evening, Mr Sunak telephoned Benjamin Netanyahu to say that “far too many aid workers and ordinary civilians have lost their lives in [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) ” and that the situation there is “increasingly intolerable”.The White House said it was also “outraged” by the incident, which killed workers and volunteers WCK, a charity that was supplying food to starving Palestinians.Bel Trew and Alastair Jamieson report.[*All seven aid workers killed by Israeli strike in Gaza named*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html) UK has ‘no choice’ but to suspend arms sales to Israel, Tory MP says10:25 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Alicia Kearns MP said the UK has “no choice” but to suspend arms sales to Israel. Speaking to BBC Radio today, the Chair of Foreign Affairs and Select Committee, said: “I believe we have no choice but to suspend arm sales to Israel, and it’s important the public understands this isn’t a political decision.“UK arms export licenses require a recipient to comply with international humanitarian law, and that’s why emergency handbrakes exist in a change of circumstances.”UN rights body adopts resolution on Israel accountability for possible war crimes10:13 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The United Nations Human Rights Council on Friday adopted a resolution calling for Israel to be held accountable for possible war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in the Gaza Strip.Twenty-eight countries voted in favour, 13 abstained and six voted against the resolution.How AI is fueling Israel’s target list10:00 , Josh Marcus In the weeks immediately after Hamas’s 7 October surprise attack on Israel, the Israel Defense Forces allegedly intentionally targeted civilian homes and allegedly used an AI-based programme called Lavender to generate targets for assassination, generating scores of bombings based on decisions made with scant human review.At one point, the system used mass surveillance in Gaza to generate a list of 37,000 bombing targets, including numerous low-level alleged Hamas operatives who wouldn’t typically be the targets of bombing operations, according to a report.The allegations, [*uncovered by +972 Magazine and Local Call*](https://www.972mag.com/lavender-ai-israeli-army-gaza/) , are based on interviews with six Israeli intelligence officers who served during the conflict with Hamas in Gaza and were involved in the use of AI to investigate targets.One officer said his role in the system was as a mere “rubber stamp” on Lavender’s targeting decisions, spending only a few seconds personally reviewing the system’s recommendations.More details in our full story.[*Israel reportedly used ‘Lavender’ AI system to ID thousands of targets in Gaza war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-hamas-war-ai-b2523039.html) The article that triggered Tory civil war over Israel09:49 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain An [*outspoken attack on Israel by former Tory foreign minister Alan Duncan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-gaza-idf-aid-workers-alan-duncan-b2522632.html) first reported in [*The Independent*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-independent) has now led to the [*prospect of him being expelled from the party.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/alan-duncan-pickles-lord-conservative-jewish-leadership-council-b2523500.html) Writing for this newspaper, Sir Alan said: “Challenging the right of [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) to exist, or failing to condemn [*antisemitism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/antisemitism) and the atrocity of 7 October, are all inexcusable – but the noise around any of these issues should not be allowed to disguise the [*appalling conduct of Israel itself*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html). “In all the months before Hamas slaughtered hundreds of innocent Israelis, there was hardly a squeak of condemnation from world leaders about the [*growing extremism of*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-air-strikes-aid-workers-hamas-updates-b2522628.html) Benjamin [*Netanyahu’s government*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-air-strikes-aid-workers-hamas-updates-b2522628.html) , both within and outside Israel. His judicial reforms were an attack on freedom and justice within his own country, while ever more violent settler activity against [*Palestinians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/palestinians) in the West Bank accelerated under the watchful and [*supportive gaze of the Israeli Defence Forces*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/world-central-kitchen-gaza-british-workers-israel-b2522498.html). ” Read the full article here:[*Sir Alan Duncan: How can we still call Israel an ally?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-gaza-idf-aid-workers-alan-duncan-b2522632.html) Israel approves opening of two humanitarian routes into Gaza after call with Biden09:32 , Joe Middleton Israel has agreed to reopen two border crossings into Gaza after the cabinet approved a series of “immediate steps” amid pressure over the escalating humanitarian crisis in the Strip.The Erez crossing in northern Gaza will be opened for the first time since the conflict began on 7 October and Ashdod Port will be opened to allow aid shipments, prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said on Friday.“This increased aid will prevent a humanitarian crisis and is necessary to ensure the continuation of the fighting and to achieve the goals of the war,” Mr Netanyahu’s office said.[*Israel approves opening of two humanitarian routes into Gaza after call with Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-open-aid-crossing-gaza-joe-biden-b2523737.html) Are Jill and Joe Biden clashing over Gaza war?09:10 , Rachel Sharp First Lady Dr [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) is reportedly one of the [*strongest voices*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/israel-damascus-air-strike-aid-worker-missile-attack-b2523224.html) calling for the end of civilian deaths in [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) in the White House and has been urging her husband, President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) , to help [*cease the violence.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html) Earlier this week, Mr Biden met with Muslim community members – something the first lady allegedly said she disapproved of because of Mr Biden’s support of [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) in the conflict with Hamas, according to a [*Palestinians*](https://clicks.trx-hub.com/xid/esimedia_t58ukgmjkf95_theindependent?q=http%3A%2F%2Fgo.redirectingat.com%2F%3Fid%3D44681X1458326%26url%3Dhttps%253A%252F%252Fwww.nytimes.com%252F2024%252F04%252F03%252Fus%252Fpolitics%252Fjill-biden-israel-hamas.html%26sref%3Dhttps%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fworld%2Famericas%2Fus-politics%2Fjill-biden-gaza-israel-hamas-joe-b2523339.html&p=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.independent.co.uk%2Fnews%2Fworld%2Famericas%2Fus-politics%2Fjill-biden-gaza-israel-hamas-joe-b2523339.html&article_id=2523339&author=Ariana+Baio&tag=Gaza%2CPalestinians%2CJoe+Biden%2CJill+Biden%2CIsrael&section=World&category=Americas&sub_category=US+politics&updated_time=2024-04-04T14%3A13%3A11.000Z&utm_campaign=news-body&utm_term=B-2&utm_content=&utm_medium=desktop&ref=www.independent.co.uk&utm_source=independent&fbclid=&gclhttps://www.independent.co.uk/topic/palestinians) are facing [*threats of starvation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/unrwa-funding-freeze-us-biden-b2491574.html) and disease with little access to humanitarian aid. Just this week,[*seven World Central Kitchen workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-israel-workers-b2523097.html) who were delivering food to civilians in Gaza were killed by an Israeli airstrike.Ariana Baio reports.[*Jill Biden privately pleads with Joe to stop Gaza’s suffering, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/jill-biden-gaza-israel-hamas-joe-b2523339.html) Calls grow for Rishi Sunak to stop UK arms trade to Israel NOW08:58 , Joe Middleton Rishi Sunak is under mounting pressure – including from within his own party – to immediately suspend arms sales to Israel amid a growing chorus of opposition to the number of civilians killed in its war on Hamas.The prime minister faces calls from Tory grandees, hundreds of lawyers, dozens of MPs and peers from across the political spectrum, as well as top military commanders to halt arms exports to the nation.Mr Sunak has also been urged to exert Britain’s influence on Israel to force a change of approach in how Israel Defence Forces (IDF) conducts the invasion.Bel Trew andArchie Mitchellreport[*Calls grow for Rishi Sunak to stop UK arms trade to Israel NOW*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/israel-uk-rishi-sunak-arms-trade-b2523393.html) Alan Duncan faces expulsion from Tory party for attacking ‘pro Israel extremist’ Conservatives08:53 , Joe Middleton Former foreign minister Sir Alan Duncan is being investigated by Tory chiefs after he said pro-Israel “extremists” in the party should be kicked out because they refused to support international law.Sir Alan said ex-cabinet minister Eric Pickles and Tory peer Stuart Polak, both members of the powerful Conservative Friends of Israel (CFI) organisation, should both be thrown out of the party.The CFI was being used to ‘exercise the interests of another country’ by lobbying for Israel, he said.He also branded Michael Gove, Oliver Dowden, Suella Braverman, Robert Jenrick and Priti Patel “extremists” for failing to denounce unlawful Israeli settlements on Palestinian land.Archie Mitchell reports[*Alan Duncan faces expulsion from party for attacking ‘pro-Israel extremist’ Tories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tory-peer-israel-gaza-investigation-duncan-b2523466.html) NSC responds to steps announced by Israel to increase aid flow to Gaza08:50 , Rachel Sharp The National Security Council has responded to the steps announced by Israel to increase aid flow to Gaza.Read the statement in full:We welcome the steps announced by the Israeli government tonight at the President’s request following his call with Prime Minister Netanyahu. These steps, including a commitment to open the Ashdod port for the direct delivery of assistance into Gaza, to open the Erez crossing for a new route for assistance to reach north Gaza, and to significantly increase deliveries from Jordan directly into Gaza, must now be fully and rapidly implemented. As the President said today on the call, U.S. policy with respect to Gaza will be determined by our assessment of Israel’s immediate action on these and other steps, including steps to protect innocent civilians and the safety of aid workers. We are prepared to work in full coordination with the Government of Israel, the Governments of Jordan and Egypt, the United Nations, and humanitarian organizations, to ensure that these important steps are implemented and result in a significant increase in humanitarian assistance reaching civilians in dire need throughout Gaza over the coming days and weeks.Israel approves opening of two humanitarian routes into Gaza after call with Biden08:28 , Rachel Sharp Israel has agreed to reopen two border crossings into Gaza after the cabinet approved a series of “immediate steps” amid pressure over the escalating humanitarian crisis in the Strip.The Erez crossing in northern Gaza will be opened for the first time since the conflict began on 7 October and Ashdod Port will be opened to allow aid shipments, prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s office said on Friday.“This increased aid will prevent a humanitarian crisis and is necessary to ensure the continuation of the fighting and to achieve the goals of the war,” Mr Netanyahu’s office said.The decision follows US president Joe Biden’s first phone call to the Israeli prime minister since the drone strike on the vehicles of seven charity workers killed in Gaza.Read the full story:[*Israel approves opening of two humanitarian routes into Gaza after call with Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-open-aid-crossing-gaza-joe-biden-b2523737.html) ‘No one can change his mind’07:30 , Josh Marcus Investigations into [*potential Israeli war crimes and violations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html) of international law are being undermined by President Joe Biden’s insistence on providing his close ally with billions of dollars in unconditional military support, several former State Department and Pentagon officials told The Independent.Speaking out after the killing of [*seven international aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-aid-workers-israel-british-drone-b2522977.html) by Israel in Gaza, among them [*an American citizen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jacob-flickinger-gaza-aid-worker-strike-deaths-b2523162.html) , one former Pentagon attorney said that any US investigations into Israel’s actions were “perfunctory” and “performative” due to pressure from the White House.The former officials say the president’s decades-long and deeply held personal connection to Israel renders US laws and regulations concerning US arms sales essentially toothless.“There’s no incentive to investigate if the president and the White House themselves have announced that aid is unconditional,” said Brian Finucane, who worked for a decade in the Office of the Legal Adviser at the State Department advising on arms transfers and the laws of war.Richard Hall reports.[*Former officials speak out against Biden’s unconditional support for Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/joe-biden-israel-arms-gaza-b2523435.html) ICYMI: World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres says aid workers were ‘systematically’ targeted05:45 , Josh Marcus[*World Central Kitchen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-central-kitchen) founder and renowned chef [*Jose Andres*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jose-andres) accused [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) of [*targeting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/aid-worker-zomi-frankom-gaza-israel-interview-b2522098.html) the seven [*aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid-workers) who were killed by an [*IDF airstrike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-attack-strike-world-central-kitchen-b2522280.html) in [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) , “systematically, car by car.”Mr Andres told Reutersthat World Central Kitchen (WCK), a charity that provides food to people in disaster zones including Gaza, was transparent about its movements in the besieged strip.The seven staff were killed in Gaza in a marked convoy after unloading 100 tonnes of food aid from a barge.“This was not just a bad luck situation where ‘oops’ we dropped the bomb in the wrong place,” Mr Andres said. “Even if we were not in coordination with the (Israel Defense Forces), no democratic country and no military can be targeting civilians and humanitarians.”Kelly Rissman reports.[*World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres says workers were ‘systematically’ targeted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-targeted-b2522923.html) What comes next in the World Central Kitchen investigation?04:15 , Josh Marcus World leaders from multiple nations have called on Israeli officials to investigation the killing of seven aid workers in Gaza in an IDF air strike.Katie Hawkinson reports on what an investigation could look like.[*What does an ‘investigation’ into World Central Kitchen workers’ deaths really mean?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/world-central-kitchen-israel-idf-investigation-b2522952.html) ICYMI: Biden warns Netanyahu US support for Gaza war now depends on Israel protecting civilians and aid workers03:00 , Josh Marcus President [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) told [*Israeli*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israeli) prime minister [*Benjamin Netanyahu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/benjamin-netanyahu) on Thursday that future US policy towards Israel will be determined by whether its government takes action to protect [*aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/aid-workers) and civilians in [*Gaza.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) The warning came in their first telephone conversation since Israel Defense Force drones fired three missiles into a World Central Kitchen aid convoy.Andrew Feinberg and Richard Hall report.[*Biden warns Netanyahu US support for Gaza war depends on Israel protecting civilians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-netanyahu-call-israel-support-gaza-b2523455.html) Why The Independent is calling on the US to slow down Israel’s war machine02:00 , Josh MarcusTo dissuade the Israelis from following their current plan, the president will have to use more than words: he must make America’s diplomatic, financial and military support for Israel firmly conditional. American aircraft, tanks and missiles used in combat in Gaza must now have a new fitment – some political strings attached. If they do not, then the flow of American armaments and technology to Israel will have to cease. Indeed, depriving Israel of the weapons of war, and adding to its international isolation, is becoming, sadly, inevitable. If need be – and that seems highly likely – America must stop sending arms to Israel.Read the full editorial here.[*If ever there was a time for America to force Israel to do right, it is now*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/joe-biden-benjamin-netanyahu-israel-phone-call-b2523530.html) How many civilians have died in the Israel-Hamas war?01:45 , Josh Marcus Monday’s deadly IDF strike on a group of aid workers in Gaza is bringing attention to the high civilian death toll in the Israel-Hamas war. Just how many innocents have been affected?[*According to the UN*](https://lawyersletter.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Gaza-letter-FIN-3-April.pdf) , at least 32,623 Palestinians overall have been killed since the fighting began, with seventy percent of the dead women and children.Israel, meanwhile, [*claims*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/03/27/israel-gaza-hamas-war-fighting/) that it has killed between 11,500 and 13,000 Palestinian militants since the war began. During Hamas’s initial 7 October attack on Israel, [*another roughly 1,200 people*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/02/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine/) , most of them civilians, were killed. Will aid workers be safer with new Israeli tactics01:30 , Josh Marcus Amid the fallout of a disasterous strike on seven World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza, Israel has promised to adjust its tactics.To start, Israel says it will establish a joint operational coordination room inside of its Southern Command to work alongside humanitarian agencies and coordinate safe movements.The country has also said it will release an investigative report on the airstrike to the public, according to Rear Admiral Daniel Hagari, who gave a public briefing on Thursday.“And I believe that, after we present this to the ambassadors from the respective countries, and to the members of the WCK organisation, we will make it public in a clear, transparent manner -and that will happen soon,” he [*said*](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/israel-signals-probe-lethal-strike-gaza-aid-convoy-take-weeks-2024-04-04/). The DOJ’s divergent approach on war crimes in Ukraine vs Gaza01:15 , Josh Marcus When Russia invaded Ukraine, the US was quick to assist the Ukrainians in prosecuting war crimes, and in bringing charges itself against four Russian-allied troops in December. However, Attorney General Merrick Garland has barely spoken in public about potential war crimes in the Israel-Hamas war, despite numerous instances during the conflict that rights group believe have crossed the line.As NPR notes, Mr Garland has said just 29 words in public about war crimes in the conflict in Gaza.“Hamas murdered more than 30 Americans and kidnapped more during their terrorist attack on Oct. 7. We are investigating those heinous crimes, and we will hold those people accountable,” he [*said*](https://www.npr.org/2024/04/04/1242320285/israel-hamas-war-crimes-ukraine) in December. Jacob Flickinger’s parents don’t believe IDF strike on aid workers was accidentFriday 5 April 2024 00:55 , Josh Marcus The parents of Jacob Flickinger, one of seven aid workers killed this week in an Israeli airstrike, don’t believe the incident in Gaza was an accident.“They were aware, the entire world was aware, this food shipment was coming in,” John Flickinger [*told CBS News on Thursday*](https://www.cbsnews.com/news/parents-dispute-israeli-claim-of-unintentional-strike-in-death-of-jacob-flickinger/). “It’s been international news for days. They were aware the food was picked up at the ship on the coast of Gaza and delivered to a warehouse along an approved humanitarian route approved by Israel. Soon after they dropped the food off, we know they were targeted. The convoy was clearly marked. The vehicles were clearly marked. The facts on the ground seemed to indicate it wasn’t a ‘tragic accident.’”Survivors of Al-Shifa siege recount horrifying experiencesFriday 5 April 2024 00:40 , Josh Marcus Earlier this week, Israel withdrew from [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) ’s largest [*hospital*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hospital) after [*two weeks of “close-quarter” fighting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hamas-ap-benjamin-netanyahu-gaza-israel-b2520663.html) in which it claimed hundreds of [*militants*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/militants) were killed or arrested.Civilians who survived the fighting at the Shifa hospital said the violence left them without food and medicine, and caused them deep psychological trauma.“My psyche has been shattered from within.”Some patients who were inside Al-Shifa Hospital in [*#Gaza*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Gaza?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) during the latest siege recount their experience.[*#CeasefireNOW*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/CeasefireNOW?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/gJa1WlOTse*](https://t.co/gJa1WlOTse) — WHO in occupied Palestinian territory (@WHOoPt) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/WHOoPt/status/1775913716715774101?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) One patient told the World Health Organization, “My psyche has been shattered from within.”Read more of our reporting on the siege.[*Israeli military withdraws from Shifa Hospital amid Netanyahu protests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-hamas-shifa-hospital-b2521636.html) Israel approves reopening of Erez border crossingFriday 5 April 2024 00:25 , Josh Marcus Israel’s war cabinet has agreed to reopen the Erez border crossing between Israel and northern Gaza for the first time since the war with Hamas began last year, CNN [*reports*](https://www.cnn.com/2024/04/04/middleeast/gaza-erez-crossing-israeli-cabinet-intl/index.html) , citing an Israeli official.The decision was made to allow the reopening to let more humanitarian aid into the besieged strip. Biden shares photo of call with NetanyahuFriday 5 April 2024 00:10 , Josh Marcus Joe Biden on Thursday shared a photo of his recent high-stakes call with Benjamin Netanyahu, the first between the two men since seven World Central Kitchen aid workers were killed this week by an Israeli air strike in Gaza.Today, I spoke with Prime Minister Netanyahu to emphasize that strikes on aid workers and the humanitarian situation in Gaza are unacceptable.Israel must implement steps to address civilian harm and the safety of workers – and work toward a ceasefire to bring hostages home. [*pic.twitter.com/c7yB0jwq06*](https://t.co/c7yB0jwq06) — President Biden (@POTUS) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/POTUS/status/1775962929872982130?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Read more on their conversation from Andrew Feinberg and Richard Hall.[*Biden warns Netanyahu US support for Gaza war depends on Israel protecting civilians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-netanyahu-call-israel-support-gaza-b2523455.html) Mourners in Poland celebrate World Central Kitchen worker killed in IDF strikeThursday 4 April 2024 23:55 , Josh Marcus Mourners gathered in the Polish city of Przemysl on Thursday to pay tribute to Damian Sobol, 35, a World Central Kitchen humanitarian worker who was killed by the Israel Defense Forces in Gaza on Monday in an airstrike. “There is no consent for killing innocent people, let’s remember this and let’s remember that Damian was helping so that other people would not die of hunger,” Waldemar, a local who works with ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and previously worked with Sobol, [*told broadcaster TVN*](https://www.reuters.com/world/hometown-mourners-commemorate-polish-aid-worker-killed-gaza-2024-04-04/). “We started here as volunteers. Damian set off further on the volunteering path and unfortunately was murdered by Israeli services.”Mourners placed candles and flowers in a central plaza on Thursday in honour of Sobol. Biden and Netanyahu didn’t discuss ‘disaster’ of potential Rafah invasionThursday 4 April 2024 23:40 , Josh Marcus Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US president Joe Biden reportedly did not discuss the IDF’s hinted-at invasion of Rafah during their call on Thursday.A US official [*told Al Jazeera*](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/liveblog/2024/4/4/israels-war-on-gaza-live-israel-accused-of-ai-assisted-genocide-in-gaza?update=2818915) that the US president “refused” to broach the topic.Prime Minister Netanyahu [*has said*](https://www.cnn.com/middleeast/live-news/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news-03-20-24/h_471513ebe45eb3ba6c93d58158683745) it will be impossible to defeat Hamas without entering the southern Gazan city, where over 1m people are now living, many of whom were told by the IDF to evacuate south at the beginning of the war with Hamas. US officials, meanwhile, have [*reportedly*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/02/rafah-invasion-gaza-israel-displaced-hamas/) warned that an invasion of Rafah would be a “disaster” and argued for alternative options. Over 600 UK legal experts call on UK to halt arms transfers to IsraelThursday 4 April 2024 23:11 , Josh Marcus A group of over 600 UK legal experts is calling on the government to suspend weapons transfers to Israel, amid increasing scrunity of the thousands of civilians killed in the IDF’s campaign against Hamas.“At least 32,623 Palestinians have now been killed and 75,092 injured in Gaza,” the letter reads. “Seventy percent of recorded deaths have consistently been women and children.”The [*letter*](https://lawyersletter.uk/) also made mention of the recent strike on World Central Kitchen humanitarian workers.“Strikes on [United Nations Relief and Works Agency] facilities have led to the deaths of 400 people seeking shelter under the UN flag,” the letter continues. “At least 165 employees of the [UNRWA] workers have been killed. 18 In addition to UNRWA staff, other humanitarian workers and volunteers have been killed.”Member of Netanyahu’s war cabinet calls for early electionsThursday 4 April 2024 22:58 , Josh Marcus A member of Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s war cabinet has called for early elections, further ratcheting up the domestic pressure on the wartime leader.New elections aren’t required until October 2026, but Benny Gantz said earlier elections will stop a “rupture among the people.”“This agreed-upon date for elections will leave us time to continue the security effort, and it will allow Israeli citizens to know that we will soon need to renew the trust between us,” Mr Gantz said Thursday, The New York Times [*reports*](https://www.nytimes.com/live/2024/04/04/world/israel-hamas-war-gaza-news?name=styln-israel-gaza&region=hub&block=storyline_live_updates_block_hub_recirc&action=click&pgtype=LegacyCollection#a-call-for-early-elections-by-a-member-of-netanyahus-war-cabinet-highlights-the-domestic-pressure-he-is-under). Even before the 7 October war, Mr Netanyahu was under intense domestic pressure, facing [*unprecedented protests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-protest-netanyahu-delay-knesset-b2308824.html) in the midst of an attempted judicial reform and [*a corruption trial*](https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/2024-03-10/ty-article/.premium/netanyahu-trial-dates-set-for-officials-testimony-despite-pms-request-to-postpone/0000018e-2987-d7d3-abce-69afc0f10000). Trump says Israel ‘losing the PR war’ in Hamas conflictThursday 4 April 2024 22:40 , Josh Marcus Donald Trump has joined the chorus of those criticising Israel this week, though from a slightly different angle than most. Israel’s [*strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/joe-biden-israel-arms-gaza-b2523435.html) on a convoy of World Central Kitchen aid workers in Gaza has inspired widespread shock and outrage, but Mr Trump’s issue appears to be more with how the IDF is marketing its campaign to the world.During a Thursday interview with radio host Hugh Hewitt, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee urged Israel to finish its conflict quickly and said the country was losing world opinion the more “heinous” videos went public of it destroying buildings and harming civilians in Gaza. “You’ve got to get it over with, and you have to get back to normalcy. And I’m not sure that I’m loving the way they’re doing it, because you’ve got to have victory. You have to have a victory, and it’s taking a long time,” Mr Trump said. “And the other thing is I hate, they put out tapes all the time,” he continued. “Every night, they’re releasing tapes of a building falling down. They shouldn’t be releasing tapes like that. They’re doing, that’s why they’re losing the PR war. They, Israel is absolutely losing the PR war.”The whole transcript of the interview can be found [*here*](https://hughhewitt.com/former-president-donald-trump-on-israels-war-2024-and-much-more). Scrutiny grows of Israel’s targeting practices in war with HamasThursday 4 April 2024 22:23 , Josh Marcus Even before this week, it was no secret that scores of civilians have been killed in the Israel-Hamas war.[*Over 32,000 people have been killed in Gaza alone*](https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2024/04/02/israel-hamas-war-news-gaza-palestine/) , according to the Gaza Health Ministry, [*the majority of them civilians*](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/gaza-war-after-six-months-what-are-issues-now-2024-04-04/) , while about 1,200 mostly civilians were killed in Hamas’s initial 7 October attack on Israel. However, Israel has faced increased scrunity of its targeting practices since Monday, when the IDF [*struck an international convoy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-targeted-b2522923.html) of World Central Kitchen humanitarian workers, killing seven. [*World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres says workers were ‘systematically’ targeted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-targeted-b2522923.html) The attack prompted worldwide condemnation, and experts have argued that Israel’s targeting systems are a major culprit in the unnecessary loss of life.Sir [*Alex Younger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alex-younger) , ex-head of M16, said the World Central Kitchen incident showed Israel was using “systematic targeting” that risked slaughtering innocent people by mistake. “My view is that what happened is essentially systematic -of an approach to targeting that has on occasion bordered on the reckless and therefore fundamentally undermines what must be Israel’s political objectives which is to sustain some moral high ground and moral purpose,” he said recently. [*Ex MI6 chief blames Israel’s ‘systematic targeting’ for death of aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-aid-worker-mi6-alex-younger-b2523139.html) Internally, Israeli officers have voiced concerned over the growing role of AI in the IDF’s targeting process, describing a secretive system called Lavender that often identities thousands of low-level targets, who they said can become official targets with minimal human review, though the IDF denies this characterisation.[*Israel reportedly used ‘Lavender’ AI system to ID thousands of targets in Gaza war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-hamas-war-ai-b2523039.html) Rights group accuses Israel of ‘war crime’ for strike that killed 106, including 54 childrenThursday 4 April 2024 21:50 , Richard Hall An investigation by Human Rights Watch published on Thursday found that an Israeli attack on a building in October that killed 106 people, including 54 children, had no apparent military target. The rights group said the 31 October strike, one of the deadliest of the war, amounted to an “apparent war crime.”Read the story [*here*](https://apnews.com/article/israel-gaza-airstrike-hamas-war-palestinians-344bd8da0254e83eedd7245a593823d0?utm_campaign=TrueAnthem&utm_medium=AP&utm_source=Twitter). Fetterman says ‘no conditions’ on US aid for Israel after killing of seven aid workersThursday 4 April 2024 21:26 , Richard Hall Senator John Fetterman of Pennsylvania has responded to the killing of seven aid workers by three precision Israeli airstrikes by urging that there should be no conditions placed on US military aid to Israel. “In this war against Hamas—no conditions for Israel, he tweeted, along with a screenshot of a quote in which president Joe Biden called the killings “unacceptable.” Mr Fetterman’s comments stand in stark contrast to many of his Democratic colleagues, including the president, who has called on Israel to make immediate changes to protect aid workers and civilians. In this war against Hamas—no conditions for Israel. [*pic.twitter.com/qCrqHT4pge*](https://t.co/qCrqHT4pge) — Senator John Fetterman (@SenFettermanPA) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/SenFettermanPA/status/1775965417992851930?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) World Central Kitchen founder Jose Andres: ‘We were targeted deliberately’Thursday 4 April 2024 20:52 , Richard Hall Jose Andres, the founder of World Central Kitchen, says Israel “deliberately” targeted his staff when it struck their convoy on Monday, killing seven of them.Speaking to Reuters, he said they were targeted despite his organisation being in clear communication with the Israeli army about the convoy’s movements.'We were targeted deliberately': Chef Jose Andres said the World Central Kitchen charity group he founded had clear communication with the Israeli military, which he said knew his aid workers' movements [*https://t.co/cn8hWKQ7dY*](https://t.co/cn8hWKQ7dY) [*pic.twitter.com/Smb40uVpa4*](https://t.co/Smb40uVpa4) — Reuters (@Reuters) [*April 3, 2024*](https://twitter.com/Reuters/status/1775634350958432428?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) McDonalds buys back more than 200 restaurants in Israel following boycottThursday 4 April 2024 20:24 , Richard Hall McDonald’s is buying back some 225 restaurants from an Israeli company following a boycott campaign linked to the war in Gaza, Reuters reports. Alonyal, the company that currently owns the restaurants in Israel, [*announced*](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/free-meals-israeli-soldiers-divide-mcdonalds-franchises-over-israel-hamas-war-2023-10-17/) shortly after the 7 October attack by Hamas that it would be donating free meals to the Israeli military.That sparked a campaign to boycott the company worldwide. Read the story [*here*](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/mcdonalds-israel-franchise-owner-sell-operations-fast-food-giant-2024-04-04/). Ex-MI6 chief: Israel’s ‘systematic targeting’ to blame for death of aid workersThursday 4 April 2024 20:00 , Oliver O'Connell Pressure on [*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) to act against Israel after the [*death of seven aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/world-central-kitchen-idf-israeli-british-gaza-b2523113.html) has grown after a former British spy chief condemned the “reckless” way they were killed.Sir [*Alex Younger*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/alex-younger) , ex-head of M16, said the incident showed Israel was using “systematic targeting” that risked slaughtering innocent people by mistake.It was in danger of [*losing its right to claim a “moral purpose” in the war with Hamas*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html) , he claimed in an outspoken intervention.Zoe Grunewaldreports: [*Ex MI6 chief blames Israel’s ‘systematic targeting’ for death of aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/israel-gaza-aid-worker-mi6-alex-younger-b2523139.html) Watch: Kirby says US expects changes from Israel in coming ‘hours and days’Thursday 4 April 2024 19:36 , Oliver O'ConnellQuestion: And how much time are you giving them to implement these changes? Kirby: We we would hope to see some announcements of changes here in coming hours and days, and I'll leave it at that. Reporter: That’s shortKirby: Hours and days [*pic.twitter.com/0CmcKw792v*](https://t.co/0CmcKw792v) — Acyn (@Acyn) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/Acyn/status/1775955312643579914?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Thursday 4 April 2024 19:29 , Oliver O'Connell “Growing frustrations” over message not getting through to Netanyahu.National security communications adviser John Kirby said Biden's call with Netanyahu was about 30 mins long."There's been growing frustration," he adds about the state of their relationship.— AlexGangitano (@AlexGangitano) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/AlexGangitano/status/1775953158029676984?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Thursday 4 April 2024 19:26 , Oliver O'Connell Mr Kirby is asked why the change in policy from the US?“The President was certainly shaken by the attack on the WCA,” Mr Kirby tells reporters.He adds that it “wasn’t the only event”.The president, particularly the president, was certainly shaken by the attack on the WCK convoy and aid workers. As I said earlier, it wasn’t the only event. There have been others like that — humanitarian aid convoys coming under fire and losing people.Kirby: Biden called for ‘specific concrete and measurable steps’ to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering and safety of aid workersThursday 4 April 2024 19:21 , Oliver O'Connell White House National Security Communications Advisor John Kirby made the following comments regarding the call between Biden and Netanyahu: Now, as I'm sure you are all aware, the President had a chance to speak with Prime Minister Netanyahu earlier today. On that phone call the president emphasised that the strikes on humanitarian work are unacceptable.He made clear the need for Israel to announce and implement specific concrete and measurable steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering and the safety of aid workers.He made clear that US policy with respect to Gaza will be determined by our assessment of Israel's immediate action on the steps.He underscored that an immediate ceasefire is essential to stabilise and improve the humanitarian situation.Mr Kirby added that the US expects to see these changes made by Israel “in the coming hours and days”.Watch: Blinken says Biden emphasised ‘strikes on humanitarian workers and overall humanitarian situation’ unacceptableThursday 4 April 2024 19:14 , Oliver O'Connell.[*@SecBlinken*](https://twitter.com/SecBlinken?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) : "President Biden spoke a short while ago with Prime Minister Netanyahu...the president emphasized that the strikes on humanitarian workers and the overall humanitarian situation are unacceptable." [*pic.twitter.com/LcXO98A429*](https://t.co/LcXO98A429) — CSPAN (@cspan) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/cspan/status/1775946159611158985?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Biden says US policy in Gaza will be determined by Israeli efforts to protect civilian sThursday 4 April 2024 18:58 , Richard Hall Joe Biden told Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu that US policy in Gaza could change if Israel does not make efforts to protect civilians and aid workers. A readout from the call released by the White House said that Mr Biden “made clear the need for Israel to announce and implement a series of specific, concrete, and measurable steps to address civilian harm, humanitarian suffering, and the safety of aid workers.”The president did not, however, announce any conditions on future US military aid for Israel as many in his party have pushed for. The Independent’s Andrew Feinberg reports on the call [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/biden-netanyahu-call-israel-support-gaza-b2523455.html). How have Israel, US and UK responded to Gaza aid convoy attack?Thursday 4 April 2024 18:45 , Oliver O'Connell Following the deaths of the seven World Central Kitchen aid workers, responses have come from leaders across the world, with Israel taking responsibility for the deaths — which it said was unintentional — and promising to conduct an independent investigation. Here’s what’s been said so far:[*Gaza aid convoy attack: How has Israel, US and UK responded?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-aid-workers-killed-british-world-kitchen-b2522601.html) Israeli drone used in Gaza aid strike powered by British-made engine, activists claimThursday 4 April 2024 18:39 , Richard HallThe Independent’s International Correspondent Bel Trew reports on the British link to the Israeli drone that killed seven aid workers in Gaza on Monday. Her story can be read [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-aid-workers-israel-british-drone-b2522977.html). As more details emerged about the bombing and its victims, CAAT accused the UK of being “complicit in the murder of UK aid workers” and said it must halt arms sales to Israel. The Independent has approached the Department of Business and Trade for comment.“This government has had every opportunity to impose an arms embargo and has refused to do so. While our thoughts are with the families and friends of the aid workers killed, they are also with the families and friends of the tens of thousands of Palestinians who have been killed by Israel,” said spokesperson Emily Apple.She cited claims that the Foreign Office is hiding legal advice that Israel is breaching international humanitarian law, according to foreign affairs committee chair Alicia Kearns.Since 2015, the UK has licensed £487m worth of weapons to Israel, although this does not include equipment exported via open licences.Aid worker deaths: Diplomatic crisis erupts between Poland and IsraelThursday 4 April 2024 18:15 , AP A new diplomatic crisis between Poland and [*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) has erupted following the death of a Polish aid worker in Gaza, with the Polish president on Thursday denouncing a comment by the Israeli ambassador as “outrageous” and the [*Foreign Ministry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-ministry) in Warsaw saying it was summoning him for a meeting.A 35-year-old Polish man was among seven people who were killed while delivering food to besieged Palestinians with the charity [*World Central Kitchen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-central-kitchen). Israel has called the incident a “mistake” that followed a misidentification. The charity said its vehicles were clearly marked.Amid shock in Poland over the death of the charity worker, Israel’s ambassador to Poland, Yacov Livne, pushed back at what he said were attempts by the “extreme right and left in Poland” to accuse Israel of “intentional murder in the attack.”Continue reading...[*Diplomatic crisis erupts between Poland and Israel following killing of Polish aid worker in Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/foreign-ministry-ap-israel-poland-world-central-kitchen-b2523321.html) The Independent View: It’s time to stopThursday 4 April 2024 17:45 , Oliver O'Connell The seven aid workers killed by an Israeli air strike have become symbolic of the lawless, reckless manner in which Benjamin Netanyahu has prosecuted this war. The moment has come to do whatever it takes to force the government of Israel to end it.[*Editorial: It’s time to stop*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html) Biden and Netanyahu begin first call since Israel’s deadly strike on aid workersThursday 4 April 2024 17:41 , Richard Hall Joe Biden and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu have begun their first call since Israel’s deadly strike on an international aid convoy that killed seven people. The call between the two leaders comes as Mr Biden faces increasing pressure from a growing chorus of voices who are fed up with what they perceive as a callous refusal to rein in Israeli violations of international humanitarian law.The killing of seven aid workers with the World Central Kitchen (WCK) — a non-profit humanitarian aid organisation founded by celebrity chef José Andrés — by three precision strikes from an Israeli drone made with British components, drew swift condemnation from the president, who said he was “outraged and heartbroken” over the deaths.BREAKING: Pres. Biden is now speaking with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, a source familiar with the call told [*@ABC*](https://twitter.com/ABC?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) News, their first conversation since seven World Central Kitchen aid workers were killed in an Israeli airstrike in Gaza. [*https://t.co/Kvx7pGxwLe*](https://t.co/Kvx7pGxwLe) [*pic.twitter.com/Wjq2oloaZq*](https://t.co/Wjq2oloaZq) — This Week (@ThisWeekABC) [*April 4, 2024*](https://twitter.com/ThisWeekABC/status/1775924650234528038?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

‘No one can change his mind’: Former officials speak out against Biden’s Israel support after aid worker killings

Richard Hall writes:

Investigations into [*potential Israeli war crimes and violations*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/editorials/aid-workers-gaza-israel-killed-air-strike-b2522745.html) of international law are being undermined by President Joe Biden’s insistence on providing his close ally with billions of dollars in unconditional military support, several former State Department and Pentagon officials told The Independent.

Speaking out after the killing of [*seven international aid workers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/gaza-aid-workers-israel-british-drone-b2522977.html) by Israel in Gaza, among them [*an American citizen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/jacob-flickinger-gaza-aid-worker-strike-deaths-b2523162.html) , one former Pentagon attorney said that any US investigations into Israel’s actions were “perfunctory” and “performative” due to pressure from the White House.

The former officials say the president’s decades-long and deeply held personal connection to Israel renders US laws and regulations concerning US arms sales essentially toothless.

Continue reading...

[*Former officials speak out against Biden’s unconditional support for Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/joe-biden-israel-arms-gaza-b2523435.html)

World Central Kitchen calls for independent investigation into Israeli air strike

Humanitarian food charity [*World Central Kitchen*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/world-central-kitchen) has called for an independent investigation into the [*Israeli*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israeli) air strike that killed seven of its aid workers in [*Gaza*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/gaza) on Monday.

WCK issued a statement on Thursday morning calling for the governments of Australia, Canada, the [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) , the [*UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/uk) and Poland – the countries from which six of the workers hailed – to join a third-party [*investigation into the drone bombardment on the charity’s convoy.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-targeted-b2522923.html)

The investigation must establish “whether [the drone strikes] were carried out intentionally or otherwise violated international law”, it said in a statement on Thursday.

Shweta Sharma reports:

[*World Central Kitchen calls for independent investigation into Gaza strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/world-central-kitchen-gaza-israel-workers-b2523097.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin airstrike targets Odesa hotel in two-hour onslaught*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6983-YFK1-DY4H-K14G-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Length:** 9576 words

**Byline:** Athena Stavrou

**Highlight:** Overnight attacks have left key Ukrainian infrastructure damaged and two people injured

**Body**

[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) missiles have struck Odesa two nights in a row, damaging key infrastructure in the region.

Early on Monday morning, Russian attacks in the region left a high-rise hotel destroyed and at least two workhouse workers dead.

An air strike on Monday night saw further attacks on the key [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) grain exporting port of Izmail, injuring two people and damaging infrastructure, the governor of the Odesa region said on Tuesday.

A port building, storage facilities and more than 30 trucks and cars were damaged in Monday night’s attack, which lasted more than two hours, Oleh Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app.

The Ukrainian military reported shooting down 26 of the 38 Iranian-made attack drones it said were launched by Russia.

Moscow has intensified its air attacks on Ukrainian ports on the Danube River, including Izmail and Reni, after it quit a grain deal in July that ensured the safe export of Ukrainian grains.

Seperately on Tuesday morning, a Russian missile strike damaged a local enterprise in the southern Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, its mayor, Oleksandr Vilkul, said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.

Key Points

Overnight Russian airstrike damages Ukrainian port and injures two Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claims Ukrainian forces ‘occupying half of Verbove in counteroffensive breakthrough' Ukrainian counteroffensive pushes through Putin’s final line of defence

Fire rips through Odesa hotel after Russian missile strike

Air strikes on the Odesa region have destroyed a high-rise hotel and killed at least two people.

Early on Monday morning, Russian attacks in the region left a high-rise hotel destroyed and at least two workhouse workers dead.

An air strike on Monday night saw further attacks on the key [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) grain exporting port of Izmail, injuring two people and damaging infrastructure, the governor of the Odesa region said on Tuesday.

A [*fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fire) ripped through [*Hotel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotel) Odesa, which was not in use at the time, as a result of the strike on Monday morning.

Footage shared by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Monday morning (25 September) shows authorities working on the site.

Cargo ship leaves Ukrainian Black Sea Port

A cargo vessel has left a Ukrainian Black Sea port after loading, an industry source told Reuters, without giving any further details.

The vessel was the latest to set off from a Ukrainian Black Sea port of Chornomorsk on Tuesday since Kyiv established a temporary “humanitarian corridor” hugging the coastline.

Two bulk carriers left the port of Chornomorsk last week via the humanitarian corridor following Russia’s decision to quit a deal that had allowed safe Ukrainian exports.

After it invaded Ukraine last year, Moscow closed off the Black Sea ports from one of the world’s biggest suppliers of grain, in what Kyiv and its Western backers called an attempt to use global food supplies as blackmail. Moscow said the ports could bring in weapons.

From July 2022, the ports were been reopened under a deal brokered by the United Nations and Turkey that allowed Russia to inspect ships for arms but Moscow quit the deal a year later and reimposed the blockade, saying its demands for better terms for its own food and fertiliser exports were being ignored.

The blockage of deep sea ports has already affected Ukrainian grain exports, which have decreased by 51% so far in September to 1.57 million tons from 3.21 million tons in the corresponding period last year, Reuters reports.

Border crossing point between Ukraine and Romania closed due to overnight Russian attack

A border crossing point between Ukraine and Romania was damaged during overnight Russian drone attacks.

As the Odesa area was struck by a second night of air strikes, the governor of region said that at least two people are injured more than 30 trucks and cars were damaged in last night’s two-hour onslaught.

The Ukrainian military said operations at an international checkpoint had been suspended and vehicles were temporarily being rerouted.

Ukraine’s border service later identified the crossing point as Orlivka on the border with Romania, Reuters reports.

Ukrainian military spokeswoman Natalia Humeniuk told Radio Svoboda that the drones only struck the Ukrainian side of the border.

The State Border Guard Service of Ukraine wrote on social media: “The operation of the Orlivka ferry checkpoint has been temporarily suspended. Measures are being taken to stabilise its operation after the enemy’s night attack.

“We will report on the resumption of border crossing operations, and in the meantime, we recommend choosing other directions to cross the border, in particular, the Reni vehicle checkpoint.”

New photos of damage in Odesa following drone strikes

More photos of the aftermath of Russian attacks in the Odesa region have been released by Ukrainian authorities.

A port building, storage facilities and more than 30 trucks and cars were damaged in last night’s attack, which lasted more than two hours, Oleh Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app.

It follows previous attacks on the region early on Monday morning, which destroyed a high-rise hotel and killed at least two people.

Russia tries to rejoin UN Human Rights Council

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) wants to rejoin the [*UN Human Rights Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un-human-rights-council) ([*UNHRC*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/unhrc) ) more than 15 months after it was expelled for invading [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , according to a renewed pitch it has given to member nations.

Russia was kicked out of the UNHRC in April last year during an emergency special session called by the UN months after the invasion began.

There were 93 votes cast in favour of the move, 24 against it and 58 abstentions. Officials said the kicking out of Russia signalled the international community’s “strong censure of Moscow’s aggressive actions towards a neighbouring State”.

The country that has been isolated from the world stage after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion is now circulating a position paper to UN members as an effort to court them for their support, reported the BBC.

[*Russia tries to rejoin UN Human Rights Council*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-un-human-rights-council-ukraine-war-b2418564.html)

Polish experts confirm missile that hit grain facility, killing two, was Ukrainian

Polish experts have confirmed that the missile that killed two people at a grain facility in southern Poland in November was fired by Ukraine, Rzeczpospolita daily reported, citing sources.

On November 15 2022, a missile struck the the village of Przewodów near the Polish border with Ukraine, killing two people.

The explosion of the missile in NATO-member Poland fuelled fears that the war in Ukraine could spiral into a wider conflict by triggering the alliance’s mutual defence clause, but at the time Warsaw and NATO said that they believed that it was a Ukrainian stray, easing worries about escalation.

Reuters reported that sources with knowledge of the investigation told Rzeczpospolita that Poland had established that the missile that landed in the village of Przewodow was an S 300 5-W-55 air-defence missile fired from Ukrainian territory.

“This rocket has a range of 75 km to 90 km,” the newspaper cited a source as saying. “At that time, the Russian positions were in a place from which no Russian missile could reach Przewodow.”

Rzeczpospolita reported that the Ukrainian side has not made any material available to Polish investigators.

It quoted Lukasz Lapczynski, spokesman for the Polish prosecutor’s office, as saying the prosecutor had received the experts’ opinion but was not disclosing its content as it was confidential.

Ukraine has denied that one of its missiles had landed in Poland. Lapczynski could not immediately be reached for comment and the prosecutor’s office did not immediately respond to an emailed request.

Ukrainian MP calls for an urgent upgrade to air defences around Odesa, following repeated Russian attacks.

Ukrainian MP Kira Rudik has called for an urgent upgrade in the air defence around Odesa, following repeated Russian attacks.

She posted to social media platform X, previosuly known as Twitter, to say: “Odesa region urgently needs an air defence upgrade as Russia escalates air attacks. We must protect everyone and everything until Russians are weakened and stopped.”

Odesa region urgently needs an air defense upgrade as russia escalates air attacks. We must protect everyone and everything until russians are weakened and stopped. [*pic.twitter.com/OT7YL80lSI*](https://t.co/OT7YL80lSI) — Kira Rudik (@kiraincongress) [*September 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/kiraincongress/status/1706576455944003948?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 08:40 , Athena Stavrou Odesa’s regional authority has shared two pictures showing the damage done to the port city overnight.Power cut reported following Ukrainian drone attack08:10 , Athena Stavrou A Ukrainian drone attack on Russia’s Kursk resulted in power being cut off to about seven settlements in the region, the region’s governor Roman Starovoyt said on Tuesday. He said there were no reports of injuries.Earlier, Russia’s defence ministry said its air defence systems had destroyed one Ukraine-launched drone over the Kursk at around 5:30am. It followed reports of multiple drones being shot down over the region that borders Ukraine on Monday.There was no immediate comment from Ukraine.Overnight Russian airstrike damages Ukrainian port and injures two07:51 , Athena Stavrou A overnight Russian air strike on the key Ukrainian grain exporting port of Izmail injured two people and damaged infrastructure, the governor of the Odesa region said on Tuesday.A port building, storage facilities and more than 30 trucks and cars were damaged in the attack, which lasted more than two hours, Oleh Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app.The Ukrainian military reported shooting down 26 of the 38 Iranian-made attack drones it said were launched by Russia, Reuters reports.Moscow has intensified its air attacks on Ukrainian ports on the Danube River, including Izmail and Reni, after it quit a grain deal in July that ensured the safe export of Ukrainian grains.Separately on Tuesday, a Russian missile strike also damaged a local enterprise in the southern Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, Mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.There was no immediate comment from Russia.Why did Russia invade Ukraine?07:00 , Eleanor Noyce[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky). Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.More here:[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html) Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’06:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html). One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.Alexander Butler reports:[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html) Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Crimea’s Sevastopol05:40 , Arpan Rai[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has launched a fresh missile attack on a military airfield in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) ’s Sevastopol, officials said.Sevastopol, a vulnerable Russian target in Crimea where [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) parks its Black Sea Fleet, has come under repeated targeting in recent months as Ukraine looks to destroy [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s logistics and infrastructure on the peninsula that Russia had illegally annexed in 2014.Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield in the late hours on Monday, Russian-backed governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said on his official [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) channel early Tuesday.Sevastopol remained under an air raid alert starting around 11.30pm on Monday, as per Mr Razvozhayev’s Telegram message. It continued for an hour, covering midnight, as Russian air defence systems were activated.Arpan Rai reports here:[*Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Sevastopol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sevastopol-strike-crimea-putin-missile-attack-b2418473.html) Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees05:30 , Eleanor Noyce Zug, [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) ’s wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have fled their war-torn country.“They were bombing my city last night,” explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.“This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege,” she says.Paddy Dowling has more:[*Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/photography/switzerland-ukraine-refugees-zug-monastery-b2413698.html) Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again04:30 , Eleanor Noyce This is the heartwarming moment a six-year-old [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) girl who lost her leg to a Russian missile strike learns to ride a bike again with the help of her prosthetic leg she named Kesha.[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) posted footage of brave Marinya cycling a small tricycle through cones as she recovers from the bombing of Kherson in May last year.The girl, the first Ukrainian child to be fitted with a prosthetic since the Russian invasion, manages to complete the course solo under the watchful eye of physiotherapists at The Kyiv Institute of Rehabilitation.Barney Davis reports:[*Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-girl-leg-bike-b2417499.html) ICYMI: Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine03:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html). The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.Read more:[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html) Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs02:30 , Eleanor Noyce Flying above enemy lines, a Ukrainian reconnaissance drone sends a clear image back to soldiers hiding in a basement a few kilometres away: A Russian armoured vehicle is idling along a key logistics route, looking like easy prey in the artillery-scarred green landscape.Then, in a flash, the image disappears, and the drone operator’s screen is replaced by a jumble of black and white pixels.“Snow,” says a calm commander known by the battlefield name Giocondo, who allowed The Associated Press to follow him and his unit of drone pilots on condition of anonymity to protect their identities. High-tech warfare cuts two ways, and the Russians use electronic beams to disable the drone’s signals.More here:[*Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-soviet-bakhmut-kyiv-b2417807.html) Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracks01:30 , Eleanor Noyce[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.Arpan Rai reports:[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html) Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bidTuesday 26 September 2023 00:30 , Eleanor Noyce Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) said Monday that his country is in no hurry to ratify [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s bid to join NATO, suggesting the [*Nordic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nordic) country could face further delays in becoming a member of the military alliance.Speaking during the opening autumn session of Hungary’s parliament, Orbán told lawmakers that “nothing is threatening Sweden’s security,” and that Hungary was therefore in “no rush” to ratify its NATO accession.Orbán’s statement came after other high-ranking Hungarian officials recently suggested that Sweden’s ratification may not be put on the parliamentary agenda at all during the autumn session. On Thursday, the caucus leader of Orbán’s Fidesz party, Mate Kocsis, said he saw “little chance” that parliament would vote on the matter this year.Read more:[*Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-ap-viktor-orban-sweden-nato-b2418227.html) Chechen leader Kadyrov says he's proud of son for beating up prisonerMonday 25 September 2023 23:30 , Eleanor Noyce The leader of Russia’s Chechnya region, Ramzan Kadyrov, said on Monday he was proud of his teenage son Adam for beating up a prisoner accused of burning the Koran.Kadyrov posted the comments on Telegram, accompanied by a clip in which a young man in khaki clothing is seen punching and kicking another man cowering in a chair before wrestling him to the floor and slapping him on the head.The Chechen leader, who styles himself as a ruthless ally of President Vladimir Putin, said he was releasing the video to settle any doubts about whether the incident, first reported last month, had really taken place.“He beat him, and he did the right thing,” Kadyrov said.“Without exaggeration, yes, I am proud of Adam’s action,” he said, adding that he respected the boy for acquiring “adult ideals of honour, dignity and defence of his religion.”The prisoner, Nikita Zhuravel, had complained about the attack to Russia’s human rights ombudswoman, who said last month she had referred the issue to her counterpart in Chechnya.Kadyrov, 46, has ruled Chechnya with an iron hand since becoming president in 2007, following in the footsteps of his father Akhmat who was killed in a bomb blast in 2004. He has enjoyed generous funding from Putin to rebuild the mainly Muslim region which suffered devastation in two wars following the collapse of the Soviet Union when it tried to break away from Moscow’s control.Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data showsMonday 25 September 2023 22:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian crude oil supply surged 50 per cent this spring despite sanctions imposed by the [*G7*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g7) countries in the backdrop of continuing war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , data from commodities tracker and analytics company Kpler showed.An analysis of shipping and insurance records from August showed almost three-quarters of all seaborne Russian crude flows travelled without any western insurance in August, reported the Financial Times.The move was a lever enacted by the G7 nations, the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) and Australia which imposed a $60-a-barrel price cap last December as the coalition looked to restrict [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s ability to finance its invasion of Ukraine.Arpan Rai reports:[*Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data shows*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oil-g7-price-ukraine-war-latest-b2418040.html) How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against RussiaMonday 25 September 2023 21:30 , Eleanor Noyce Ukraine’s forces have made a number of breakthroughs against Russian positions in recent weeks as intense fighting rages on in southern and northeastern parts of the country.The counteroffensive launched by Ukraine in June had been making gradual, if slow progress, in pushing back [*Vladimir Putin’s troops from land seized since the invasion began.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-explained-b2407204.html) But at the start of the month, there were signs that Kyiv’s troops were starting to make inroads, as they broke [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s first defensive line near [*Zaporizhzhia, in the southeast of the country.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html) Joe Middleton reports:[*How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counteroffensive-war-b2418170.html) Air alert lifted in Sevastopol, missile attack thwarted -governorMonday 25 September 2023 20:43 , Eleanor Noyce Russian forces repelled an attack on the Crimean port of Sevastopol on Monday, downing one missile, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said on Telegram.Razvozhayev, citing preliminary data, said Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield.An air raid alert was subsequently lifted. Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula, annexed from Ukraine in 2014, was restored.At least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol last Friday.ICYMI: Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attackMonday 25 September 2023 20:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian forces have pounded the city of Odesa[*in an overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html) , damaging port infrastructure, a grain silo and an abandoned hotel and injuring one person.Ukrainian air defences destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles, the vast majority of them were directed at the Odesa region, Ukraine’s military said.It said Russia also fired two hypersonic missiles that destroyed grain storage facilities.Lydia Patrick reports:[*Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/odesa-ukraine-attack-russia-putin-b2417946.html) Russian military repels missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol -local officialMonday 25 September 2023 20:11 , Eleanor Noyce The Russian military is repelling a missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev said in his Telegram channel.“According to preliminary data, the air defense forces shot down one missile near the Belbek airfield,” Razvozhayev said.What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?Monday 25 September 2023 19:30 , Eleanor Noyce Tensions between Serbia and [*Kosovo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kosovo) flared anew over the weekend when some 30 heavily armed Serbs barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery in northern Kosovo, setting off a daylong gunbattle with police that left one officer and three attackers dead.Sunday’s clash was one of the worst since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. It came as the European Union and the U.S. are trying to mediate and finalize yeraslong talks on normalizing ties between the two Balkan states.There are fears in the West of a revival of the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives and left over 1 million homeless.More here:[*What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/kosovo-ap-serbia-aleksandar-vucic-vladimir-putin-b2418042.html) Sevastopol governor announces air alert, Crimean Bridge traffic haltedMonday 25 September 2023 19:21 , Eleanor Noyce The Russian-installed governor of Crimea’s Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev announced an air alert in the city on Monday evening.Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 has been temporarily suspended, the operator of the bridge said.On 22 September at least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol.Russian air strikes on Ukraine kill four, damage grain and port facilitiesMonday 25 September 2023 19:14 , Eleanor Noyce Russian air strikes and shelling killed six people in Ukraine and caused “significant damage” to infrastructure at the Black Sea port of Odesa and to grain storage facilities, Ukrainian officials said on Monday.The air attacks were part of a campaign that has made it harder for major grain producer Ukraine to export its products since Moscow quit a deal in mid-July that had enabled Black Sea shipments and helped combat a global food crisis.The strikes have intensified as Kyiv presses on with a counteroffensive in the south and east that has made slow gains but could be boosted by the delivery of U.S.-made Abrams tanks, announced on Monday by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.“Another massive attack on Odesa!”, Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said on X. “The attack resulted in the destruction of grain storage facilities and significant damage to the seaport.”Oleh Kiper, the Odesa region governor, said the facilities that were hit had contained almost 1,000 tons of grain and that the bodies of two men were found under the rubble of a warehouse where grain was stored.Ukraine‘s military said 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles were shot down overnight, most of them directed at Odesa region. The grain storage facilities that were destroyed were hit by two supersonic missiles, it said.British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skillsMonday 25 September 2023 18:30 , Eleanor Noyce British Royal Engineers sappers have given training to Ukrainian [*soldiers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soldiers) to help them disable mines, munitions and other explosive devices that are being used in the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Mines present one of the biggest obstacles to the Ukrainian Armed Forces as they seek to take back occupied land from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). Defence Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said: “Putin’s illegal invasion has left Ukraine’s fields and towns covered in deadly landmines and unexploded munitions, which presents an immediate danger to its citizens now and for years to come.“The Royal Engineers are using their world-leading experience to train Ukraine’s bomb disposal experts, who can pass on these lifesaving skills to their own recruits and ensure a safer future for all Ukrainians.”Watch:[*British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/british-ukrainian-soldiers-mine-disposal-training-b2418160.html) US, Poland sign $2 bln defense loan agreement, State Dept. saysMonday 25 September 2023 17:40 , Eleanor Noyce The United States has signed a $2 billion direct loan agreement to support Poland’s defense modernisation program, the State Department said on Monday.The foreign military financing deal advances the two countries’ defense cooperation as Poland seeks to boost its armed forces following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.“In addition to its central support role in facilitating international assistance to neighbouring Ukraine, Poland has demonstrated its ironclad commitment to strengthening regional security through its robust investments in defense spending,” the State Department said in a statement on Monday.Poland is a top U.S. ally and has topped NATO’s spending charts this year. The military alliance has forecast Poland pouring 3.9% of gross domestic product into military goals, almost twice NATO’s current 2% target.The U.S. will provide $60 million for the cost of the $2 billion loan, which will be used to help pay for Poland’s defense modernisation program with weapons purchases from the U.S., the State Department said.Russia tells Armenian PM: you are making a big mistake by flirting with WestMonday 25 September 2023 17:20 , Eleanor Noyce Russia told Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday that he had only himself to blame for Azerbaijan’s victory over Nagorno-Karabakh because he had insisted on flirting with the West rather than working with Moscow and Baku for peace.Pashinyan said in an address to the nation on Sunday that Russia had failed Armenia by not providing more help to avert the crisis over the breakaway region, adding that he would have to transform Armenia’s security alliances.Russia’s foreign ministry hit back with a strongly worded attack on Pashinyan.“We are convinced that the Yerevan leadership is making a massive mistake by deliberately trying to destroy Armenia’s multi-faceted and centuries-old ties with Russia while making the country hostage to the geopolitical games of the West,” it said.Azerbaijan seized Karabakh in a lightning offensive last week, sending thousands of ethnic Armenians fleeing into Armenia. Baku has promised to protect the rights of the roughly 120,000 Armenians who call Karabakh home but many refuse to accept its assurances.Karabakh is internationally viewed as Azerbaijani territory.Russia, which has about 2,000 peacekeepers in the region, said Pashinyan was trying to absolve himself “of responsibility for failures in domestic and foreign policy by shifting the blame to Moscow”.Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracksMonday 25 September 2023 17:00 , Eleanor Noyce Vladimir Putin wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html) US made tanks arrive in UkraineMonday 25 September 2023 16:30 , Athena Stavrou US made Abrams tanks have arrived in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday, Reuters reports.“Good news from Minister (of Defence Rustem) Umerov. Abrams are already in Ukraine and are being prepared to reinforce our brigades,” he said on the Telegram messaging app.He did not specify how many of tanks had arrived. The jet-powered American tanks were a top demand from Ukraine until Washington finally offered more than 30 of them in January. European countries have already sent dozens of German-made Leopards and some British Challengers.The delivery comes nearly four months into Ukraine’s big offensive to recapture Russian-occupied territory. Kyiv has reported slow, steady progress so far, capturing villages and ground that it says improves its position, but has yet to force a major Russian retreat as it did three times last year. Moscow says the Ukrainian offensive has already failed.“I am grateful to our allies for fulfilling the agreements! We are looking for new contracts and expanding our supply geography,” Zelenskiy added.U.S. President Joe Biden said last week that the first American Abrams tanks would be delivered to Ukraine this week.Read more from The Independent:[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html) Video captures fire ripping through Odesa hotel after Russian missile strikeMonday 25 September 2023 16:00 , Athena Stavrou Infrastructure near the [*port*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/port) of Odesa, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , was damaged as a result of a Russian drone and missile strike over the region last night, according to regional head Oleh Kiper. Mr Kiper said two people working in a warehouse that was struck had been killed.A [*fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fire) ripped through [*Hotel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotel) Odesa, which was not in use at the time, as a result of the strike. Mr Kiper said [*firefighters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/firefighters) extinguished the flames overnight.Footage shared by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Monday morning (25 September) shows authorities working on the site.Three confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in BeryslavMonday 25 September 2023 15:30 , Athena Stavrou The death toll in Beryslav has risen to three according to Ukrainian officials, following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.Earlier, the governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.He reported via the Telegram messaging app on Monday afternoon that one more person, a 55-year-old man, has also died. He added that another woman is injured and in hospital.Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine. He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.Unfortunately, it became known about the death of a 55-year-old man who was hit by enemy aircraft in Beryslav. Doctors fought for his life in the morning, but the injuries were too severe. In total, the Russian airstrike on the city claimed the lives of three people, and another woman is in the hospital. Governer of Kherson Oblast Oleksandr Prokudin via Telegram messageWhat happened in Sevastopol?Monday 25 September 2023 15:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine have claimed to have killed the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.Kyiv launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.On Saturday morning, it followed this up with another missile attack on Sevastopol, according to a local Russian-installed official.The Ukrainian military said the air force conducted 12 strikes on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, targeting areas where personnel, military equipment and weapons were concentrated. It said two anti-aircraft missile systems and four Russian artillery units were hit.The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that Admiral Viktor Sokolov was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claimMonday 25 September 2023 14:17 , Athena Stavrou Ukraiane has claimed that the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, was killed in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that he was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.Canadian parliament House speaker issues apology after accidentally honouring NaziMonday 25 September 2023 14:00 , Athena Stavrou Canada’s House of Commons gave a standing ovation to a Ukrainian veteran who had served in a Nazi SS unit during the Second World War -without realising who he was.Yaroslav Hunka, 98, was sitting in the gallery when he was described as a “Ukrainian hero” and a “Canadian hero” to applause from prime minister Justin Trudeau and president Volodymyr Zelensky.House speaker Anthony Rota has since apologised after it emerged that Hunka served in the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, a voluntary unit made up mostly of ethnic Ukrainians under Nazi command.[*Canadian parliament accidentally honours Nazi -with Zelensky and Trudeau applauding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-justin-trudeau-canada-nazi-b2418001.html) Russia tortured some victims to death, UN Human Rights Council hearsMonday 25 September 2023 13:20 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s torture methods in parts of Ukraine it occupied have been so brutal that it tortured some of its victims to death, the head of a United Nations mandated investigative body said on Monday.The Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, Erik Mose, told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva his team had “collected further evidence indicating that the use of torture by Russian armed forces in areas under their control has been widespread and systematic”.He added: “In some cases, torture was inflicted with such brutality that it caused the death of the victim.”Mose’s commission visited parts of Ukraine formerly held by Russian forces such as in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. It found that torture was committed mainly in detention centres operated by the Russian authorities, Reuters reports.The commission has previously said that violations committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture, may constitute crimes against humanity.Russia denies committing atrocities or targeting civilians in Ukraine. Russia was given an opportunity to respond to the allegations at the council hearing but no Russian representative attended.Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in UkraineMonday 25 September 2023 12:50 , Athena Stavrou Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html). The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.Read more:[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html) Devastating damage to Odesa hotelMonday 25 September 2023 12:20 , Athena Stavrou Before and after pictures of a hotel in Odesa show the devastating impact of the Russian attack.At least two people have been killed in the strike and at least one other injured as a result of the missile and drone attacks carried out last night.Odesa hotel in the harbor before and after tonight's Russian attack [*pic.twitter.com/Bc0VYksnrG*](https://t.co/Bc0VYksnrG) — Maria Avdeeva (@maria\_avdv) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/maria_avdv/status/1706175047033888878?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Two warehouse workers killed following Russian missile and drone attackMonday 25 September 2023 11:50 , Athena Stavrou Two people have been confirmed dead in Odesa following Russian missile and drone attacks overnight.Odesa’s regional governor, Oleh Kiper, wrote on the Telegram messaging service that the bodies of two people working in the grain warehouse have been found under the rubble.The warehouse, where 1,000 tons of grain was reportedly stored, was hit by Russian missiles during last night’s attacks.Suspilne, Ukraine’s state broadcaster, wrote on Telegram: “The body of a second worker who died due to a Russian missile hitting a grain warehouse was found in Odesa, said the head of the Regional Military Administration Kiper.”The governer wrote on Telegram: “I express my condolences to the family.”1,000 tons of grain stored in facilities attacked by RussiaMonday 25 September 2023 11:30 , Athena Stavrou Almost 1,000 tons of grain was stored in facilities attacked by Russia overnight in Odesa, regional governor Oleh Kiper said on Monday.The port was attacked by Russian missiles during the night. The south command of Ukraine’s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app earlier that: “The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage.”Two confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in BeryslavMonday 25 September 2023 11:15 , Athena Stavrou The death toll in Beryslav has risen to two following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning. Governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.He also confirmed via the Telegram messaging app that two more people, a 55-year-old man and a 59-year-old woman were injured.Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine.He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.Monday 25 September 2023 10:55 , Athena Stavrou Photos released by Ukraine’s Regional Prosecutor’s Office show destroyed buildings following the missile and drone strike on Odessa.One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefieldMonday 25 September 2023 10:35 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine’s advance on the southern frontline’s Verbove area has triggered “panic” for a Russian source affiliated to Vladimir Putin’s elite military unit VDV, according to a US-based war monitoring think-tank.The Ukrainian General Staff reported that its forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on 24 September and top general Oleksandr Tarnavsky said more breakthroughs are coming for the war-hit nation that is deep into a counteroffensive against Mr Putin’s troops.A VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on 22 September and continued attacking the settlement with armoured vehicles as of Sunday, as per The Institute for the Study of War think-tank.[*‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russian-military-bloggers-putin-latest-b2417846.html) Russia carries out controlled detonation of Black Sea Fleet headquarters in SevastopolMonday 25 September 2023 10:15 , Athena Stavrou Mikhail Razvozhaev, the governor of Sevastopol, warned residents that the next controlled detonation of the Black Sea Fleet building would be carried out this morning.He assured residents to not worry if they “hear loud noises” while the work is carried out at 11:25am.He wrote on the Telegram messaging app: “The next controlled detonation to collapse emergency structures in the Black Sea Fleet building will be carried out at 11:25. Work will continue until approximately 14.00. If you hear loud noises, don’t worry. The situation is under control.”On Friday, Ukrainian forces attacked the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. The attack left a serviceman missing.Drones attack Russia’s Tula region where thousands suffered power cutMonday 25 September 2023 09:55 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s Tula region came under drone attack in the early hours of Monday as the country engaged its air defence systems to repel strikes, officials said.The air defence was activated over the region bordering Moscow to its north, reported Russian news agency RIA.The latest morning attacks caused limitation of air traffic as two of Moscow’s major airports – the Vnukovo and Domedovo – trimmed down operations on Monday. Flights flying into these airports were redirected to other airports, the Tass state news agency reported.According to preliminary information, no damage or injuries were reported as a result of the attack, the Russian ministry of regional security said.[*Drones attack Black Sea, Crimea and Russian city where thousands suffered power cuts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/drones-attack-russia-s-tula-region-where-thousands-suffered-power-cut-b2417789.html) One person killed in southern Ukraine following aerial bomb attackMonday 25 September 2023 09:31 , Athena Stavrou One person has been killed and several others are injured in southern Ukraine following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.Oleksandr Prokudin, Governor of Kherson Oblast, shared the news following attacks on Beryslav.He wrote on Telegram: “In the morning, Russian aviation attacked Berislav. The occupiers dropped four aerial bombs on the city. One of them hit the building of the housing and exploitation office. So far, it is known about one dead and several injured. Another aerial bomb destroyed a residential building.”Ukrainian Ministry of Defence call Odesa attack a “pathetic attempt at retaliation"Monday 25 September 2023 09:25 , Athena Stavrou The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence has called the Russian missile attack on Odessa a “pathetic attempt at retaliation”.In a tweet, Ukraine claimed this morning’s attack was a retaliation to it’s own strike on the Russian Black Sea fleet headquarters in Sevastopol on Friday.Last week’s attack saw “dozens dead”, according to Ukraine, while Russia say only one soldier is missing.Russia has not commented on the claims that last night’s attack was a direct retaliation.russian missiles struck a hotel in Odesa last night.A pathetic attempt at retaliation for our successful hit on the russian Navy HQ in Sevastopol. Andrey Stavnitser [*pic.twitter.com/I9nlq0HYHD*](https://t.co/I9nlq0HYHD) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1706193779940581503?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Pictures show damage caused in Odesa after Russian missile attack

Ukrainian military and emergency services have issued photos of damage to infrastructure in Odesa following Russian missile attacks overnight.

Three Russian divisions actively defending against Ukrainian assaults

Elements of three Russian divisions are actively defending against Ukrainian assaults around the Orikhiv area in southern Ukraine according to US-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War.

On September 24, Ukrainian forces launched attacks in three directions within the Orikhiv salient from Robotyne against Novoprokopivka, directly into Verbove’s western side and north of Verbove.

Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 76th Air Assault Division and 7th Air Assault Division are have been deployed to defend against the assaults.

The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are defending at the southernmost point of the Ukrainian salient and are engaging Ukrainian forces in Novoprokopivka while the Russian 76th Air Assault Division have been deployed to the western flank near Kopani towards Robotyne and counterattacking there. The 7th Air Assault Division are deployed on the eastern flank near the Verbove-Novopokrovka line and are counterattacking there also.

‘Panic’ among Putin’s forces as they face “real threat” of Ukrainian forces encircling Russian forces

A Russian VDV source warned that there is a “real threat” of Ukrainian forces reaching and encircling the 56th VDV Regiment near Novofedorivka.

The source said on September 22 that Ukrainian forces were within 7km of encircling the 56th VDV Regiment and that the regiment would be in a difficult position if its commander did not make a decision to withdraw from Novofedorivka to other previously prepared positions.

Russian sources also reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

Ukrainian forces occupying half of Verbove after successful advance on Russian village

Russian sources reported to aUS-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War, that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24.

Geolocated combat footage posted on September 24 shows a Ukrainian BMP operating within Verbove’s westernmost village limits.

A Russian VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove for the first time on September 22 and continued pushing east. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

The source also accused the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) of trying to conceal Ukraine’s tactical progress in Verbove, rhetorically stating: “For how long can Shoigu’s MoD hide the breakthrough in Verbove?”

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on September 24.

Ukrainian drones destroyed by Russian air defence overnight

Russia’s defence ministry said on Monday that it’s air defence systems destroyed four Ukraine-launched drones over the northwestern part of the Black Sea and over the Crimean Peninsula.

Separately, the ministry said that four other drones were destroyed overnight over Russia’s Kursk and Belgorod regions.

According to reports, Ukraine’s drone attack on the Kursk region damaged several private houses and an administrative building

It was not immediately known whether there was any damage or injuries as a result of the reported attacks.

Russian overnight missile attack injures one in southern Ukraine

One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.

“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.

They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.

Ukraine‘s Air Force said that its air defence systems destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones, 11 cruise missiles and two hypersonic missiles that Russia launched on Ukraine overnight, vast majority directed at Odesa. Three other drones were destroyed earlier on Sunday, it said.

Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region, said that a woman was taken to a hospital after a shrapnel injury in result of the blast wave. Ukraine‘s south military command posted on its Telegram messaging app several pictures showing a high-rise building with blown up windows and severe damage to its structure.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attack.

ICYMI: What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s military has reportedly succeeded in driving [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) through [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s defensive line in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War, [*a major breakthrough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces spent the winter establishing a tough obstacle course of [*anti-tank ditches, artillery nests and other obstructions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html).

The institute could not confirm that Ukrainian troops had followed suit at the breakthrough point near Verbove but the news is nevertheless a welcome indication that Kyiv’s counteroffensive is bearing fruit as it seeks to drive the invader from its territory.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) is currently in North America seeking to shore up support from his US counterpart [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and Canadian prime minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and has already flown out of Washington with the promise of a new $325m military aid package for his country that will include air defence systems and other weaponry to help it through what promises to be another trying winter of combat.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month

Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine’s [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) province, the region’s governor reported Sunday as the war in Ukraine entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of Lvove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

Samya Kullab has more:

[*Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kherson-poland-kyiv-b2417577.html)

Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’

Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.

In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html).

One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html)

One injured as Russia fires cruise missiles on Odesa

One woman was injured and port infrastructure was damaged in southern Ukraine’s Odesa as Russia launched an overnight missile and drone attack, officials said.

A fire broke out in a non-residential high-rise in the city of Odesa, the administrative centre of the Odesa region, as a result of the attack, but was promptly extinguished, Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region in southern Ukraine, said on his Telegram channel.

The scale of the attack and the full extent of the damage were not immediately clear.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

ICYMI: Russia’s Lavrov rubbishes Ukraine peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has rubbished Ukraine’s 10-point peace plan and warned the conflict will be resolved on the battlefield if the West stuck to it.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Mr Lavrov dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible”.

In a letter to Mr Lavrov last month, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the UN could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertiliser exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

Read more:

[*Russia rubbishes Kyiv peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimea-black-sea-b2417322.html)

Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the “martyrdom” of Ukraine’s people in Russia’s war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery.

Francis appeared to refer to Poland’s recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.

Francis acknowledged he was frustrated that the Vatican’s diplomatic initiatives hadn’t borne much fruit. But he said behind the Russia-Ukraine conflict was also the weapons industry.

Nicole Winfield reports:

[*Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-ukraine-poland-russia-b2417354.html)

Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) says its missile strike on the headquarters of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s Black Sea fleet in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) successfully targeted a meeting of senior naval officials, with “top” commanders among “dozens of dead and wounded”.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.

Read more:

[*Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html)

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Putin’s Black Sea fleet commander ‘killed in attack on Crimea navy HQ’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:697X-4X01-DY4H-K00S-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Byline:** Athena Stavrou

**Highlight:** The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces also claimed that 105 others were injured

**Body**

Ukraine have claimed that the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, was killed in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.

The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that he was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the Black Sea fleet headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.

The Russian defence ministry initially said that Friday’s strike killed one service member at the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, but later issued a statement that he was missing. They have not yet commented on the latest claims.

Kyiv launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting. On Saturday morning, it followed this up with another missile attack on Sevastopol, according to a local Russian-installed official.

The strike sent plumes of black smoke billowing from the building. The special forces added that: “The headquarters are beyond repair.”

Key Points

Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claims Ukrainian forces ‘occupying half of Verbove in counteroffensive breakthrough' US ‘to give Kyiv ATACMS long-range missiles’ Ukrainian counteroffensive pushes through Putin’s final line of defence

Fire rips through Odesa hotel after Russian missile strike

Air strikes on the Odesa region have destroyed a high-rise hotel and killed at least two people.

Early on Monday morning, Russian attacks in the region left a high-rise hotel destroyed and at least two workhouse workers dead.

An air strike on Monday night saw further attacks on the key [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) grain exporting port of Izmail, injuring two people and damaging infrastructure, the governor of the Odesa region said on Tuesday.

A [*fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fire) ripped through [*Hotel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotel) Odesa, which was not in use at the time, as a result of the strike on Monday morning.

Footage shared by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Monday morning (25 September) shows authorities working on the site.

Polish experts confirm missile that hit grain facility, killing two, was Ukrainian

Polish experts have confirmed that the missile that killed two people at a grain facility in southern Poland in November was fired by Ukraine, Rzeczpospolita daily reported, citing sources.

On November 15 2022, a missile struck the the village of Przewodów near the Polish border with Ukraine, killing two people.

The explosion of the missile in NATO-member Poland fuelled fears that the war in Ukraine could spiral into a wider conflict by triggering the alliance’s mutual defence clause, but at the time Warsaw and NATO said that they believed that it was a Ukrainian stray, easing worries about escalation.

Reuters reported that sources with knowledge of the investigation told Rzeczpospolita that Poland had established that the missile that landed in the village of Przewodow was an S 300 5-W-55 air-defence missile fired from Ukrainian territory.

“This rocket has a range of 75 km to 90 km,” the newspaper cited a source as saying. “At that time, the Russian positions were in a place from which no Russian missile could reach Przewodow.”

Rzeczpospolita reported that the Ukrainian side has not made any material available to Polish investigators.

It quoted Lukasz Lapczynski, spokesman for the Polish prosecutor’s office, as saying the prosecutor had received the experts’ opinion but was not disclosing its content as it was confidential.

Ukraine has denied that one of its missiles had landed in Poland. Lapczynski could not immediately be reached for comment and the prosecutor’s office did not immediately respond to an emailed request.

Ukrainian MP calls for an urgent upgrade to air defences around Odesa, following repeated Russian attacks.

Ukrainian MP Kira Rudik has called for an urgent upgrade in the air defence around Odesa, following repeated Russian attacks.

She posted to social media platform X, previosuly known as Twitter, to say: “Odesa region urgently needs an air defence upgrade as Russia escalates air attacks. We must protect everyone and everything until Russians are weakened and stopped.”

Odesa region urgently needs an air defense upgrade as russia escalates air attacks. We must protect everyone and everything until russians are weakened and stopped. [*pic.twitter.com/OT7YL80lSI*](https://t.co/OT7YL80lSI) — Kira Rudik (@kiraincongress) [*September 26, 2023*](https://twitter.com/kiraincongress/status/1706576455944003948?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) 08:40 , Athena Stavrou Odesa’s regional authority has shared two pictures showing the damage done to the port city overnight.Power cut reported following Ukrainian drone attack08:10 , Athena Stavrou A Ukrainian drone attack on Russia’s Kursk resulted in power being cut off to about seven settlements in the region, the region’s governor Roman Starovoyt said on Tuesday. He said there were no reports of injuries.Earlier, Russia’s defence ministry said its air defence systems had destroyed one Ukraine-launched drone over the Kursk at around 5:30am. It followed reports of multiple drones being shot down over the region that borders Ukraine on Monday.There was no immediate comment from Ukraine.Overnight Russian airstrike damages Ukrainian port and injures two07:51 , Athena Stavrou A overnight Russian air strike on the key Ukrainian grain exporting port of Izmail injured two people and damaged infrastructure, the governor of the Odesa region said on Tuesday.A port building, storage facilities and more than 30 trucks and cars were damaged in the attack, which lasted more than two hours, Oleh Kiper said on the Telegram messaging app.The Ukrainian military reported shooting down 26 of the 38 Iranian-made attack drones it said were launched by Russia, Reuters reports.Moscow has intensified its air attacks on Ukrainian ports on the Danube River, including Izmail and Reni, after it quit a grain deal in July that ensured the safe export of Ukrainian grains.Separately on Tuesday, a Russian missile strike also damaged a local enterprise in the southern Ukrainian city of Kryvyi Rih, Mayor Oleksandr Vilkul said. There were no immediate reports of casualties.There was no immediate comment from Russia.Why did Russia invade Ukraine?07:00 , Eleanor Noyce[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky). Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.More here:[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html) Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’06:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html). One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.Alexander Butler reports:[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html) Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Crimea’s Sevastopol05:40 , Arpan Rai[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has launched a fresh missile attack on a military airfield in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) ’s Sevastopol, officials said.Sevastopol, a vulnerable Russian target in Crimea where [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) parks its Black Sea Fleet, has come under repeated targeting in recent months as Ukraine looks to destroy [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s logistics and infrastructure on the peninsula that Russia had illegally annexed in 2014.Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield in the late hours on Monday, Russian-backed governor Mikhail Razvozhayev said on his official [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) channel early Tuesday.Sevastopol remained under an air raid alert starting around 11.30pm on Monday, as per Mr Razvozhayev’s Telegram message. It continued for an hour, covering midnight, as Russian air defence systems were activated.Arpan Rai reports here:[*Ukraine launches new missile attack near Putin’s military airfield in Sevastopol*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/sevastopol-strike-crimea-putin-missile-attack-b2418473.html) Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees05:30 , Eleanor Noyce Zug, [*Switzerland*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/switzerland) ’s wealthiest canton, is famous for its flawless alpine vistas and low taxes. And here in the rolling hills sits Kloster Menzingen monastery, a temporary home to 160 ***Ukrainian*** [***refugees***](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/refugees) who have fled their war-torn country.“They were bombing my city last night,” explains law graduate Hana, 28, from Odesa, as she walks along the gloomy corridor in the southern wing of the convent.“This is our life, waking up to news that our towns and cities are once more under siege,” she says.Paddy Dowling has more:[*Swiss ‘millionaire’s playground’ plays host to Ukraine refugees*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/photography/switzerland-ukraine-refugees-zug-monastery-b2413698.html) Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again04:30 , Eleanor Noyce This is the heartwarming moment a six-year-old [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) girl who lost her leg to a Russian missile strike learns to ride a bike again with the help of her prosthetic leg she named Kesha.[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s [*Ministry of Defence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ministry-of-defence) posted footage of brave Marinya cycling a small tricycle through cones as she recovers from the bombing of Kherson in May last year.The girl, the first Ukrainian child to be fitted with a prosthetic since the Russian invasion, manages to complete the course solo under the watchful eye of physiotherapists at The Kyiv Institute of Rehabilitation.Barney Davis reports:[*Heartwarming moment Russian bomb victim, 6, learns to ride bike again*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-girl-leg-bike-b2417499.html) ICYMI: Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine03:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html). The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.Read more:[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html) Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs02:30 , Eleanor Noyce Flying above enemy lines, a Ukrainian reconnaissance drone sends a clear image back to soldiers hiding in a basement a few kilometres away: A Russian armoured vehicle is idling along a key logistics route, looking like easy prey in the artillery-scarred green landscape.Then, in a flash, the image disappears, and the drone operator’s screen is replaced by a jumble of black and white pixels.“Snow,” says a calm commander known by the battlefield name Giocondo, who allowed The Associated Press to follow him and his unit of drone pilots on condition of anonymity to protect their identities. High-tech warfare cuts two ways, and the Russians use electronic beams to disable the drone’s signals.More here:[*Ukraine is building an advanced army of drones. For now, pilots improvise with duct tape and bombs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-soviet-bakhmut-kyiv-b2417807.html) Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracks01:30 , Eleanor Noyce[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.Arpan Rai reports:[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html) Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bidTuesday 26 September 2023 00:30 , Eleanor Noyce Hungarian Prime Minister [*Viktor Orbán*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/viktor-orban) said Monday that his country is in no hurry to ratify [*Sweden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sweden) ‘s bid to join NATO, suggesting the [*Nordic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nordic) country could face further delays in becoming a member of the military alliance.Speaking during the opening autumn session of Hungary’s parliament, Orbán told lawmakers that “nothing is threatening Sweden’s security,” and that Hungary was therefore in “no rush” to ratify its NATO accession.Orbán’s statement came after other high-ranking Hungarian officials recently suggested that Sweden’s ratification may not be put on the parliamentary agenda at all during the autumn session. On Thursday, the caucus leader of Orbán’s Fidesz party, Mate Kocsis, said he saw “little chance” that parliament would vote on the matter this year.Read more:[*Prime Minister Orbán says Hungary is in no rush to ratify Sweden's NATO bid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/hungary-ap-viktor-orban-sweden-nato-b2418227.html) Chechen leader Kadyrov says he's proud of son for beating up prisonerMonday 25 September 2023 23:30 , Eleanor Noyce The leader of Russia’s Chechnya region, Ramzan Kadyrov, said on Monday he was proud of his teenage son Adam for beating up a prisoner accused of burning the Koran.Kadyrov posted the comments on Telegram, accompanied by a clip in which a young man in khaki clothing is seen punching and kicking another man cowering in a chair before wrestling him to the floor and slapping him on the head.The Chechen leader, who styles himself as a ruthless ally of President Vladimir Putin, said he was releasing the video to settle any doubts about whether the incident, first reported last month, had really taken place.“He beat him, and he did the right thing,” Kadyrov said.“Without exaggeration, yes, I am proud of Adam’s action,” he said, adding that he respected the boy for acquiring “adult ideals of honour, dignity and defence of his religion.”The prisoner, Nikita Zhuravel, had complained about the attack to Russia’s human rights ombudswoman, who said last month she had referred the issue to her counterpart in Chechnya.Kadyrov, 46, has ruled Chechnya with an iron hand since becoming president in 2007, following in the footsteps of his father Akhmat who was killed in a bomb blast in 2004. He has enjoyed generous funding from Putin to rebuild the mainly Muslim region which suffered devastation in two wars following the collapse of the Soviet Union when it tried to break away from Moscow’s control.Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data showsMonday 25 September 2023 22:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian crude oil supply surged 50 per cent this spring despite sanctions imposed by the [*G7*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g7) countries in the backdrop of continuing war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , data from commodities tracker and analytics company Kpler showed.An analysis of shipping and insurance records from August showed almost three-quarters of all seaborne Russian crude flows travelled without any western insurance in August, reported the Financial Times.The move was a lever enacted by the G7 nations, the [*European Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/european-union) and Australia which imposed a $60-a-barrel price cap last December as the coalition looked to restrict [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s ability to finance its invasion of Ukraine.Arpan Rai reports:[*Russian oil supplies continue to spike despite G7 price cap sanctions, data shows*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-oil-g7-price-ukraine-war-latest-b2418040.html) How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against RussiaMonday 25 September 2023 21:30 , Eleanor Noyce Ukraine’s forces have made a number of breakthroughs against Russian positions in recent weeks as intense fighting rages on in southern and northeastern parts of the country.The counteroffensive launched by Ukraine in June had been making gradual, if slow progress, in pushing back [*Vladimir Putin’s troops from land seized since the invasion began.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-counteroffensive-putin-russia-war-explained-b2407204.html) But at the start of the month, there were signs that Kyiv’s troops were starting to make inroads, as they broke [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s first defensive line near [*Zaporizhzhia, in the southeast of the country.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html) Joe Middleton reports:[*How Ukraine’s forces have surged back against Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-counteroffensive-war-b2418170.html) Air alert lifted in Sevastopol, missile attack thwarted -governorMonday 25 September 2023 20:43 , Eleanor Noyce Russian forces repelled an attack on the Crimean port of Sevastopol on Monday, downing one missile, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, said on Telegram.Razvozhayev, citing preliminary data, said Russian air defence units downed a missile near the Belbek military airfield.An air raid alert was subsequently lifted. Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula, annexed from Ukraine in 2014, was restored.At least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol last Friday.ICYMI: Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attackMonday 25 September 2023 20:30 , Eleanor Noyce Russian forces have pounded the city of Odesa[*in an overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-panic-putin-encirclement-b2417805.html) , damaging port infrastructure, a grain silo and an abandoned hotel and injuring one person.Ukrainian air defences destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles, the vast majority of them were directed at the Odesa region, Ukraine’s military said.It said Russia also fired two hypersonic missiles that destroyed grain storage facilities.Lydia Patrick reports:[*Russia unleashes hypersonic missiles on Odesa port in overnight attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/odesa-ukraine-attack-russia-putin-b2417946.html) Russian military repels missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol -local officialMonday 25 September 2023 20:11 , Eleanor Noyce The Russian military is repelling a missile attack on Crimea’s Sevastopol, the Russian-installed governor of Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev said in his Telegram channel.“According to preliminary data, the air defense forces shot down one missile near the Belbek airfield,” Razvozhayev said.What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?Monday 25 September 2023 19:30 , Eleanor Noyce Tensions between Serbia and [*Kosovo*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kosovo) flared anew over the weekend when some 30 heavily armed Serbs barricaded themselves in an Orthodox monastery in northern Kosovo, setting off a daylong gunbattle with police that left one officer and three attackers dead.Sunday’s clash was one of the worst since Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008. It came as the European Union and the U.S. are trying to mediate and finalize yeraslong talks on normalizing ties between the two Balkan states.There are fears in the West of a revival of the 1998-1999 war in Kosovo that claimed more than 10,000 lives and left over 1 million homeless.More here:[*What is behind renewed tensions between Serbia and Kosovo?*](https://www.the-independent.com/news/world/americas/us-politics/kosovo-ap-serbia-aleksandar-vucic-vladimir-putin-b2418042.html) Sevastopol governor announces air alert, Crimean Bridge traffic haltedMonday 25 September 2023 19:21 , Eleanor Noyce The Russian-installed governor of Crimea’s Sevastopol Mikhail Razvozhayev announced an air alert in the city on Monday evening.Traffic on the main bridge linking the Russian mainland with the Crimean Peninsula which Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014 has been temporarily suspended, the operator of the bridge said.On 22 September at least one Ukrainian missile struck the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea navy in Sevastopol.Russian air strikes on Ukraine kill four, damage grain and port facilitiesMonday 25 September 2023 19:14 , Eleanor Noyce Russian air strikes and shelling killed six people in Ukraine and caused “significant damage” to infrastructure at the Black Sea port of Odesa and to grain storage facilities, Ukrainian officials said on Monday.The air attacks were part of a campaign that has made it harder for major grain producer Ukraine to export its products since Moscow quit a deal in mid-July that had enabled Black Sea shipments and helped combat a global food crisis.The strikes have intensified as Kyiv presses on with a counteroffensive in the south and east that has made slow gains but could be boosted by the delivery of U.S.-made Abrams tanks, announced on Monday by President Volodymyr Zelenskiy.“Another massive attack on Odesa!”, Economy Minister Yulia Svyrydenko said on X. “The attack resulted in the destruction of grain storage facilities and significant damage to the seaport.”Oleh Kiper, the Odesa region governor, said the facilities that were hit had contained almost 1,000 tons of grain and that the bodies of two men were found under the rubble of a warehouse where grain was stored.Ukraine‘s military said 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones and 11 cruise missiles were shot down overnight, most of them directed at Odesa region. The grain storage facilities that were destroyed were hit by two supersonic missiles, it said.British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skillsMonday 25 September 2023 18:30 , Eleanor Noyce British Royal Engineers sappers have given training to Ukrainian [*soldiers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soldiers) to help them disable mines, munitions and other explosive devices that are being used in the war in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). Mines present one of the biggest obstacles to the Ukrainian Armed Forces as they seek to take back occupied land from [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). Defence Secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said: “Putin’s illegal invasion has left Ukraine’s fields and towns covered in deadly landmines and unexploded munitions, which presents an immediate danger to its citizens now and for years to come.“The Royal Engineers are using their world-leading experience to train Ukraine’s bomb disposal experts, who can pass on these lifesaving skills to their own recruits and ensure a safer future for all Ukrainians.”Watch:[*British troops train Ukrainian soldiers in mine disposal skills*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/british-ukrainian-soldiers-mine-disposal-training-b2418160.html) US, Poland sign $2 bln defense loan agreement, State Dept. saysMonday 25 September 2023 17:40 , Eleanor Noyce The United States has signed a $2 billion direct loan agreement to support Poland’s defense modernisation program, the State Department said on Monday.The foreign military financing deal advances the two countries’ defense cooperation as Poland seeks to boost its armed forces following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.“In addition to its central support role in facilitating international assistance to neighbouring Ukraine, Poland has demonstrated its ironclad commitment to strengthening regional security through its robust investments in defense spending,” the State Department said in a statement on Monday.Poland is a top U.S. ally and has topped NATO’s spending charts this year. The military alliance has forecast Poland pouring 3.9% of gross domestic product into military goals, almost twice NATO’s current 2% target.The U.S. will provide $60 million for the cost of the $2 billion loan, which will be used to help pay for Poland’s defense modernisation program with weapons purchases from the U.S., the State Department said.Russia tells Armenian PM: you are making a big mistake by flirting with WestMonday 25 September 2023 17:20 , Eleanor Noyce Russia told Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on Monday that he had only himself to blame for Azerbaijan’s victory over Nagorno-Karabakh because he had insisted on flirting with the West rather than working with Moscow and Baku for peace.Pashinyan said in an address to the nation on Sunday that Russia had failed Armenia by not providing more help to avert the crisis over the breakaway region, adding that he would have to transform Armenia’s security alliances.Russia’s foreign ministry hit back with a strongly worded attack on Pashinyan.“We are convinced that the Yerevan leadership is making a massive mistake by deliberately trying to destroy Armenia’s multi-faceted and centuries-old ties with Russia while making the country hostage to the geopolitical games of the West,” it said.Azerbaijan seized Karabakh in a lightning offensive last week, sending thousands of ethnic Armenians fleeing into Armenia. Baku has promised to protect the rights of the roughly 120,000 Armenians who call Karabakh home but many refuse to accept its assurances.Karabakh is internationally viewed as Azerbaijani territory.Russia, which has about 2,000 peacekeepers in the region, said Pashinyan was trying to absolve himself “of responsibility for failures in domestic and foreign policy by shifting the blame to Moscow”.Putin gives defence chief one month deadline to stop Ukrainian counteroffensive in its tracksMonday 25 September 2023 17:00 , Eleanor Noyce Vladimir Putin wants the Ukrainian counteroffensive halted by early October and has instructed Russia’s defence minister [*Sergei Shoigu*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/sergei-shoigu) to improve the situation, according to a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) insider cited by a US-based think-tank monitoring the war.“Putin reportedly gave Russian defence minister Sergei Shoigu a deadline of one month until early October 2023 to improve the situation on the frontlines, stop Ukrainian counteroffensives, and have Russian forces regain the initiative to launch an offensive operation against a larger city,” the Institute for the Study of War (ISW) said in an intelligence update on Sunday.It said the Russian military command is likely ordering relentless attacks with the hope of forcing the Ukrainian counteroffensive to culminate, even at a high cost to Russian military capabilities, if the claims are true.[*Putin wants Ukrainian counteroffensive halted before early October, report says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-ukraine-war-counteroffensive-russia-latest-b2417916.html) US made tanks arrive in UkraineMonday 25 September 2023 16:30 , Athena Stavrou US made Abrams tanks have arrived in Ukraine, President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday, Reuters reports.“Good news from Minister (of Defence Rustem) Umerov. Abrams are already in Ukraine and are being prepared to reinforce our brigades,” he said on the Telegram messaging app.He did not specify how many of tanks had arrived. The jet-powered American tanks were a top demand from Ukraine until Washington finally offered more than 30 of them in January. European countries have already sent dozens of German-made Leopards and some British Challengers.The delivery comes nearly four months into Ukraine’s big offensive to recapture Russian-occupied territory. Kyiv has reported slow, steady progress so far, capturing villages and ground that it says improves its position, but has yet to force a major Russian retreat as it did three times last year. Moscow says the Ukrainian offensive has already failed.“I am grateful to our allies for fulfilling the agreements! We are looking for new contracts and expanding our supply geography,” Zelenskiy added.U.S. President Joe Biden said last week that the first American Abrams tanks would be delivered to Ukraine this week.Read more from The Independent:[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html) Video captures fire ripping through Odesa hotel after Russian missile strikeMonday 25 September 2023 16:00 , Athena Stavrou Infrastructure near the [*port*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/port) of Odesa, [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , was damaged as a result of a Russian drone and missile strike over the region last night, according to regional head Oleh Kiper. Mr Kiper said two people working in a warehouse that was struck had been killed.A [*fire*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fire) ripped through [*Hotel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hotel) Odesa, which was not in use at the time, as a result of the strike. Mr Kiper said [*firefighters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/firefighters) extinguished the flames overnight.Footage shared by the State Emergency Service of Ukraine on Monday morning (25 September) shows authorities working on the site.Three confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in BeryslavMonday 25 September 2023 15:30 , Athena Stavrou The death toll in Beryslav has risen to three according to Ukrainian officials, following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.Earlier, the governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.He reported via the Telegram messaging app on Monday afternoon that one more person, a 55-year-old man, has also died. He added that another woman is injured and in hospital.Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine. He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.Unfortunately, it became known about the death of a 55-year-old man who was hit by enemy aircraft in Beryslav. Doctors fought for his life in the morning, but the injuries were too severe. In total, the Russian airstrike on the city claimed the lives of three people, and another woman is in the hospital. Governer of Kherson Oblast Oleksandr Prokudin via Telegram messageWhat happened in Sevastopol?Monday 25 September 2023 15:00 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine have claimed to have killed the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.Kyiv launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.On Saturday morning, it followed this up with another missile attack on Sevastopol, according to a local Russian-installed official.The Ukrainian military said the air force conducted 12 strikes on the Black Sea Fleet headquarters, targeting areas where personnel, military equipment and weapons were concentrated. It said two anti-aircraft missile systems and four Russian artillery units were hit.The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that Admiral Viktor Sokolov was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.Russia’s Black Sea fleet commander killed in Sevastopol missile strike, Ukraine claimMonday 25 September 2023 14:17 , Athena Stavrou Ukraiane has claimed that the commander of Russia’s Black Sea fleet, Admiral Viktor Sokolov, was killed in the missile strike on Sevastopol on Friday.The Ukrainian Special Operations Forces said in a social media update on Monday that he was among the 34 killed during the missile strike of the headquarters. They also claimed that 105 other occupiers were injured.Russia have not yet commented on the claims and have previously reported only one serviceman as missing.Canadian parliament House speaker issues apology after accidentally honouring NaziMonday 25 September 2023 14:00 , Athena Stavrou Canada’s House of Commons gave a standing ovation to a Ukrainian veteran who had served in a Nazi SS unit during the Second World War -without realising who he was.Yaroslav Hunka, 98, was sitting in the gallery when he was described as a “Ukrainian hero” and a “Canadian hero” to applause from prime minister Justin Trudeau and president Volodymyr Zelensky.House speaker Anthony Rota has since apologised after it emerged that Hunka served in the 14th Waffen-SS Grenadier Division, a voluntary unit made up mostly of ethnic Ukrainians under Nazi command.[*Canadian parliament accidentally honours Nazi -with Zelensky and Trudeau applauding*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-justin-trudeau-canada-nazi-b2418001.html) Russia tortured some victims to death, UN Human Rights Council hearsMonday 25 September 2023 13:20 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s torture methods in parts of Ukraine it occupied have been so brutal that it tortured some of its victims to death, the head of a United Nations mandated investigative body said on Monday.The Chair of the Commission of Inquiry on Ukraine, Erik Mose, told the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva his team had “collected further evidence indicating that the use of torture by Russian armed forces in areas under their control has been widespread and systematic”.He added: “In some cases, torture was inflicted with such brutality that it caused the death of the victim.”Mose’s commission visited parts of Ukraine formerly held by Russian forces such as in Kherson and Zaporizhzhia regions. It found that torture was committed mainly in detention centres operated by the Russian authorities, Reuters reports.The commission has previously said that violations committed by Russian forces in Ukraine, including the use of torture, may constitute crimes against humanity.Russia denies committing atrocities or targeting civilians in Ukraine. Russia was given an opportunity to respond to the allegations at the council hearing but no Russian representative attended.Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in UkraineMonday 25 September 2023 12:50 , Athena Stavrou Russia has [*weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html) , a war crimes dossier is set to allege.Working alongside Ukraine’s public prosecutor, leading human rights lawyers are [*preparing a report to the International Criminal Court (ICC)*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-verbove-counteroffensive-zelensky-b2416633.html). The dossier will document examples of hunger being used as a “weapon” over the course of the 18 month war, with the evidence aiming to encourage the ICC to launch a prosecution that could see Vladimir Putin indicted.Read more:[*Russia ‘weaponised food and deliberately caused starvation’ in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-starvation-war-crimes-b2417667.html) Devastating damage to Odesa hotelMonday 25 September 2023 12:20 , Athena Stavrou Before and after pictures of a hotel in Odesa show the devastating impact of the Russian attack.At least two people have been killed in the strike and at least one other injured as a result of the missile and drone attacks carried out last night.Odesa hotel in the harbor before and after tonight's Russian attack [*pic.twitter.com/Bc0VYksnrG*](https://t.co/Bc0VYksnrG) — Maria Avdeeva (@maria\_avdv) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/maria_avdv/status/1706175047033888878?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Two warehouse workers killed following Russian missile and drone attackMonday 25 September 2023 11:50 , Athena Stavrou Two people have been confirmed dead in Odesa following Russian missile and drone attacks overnight.Odesa’s regional governor, Oleh Kiper, wrote on the Telegram messaging service that the bodies of two people working in the grain warehouse have been found under the rubble.The warehouse, where 1,000 tons of grain was reportedly stored, was hit by Russian missiles during last night’s attacks.Suspilne, Ukraine’s state broadcaster, wrote on Telegram: “The body of a second worker who died due to a Russian missile hitting a grain warehouse was found in Odesa, said the head of the Regional Military Administration Kiper.”The governer wrote on Telegram: “I express my condolences to the family.”1,000 tons of grain stored in facilities attacked by RussiaMonday 25 September 2023 11:30 , Athena Stavrou Almost 1,000 tons of grain was stored in facilities attacked by Russia overnight in Odesa, regional governor Oleh Kiper said on Monday.The port was attacked by Russian missiles during the night. The south command of Ukraine’s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app earlier that: “The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage.”Two confirmed dead following Russian aerial bomb attack in BeryslavMonday 25 September 2023 11:15 , Athena Stavrou The death toll in Beryslav has risen to two following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning. Governor of Kherson Oblast, Oleksandr Prokudin, confirmed that a 73-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman died as a result of the attack.He also confirmed via the Telegram messaging app that two more people, a 55-year-old man and a 59-year-old woman were injured.Earlier, the governer said that Russian forces dropped four aerial bombs on the city in the Kherson Oblast region in southern Ukraine.He said one of them hit the housing and exploitation office building while another destroyed a residential building.Monday 25 September 2023 10:55 , Athena Stavrou Photos released by Ukraine’s Regional Prosecutor’s Office show destroyed buildings following the missile and drone strike on Odessa.One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefieldMonday 25 September 2023 10:35 , Athena Stavrou Ukraine’s advance on the southern frontline’s Verbove area has triggered “panic” for a Russian source affiliated to Vladimir Putin’s elite military unit VDV, according to a US-based war monitoring think-tank.The Ukrainian General Staff reported that its forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on 24 September and top general Oleksandr Tarnavsky said more breakthroughs are coming for the war-hit nation that is deep into a counteroffensive against Mr Putin’s troops.A VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on 22 September and continued attacking the settlement with armoured vehicles as of Sunday, as per The Institute for the Study of War think-tank.[*‘Panic’ grips Putin’s military and milbloggers over Ukraine’s advances on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russian-military-bloggers-putin-latest-b2417846.html) Russia carries out controlled detonation of Black Sea Fleet headquarters in SevastopolMonday 25 September 2023 10:15 , Athena Stavrou Mikhail Razvozhaev, the governor of Sevastopol, warned residents that the next controlled detonation of the Black Sea Fleet building would be carried out this morning.He assured residents to not worry if they “hear loud noises” while the work is carried out at 11:25am.He wrote on the Telegram messaging app: “The next controlled detonation to collapse emergency structures in the Black Sea Fleet building will be carried out at 11:25. Work will continue until approximately 14.00. If you hear loud noises, don’t worry. The situation is under control.”On Friday, Ukrainian forces attacked the headquarters of Russia’s Black Sea Fleet. The attack left a serviceman missing.Drones attack Russia’s Tula region where thousands suffered power cutMonday 25 September 2023 09:55 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s Tula region came under drone attack in the early hours of Monday as the country engaged its air defence systems to repel strikes, officials said.The air defence was activated over the region bordering Moscow to its north, reported Russian news agency RIA.The latest morning attacks caused limitation of air traffic as two of Moscow’s major airports – the Vnukovo and Domedovo – trimmed down operations on Monday. Flights flying into these airports were redirected to other airports, the Tass state news agency reported.According to preliminary information, no damage or injuries were reported as a result of the attack, the Russian ministry of regional security said.[*Drones attack Black Sea, Crimea and Russian city where thousands suffered power cuts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/drones-attack-russia-s-tula-region-where-thousands-suffered-power-cut-b2417789.html) One person killed in southern Ukraine following aerial bomb attackMonday 25 September 2023 09:31 , Athena Stavrou One person has been killed and several others are injured in southern Ukraine following Russian aerial bomb attacks this morning.Oleksandr Prokudin, Governor of Kherson Oblast, shared the news following attacks on Beryslav.He wrote on Telegram: “In the morning, Russian aviation attacked Berislav. The occupiers dropped four aerial bombs on the city. One of them hit the building of the housing and exploitation office. So far, it is known about one dead and several injured. Another aerial bomb destroyed a residential building.”Ukrainian Ministry of Defence call Odesa attack a “pathetic attempt at retaliation"Monday 25 September 2023 09:25 , Athena Stavrou The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence has called the Russian missile attack on Odessa a “pathetic attempt at retaliation”.In a tweet, Ukraine claimed this morning’s attack was a retaliation to it’s own strike on the Russian Black Sea fleet headquarters in Sevastopol on Friday.Last week’s attack saw “dozens dead”, according to Ukraine, while Russia say only one soldier is missing.Russia has not commented on the claims that last night’s attack was a direct retaliation.russian missiles struck a hotel in Odesa last night.A pathetic attempt at retaliation for our successful hit on the russian Navy HQ in Sevastopol. Andrey Stavnitser [*pic.twitter.com/I9nlq0HYHD*](https://t.co/I9nlq0HYHD) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*September 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1706193779940581503?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Pictures show damage caused in Odesa after Russian missile attack

Ukrainian military and emergency services have issued photos of damage to infrastructure in Odesa following Russian missile attacks overnight.

Three Russian divisions actively defending against Ukrainian assaults

Elements of three Russian divisions are actively defending against Ukrainian assaults around the Orikhiv area in southern Ukraine according to US-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War.

On September 24, Ukrainian forces launched attacks in three directions within the Orikhiv salient from Robotyne against Novoprokopivka, directly into Verbove’s western side and north of Verbove.

Elements of the Russian 42nd Motorized Rifle Division, 76th Air Assault Division and 7th Air Assault Division are have been deployed to defend against the assaults.

The 42nd Motorized Rifle Division are defending at the southernmost point of the Ukrainian salient and are engaging Ukrainian forces in Novoprokopivka while the Russian 76th Air Assault Division have been deployed to the western flank near Kopani towards Robotyne and counterattacking there. The 7th Air Assault Division are deployed on the eastern flank near the Verbove-Novopokrovka line and are counterattacking there also.

‘Panic’ among Putin’s forces as they face “real threat” of Ukrainian forces encircling Russian forces

A Russian VDV source warned that there is a “real threat” of Ukrainian forces reaching and encircling the 56th VDV Regiment near Novofedorivka.

The source said on September 22 that Ukrainian forces were within 7km of encircling the 56th VDV Regiment and that the regiment would be in a difficult position if its commander did not make a decision to withdraw from Novofedorivka to other previously prepared positions.

Russian sources also reported that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

Ukrainian forces occupying half of Verbove after successful advance on Russian village

Russian sources reported to aUS-based war monitoring think-tank, The Institute for the Study of War, that Ukrainian forces broke into Verbove on September 22 and continued attacking the settlement with armored vehicles as of yesterday, September 24.

Geolocated combat footage posted on September 24 shows a Ukrainian BMP operating within Verbove’s westernmost village limits.

A Russian VDV-affiliated source reported that Ukrainian forces entered Verbove for the first time on September 22 and continued pushing east. The source later reported that Ukrainian forces occupy half of Verbove as of September 24.

The source also accused the Russian Ministry of Defense (MoD) of trying to conceal Ukraine’s tactical progress in Verbove, rhetorically stating: “For how long can Shoigu’s MoD hide the breakthrough in Verbove?”

The Ukrainian General Staff reported that Ukrainian forces captured new unspecified locations near Verbove on September 24.

Ukrainian drones destroyed by Russian air defence overnight

Russia’s defence ministry said on Monday that it’s air defence systems destroyed four Ukraine-launched drones over the northwestern part of the Black Sea and over the Crimean Peninsula.

Separately, the ministry said that four other drones were destroyed overnight over Russia’s Kursk and Belgorod regions.

According to reports, Ukraine’s drone attack on the Kursk region damaged several private houses and an administrative building

It was not immediately known whether there was any damage or injuries as a result of the reported attacks.

Russian overnight missile attack injures one in southern Ukraine

One woman was injured and buildings and port infrastructure were severely damaged in Russia’s overnight missile and drone attack on the port of Odesa in southern Ukraine, Ukraine‘s military said on Monday.

“The sea port in Odesa suffered significant damage, a fire broke out in the port’s hotel, which has not been functioning for several years,” the south command of Ukraine‘s armed forces said on the Telegram messaging app.

They added that firefighters “promptly eliminated” the fire.

Ukraine‘s Air Force said that its air defence systems destroyed 19 Iranian-made Shahed drones, 11 cruise missiles and two hypersonic missiles that Russia launched on Ukraine overnight, vast majority directed at Odesa. Three other drones were destroyed earlier on Sunday, it said.

Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region, said that a woman was taken to a hospital after a shrapnel injury in result of the blast wave. Ukraine‘s south military command posted on its Telegram messaging app several pictures showing a high-rise building with blown up windows and severe damage to its structure.

There was no immediate comment from Russia about the attack.

ICYMI: What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s military has reportedly succeeded in driving [*tanks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tanks) through [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s defensive line in western [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) , according to the Institute for the Study of War, [*a major breakthrough*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-nuclear-war-putin-latest-b2416369.html) after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s forces spent the winter establishing a tough obstacle course of [*anti-tank ditches, artillery nests and other obstructions*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-dragons-teeth-b2328794.html).

The institute could not confirm that Ukrainian troops had followed suit at the breakthrough point near Verbove but the news is nevertheless a welcome indication that Kyiv’s counteroffensive is bearing fruit as it seeks to drive the invader from its territory.

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) is currently in North America seeking to shore up support from his US counterpart [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) and Canadian prime minister [*Justin Trudeau*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/justin-trudeau) and has already flown out of Washington with the promise of a new $325m military aid package for his country that will include air defence systems and other weaponry to help it through what promises to be another trying winter of combat.

Joe Sommerlad reports:

[*What are Abrams tanks and why is the US sending them to Ukraine?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/m1a2-abrams-tanks-biden-zelensky-ukraine-b2416444.html)

Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month

Russian airstrikes on Sunday killed two people and wounded three others in southern Ukraine’s [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) province, the region’s governor reported Sunday as the war in Ukraine entered a 20th month.

According to Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin, Russian forces struck the city of Beryslav, destroying an unspecified number of private houses. A woman was killed and three people were wounded, including a police officer, he said.

Another airstrike also killed a 67-year-old man in the village of Lvove, Prokudin said without specifying the type of weapons used in the attack.

Samya Kullab has more:

[*Russian airstrikes kill 2 and wound 3 in southern Ukraine as war enters 20th month*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kherson-poland-kyiv-b2417577.html)

Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russia’s youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’

Russian textbooks praising [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) are an attempt to encourage “self-sacrifice” among schoolchildren, experts have warned.

In September, [*Russia rolled out new history textbooks to schools that claim Ukraine is an “ultranationalist state” being used as a “battering ram” by the United States to “destroy Russia”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-students-book-b2389370.html).

One chapter claims that Ukrainian membership of Nato could have led to a catastrophic war and “possibly the end of civilisation”, an outcome it says Russia had to prevent.

Alexander Butler reports:

[*Inside Putin’s attempts to indoctrinate Russian youth by encouraging ‘self-sacrifice’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-children-b2415137.html)

One injured as Russia fires cruise missiles on Odesa

One woman was injured and port infrastructure was damaged in southern Ukraine’s Odesa as Russia launched an overnight missile and drone attack, officials said.

A fire broke out in a non-residential high-rise in the city of Odesa, the administrative centre of the Odesa region, as a result of the attack, but was promptly extinguished, Oleh Kiper, governor of the Odesa region in southern Ukraine, said on his Telegram channel.

The scale of the attack and the full extent of the damage were not immediately clear.

Why did Russia invade Ukraine?

[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s “special military operation” in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has been raging for one year now as the [*conflict continues to record devastating casualties*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-joe-biden-putin-speech-b2286203.html) and force the mass displacement of millions of blameless Ukrainians.

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) began the war by claiming [*Russia’s neighbour needed to be “demilitarised and de-Nazified”,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/world/putin-nuclear-satan2-russia-ukraine-b2279633.html) a baseless pretext on which to launch a landgrab against an independent state that happens to have a Jewish president in [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky).

Ukraine has fought back courageously against Mr Putin’s warped bid to restore territory lost to Moscow with the collapse of the [*Soviet Union*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/soviet-union) and has continued to defy the odds by defending itself against Russian onslaughts with the help of Western military aid.

Read more:

[*Here’s why Putin really invaded Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/why-did-russia-invade-ukraine-b2374515.html)

ICYMI: Russia’s Lavrov rubbishes Ukraine peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield

Russia’s foreign minister Sergei Lavrov has rubbished Ukraine’s 10-point peace plan and warned the conflict will be resolved on the battlefield if the West stuck to it.

Addressing the UN General Assembly on Saturday, Mr Lavrov dismissed the West as an “empire of lies” and said the plan promoted by Kyiv was “completely not feasible”.

In a letter to Mr Lavrov last month, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres outlined four measures the UN could facilitate to improve Russia’s grain and fertiliser exports in a bid to convince Moscow to return to the Black Sea deal, which allowed Ukraine to export grain through the corridor and helped address a global food shortage.

Read more:

[*Russia rubbishes Kyiv peace plan and warns conflict will be resolved on battlefield*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-crimea-black-sea-b2417322.html)

Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people

[*Pope Francis*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pope-francis) on Saturday labeled the weapons industry as being a key driver of the “martyrdom” of Ukraine’s people in Russia’s war, saying even the withholding of weapons now is going to continue their misery.

Francis appeared to refer to Poland’s recent announcement that it is no longer sending arms to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) when he was asked about the war during brief remarks to reporters while returning home from Marseille, France.

Francis acknowledged he was frustrated that the Vatican’s diplomatic initiatives hadn’t borne much fruit. But he said behind the Russia-Ukraine conflict was also the weapons industry.

Nicole Winfield reports:

[*Pope blames weapons industry for Russia-Ukraine war and 'martyrdom' of Ukrainian people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/pope-francis-ap-ukraine-poland-russia-b2417354.html)

Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) says its missile strike on the headquarters of [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s Black Sea fleet in [*Crimea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) successfully targeted a meeting of senior naval officials, with “top” commanders among “dozens of dead and wounded”.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) launched the missile attack on the fleet based in the port city of Sevastopol in occupied Crimea on Friday morning.

Ukrainian officials said the attack, targeting what is believed to be the best of Russia’s navy, was timed to coincide with the naval commanders’ meeting.

Read more:

[*Ukraine says Russia lost ‘top’ navy commanders in Sevastopol missile strike*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-sevastopol-russian-navy-deaths-b2417428.html)

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[*Russia-Ukraine war – live: Global wheat prices soar as Putin destroys 60,000 tonnes of Odesa grain*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68RC-YRV1-JBNF-W2GH-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:41

**Length:** 8518 words

**Byline:** Tara Cobham,Holly Evans and Alisha Rahaman Sarkar

**Highlight:** White Housewarns Russia preparing for possible attacks on civilian shipping vessels in the Black Sea

**Body**

Global wheat prices have soared following [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s attack in Odesa oblast that destroyed 60,000 tonnes of grain.

The attack comes after [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) pulled out of an agreement allowing the safe passage of Ukrainian produce via the Black Sea. Instead, the Russian defence ministry said it would consider all vessels sailing on the water to Ukrainian ports as “potential carriers of military cargo”.

“Flag states of such vessels will be considered to be involved in the Ukrainian conflict on the side of the Kyiv regime,” it added.

Wheat prices on the European stock exchange soared by 8.2 per cent, while corn prices were up by 5.4 per cent.

Wheat futures in the US jumped nearly 9 per cent yesterday, reportedly the highest daily rise since Russia’s invasion.

The White House said Russia’s decision to suspend participation in the grain deal will “worsen food insecurity and harm millions of vulnerable people around the world”.

Meanwhile, [*Wagner*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wagner) chief [*Yevgeny Prigozhin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/yevgeny-prigozhin) was shown in a video claiming his troops would not fight in Russia’s [*war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/war) for now.

“What is going on at the front is a disgrace that we do not need to get involved in,” Mr Prigozhin said in the purported video.

Key Points

Wagner’s Prigozhin says in video his mercenaries will not fight in Ukraine for now More than 2,000 to be evacuated from near military base on fire in Crimea ‘Hellish’ attack on Ukraine’s Odesa port – official UK MI6 spy chief says Putin 'clearly under pressure' Head of UK’s MI6 tells Russians: ‘Join us as agents to end war’ Why the expiry of the Black Sea grain deal matters

Belarus forces holding exercises with Wagner fighters on border with Poland

Belarus’ Defence Ministry said in a statement on Thursday that the country’s military were continuing exercises with fighters from Russia‘s Wagner Group mercenary force at a military base near the city of Brest, on the border with Poland.

On the ground in Ukraine, there’s one weapon troops want from the UK more than any other

On the frontline around Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, the scene of some of the war’s most intense fighting, soldiers are waiting for supplies from Britain. Without our missiles, they tell Askold Krushelnycky, advancing is more difficult – and every metre they take is “drenched in blood”.

I am standing outside a base – concealed by camouflage netting – for soldiers of the air defence units belonging to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s 10th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade. Beside me, the commander, a captain, identified by his war name “Kamin” (which translates as “rock”), reels off the impressive amount of Russian hardware his men have shot out of the sky. Eight fighter jets, six helicopters, and more than three dozen drones of varying types – worth tens of millions of pounds.

[*On the ground in Ukraine, there’s a weapon troops really want from the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-weapons-bakhmut-b2377382.html)

Ukraine says it destroyed 5 Russian missiles and 13 drones

Ukraine’s military said it shot down five cruise missiles and 13 attack drones launched by Russian forces overnight at the southern Mykolaiv and Odesa regions.

It said Russia fired 19 cruise missiles and 19 drones in total, without specifying where the other missiles struck.

US approves $1.3bn package of military aid for Ukraine

The Pentagon has announced a new $1.3bn package of long-term military aid to Ukraine, including four air defence systems and an undisclosed number of drones.

The new assistance comes on the heels of a meeting on Tuesday by defence and military leaders from around the globe to discuss ongoing efforts to give Ukraine the weapons it needs in its battle to retake territory seized by Russian forces.

Included in the aid, which is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, will be funding for four National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System, or Nasams, and munitions for them, as well as Phoenix Ghost and Switchblade drones.

More here.

[*US approves $1.3 billion package of long-term military aid for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-pentagon-russia-b2378420.html)

Ireland will stand with Ukraine for ‘as long as it takes’

Ireland’s premier has vowed to stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes after holding talks with president Volodymyr Zelensky on a visit to Kyiv.

Taoiseach 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.

More here.

[*Ireland will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, vows Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/leo-varadkar-volodymyr-zelensky-ukraine-bucha-government-b2378085.html)

Russia lost over 240,000 troops in 17 months, claims Ukraine

Russia has lost 240,010 troops in Ukraine since the onset of the invasion in February 2022, according to the Ukrainian armed forces.

At least 530 Russian soldiers were killed just over the past day, it alleged.

Russia has lost 4,129 tanks, 8,065 armored fighting vehicles, 7,134 vehicles and fuel tanks and 4,592 artillery systems, according to the Ukrainian armed forces report.

Video appears to show Wagner boss for first time since mutiny

A new video appears to show Wagner chief Yevgeny Prigozhin for the first time since he led an armed mutiny last month.

The mercenary leader is seen telling his troops they will spend some time in Belarus training its military before deploying to Africa.

Messaging app channels linked to Mr Prigozhin’s Wagner private military company said he spoke at a field camp in Belarus and ran a blurry video purported to show him there, his silhouette seen against the sky at dusk.

His gravelly voice was clearly distinguishable as he said: “Welcome guys! I am happy to greet you all. Welcome to the Belarusian land!“We fought with dignity! We have done a lot for Russia.”

Matt Drake reports.

[*Video appears to show Wagner boss for first time since armed mutiny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/wagner-chief-video-russia-prigozhin-b2378466.html)

18 injured in fresh Russian airstrike

At least 18 people sustained injuries after a Russian airstrike on the Ukrainian port city of Mykolaiv, regional governor Vitaliy Kim said.

A three-storey residential building was hit in the Mykolaiv city centre, and emergency services rescued two people from the rubble, the governor wrote on Telegram.

He had written earlier that some people had been killed but provided no further information in subsequent messages.

Zelensky says Russia ‘deliberately’ targeted grain storage

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky accused Russia of deliberately targeting grain infrastructure in Odesa oblast after a Russian strike destroyed 60,000 tonnes of grain and equipment in the port city.

“Russian terrorists absolutely deliberately targeted the infrastructure of the grain deal, and every Russian missile is a blow not only to Ukraine but also to everyone in the world who seeks a normal and safe life,” Zelensky wrote on Telegram.

The Russian attack also hit an infrastructure site and damaged recreational centres and hotels along with several buildings in Odesa, regional governor Oleh Kiper said.

Wheat prices soar as Russia attacks grain storage

Global wheat prices have soared following Russia’s attack in Odesa oblast that destroyed 60,000 tonnes of grain.

Wheat prices on the European stock exchange soared by 8.2 per cent, while corn prices were up by 5.4 per cent. Wheat futures in the US jumped nearly 9 per cent yesterday, reportedly the highest daily rise since Russia’s invasion.

The White House said the deal had been “critical” to bringing down food prices, which spiked following Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

“Russia’s decision to suspend participation in the Black Sea Grain Initiative will worsen food insecurity and harm millions of vulnerable people around the world,” said Adam Hodge, a spokesperson for the US national security council.

Wheat prices, however, were still down more than 50 per cent from their all-time high in March 2022.

Ukraine says Russia ‘blackmailing world with hunger’

Kyiv has accused Moscow of “blackmailing the world with hunger” after Russia launched its fiercest attack yet on Ukraine’s port city of Odesa, destroying 60,000 tonnes of grain and key infrastructure.

Odesa’s mayor said Tuesday night was “one of the most terrifying” for the Black Sea city since the start of president Vladimir Putin’s full-scale invasion of the country last February.

For a second consecutive night, Russia bombarded the southern coast, destroying food terminals and tens of thousands of tonnes of grain that was due to be shipped out via a United Nations-brokered grain corridor, according to Ukraine’s agriculture ministry.

The attack came after Moscow pulled out of the year-old agreement allowing the safe passage of Ukrainian produce via the Black Sea, which was mediated by the UN and Turkey to minimise the impact of the war on global food security.

Bel Trew reports.

[*Ukraine says Russia ‘blackmailing world with hunger’ after attack on Odesa port*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-odesa-putin-b2378276.html)

Russia likely to attack civilian ships in Black Sea, claims White House

The White House has warned that the Russian military is preparing for possible attacks on civilian shipping vessels in the Black Sea.

The warning comes days after Moscow suspended participation in the Black Sea Grain Deal, which allowed the export of grains from Ukraine.

Since leaving the deal, Russia has already struck Ukraine’s grain export ports in Odesa with missile and drone attacks, destroying nearly 60,000 tons of grain.

“Our information indicates that Russia laid additional sea mines in the approaches to Ukrainian ports,” White House national security council spokesperson Adam Hodge said in a statement.

“We believe that this is a coordinated effort to justify any attacks against civilian ships in the Black Sea and lay blame on Ukraine for these attacks.”

Nine injured in Russian strike on Mykolaiv

At least nine people sustained injuries in a Russian strike on the Ukrainian port city of Mykolaiv on Thursday, regional governor Vitaliy Kim said.

A three-storey residential building was hit in the Mykolaiv city centre, the governor wrote on the Telegram.

According to Odesa administration speaker Serhiy Bratchuk, two people were hospitalised after a strike on Odesa which damaged a building and caused a fire.

Ireland will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, vows Leo Varadkar

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.

Read more

[*Ireland will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes, vows Leo Varadkar*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/leo-varadkar-volodymyr-zelensky-ukraine-bucha-government-b2378085.html)

MI6 spy boss in extraordinary call for Russian officials to turn on Putin

It was an extraordinarily public recruitment drive from an [*MI6*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mi6) chief – an open invitation to senior officials in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s security establishment to join those who have defected in disgust over [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s invasion of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Sir Richard Moore wanted to send a direct message to officials and politicians in Moscow: “You know the address – come and talk to us… our door is always open… our loyalty to our agents is lifelong… our gratitude eternal… Their secrets will always be safe with us.”

Kim Sengupta has more

[*MI6 spy boss in extraordinary call for Russian officials to turn on Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-mi6-spy-putin-b2378160.html)

Video appears to show Russian mercenary chief Prigozhin for first time

A video released Wednesday appears to show Russian mercenary chief Yevgeny Prigozhin for the first time since he led a short-lived rebellion last month, and he is seen telling his troops they will spend some time in Belarus training its military before deploying to Africa.

[*Video appears to show Russian mercenary chief Prigozhin for first time since short-lived mutiny*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/belarus-ap-yevgeny-prigozhin-wagner-ukraine-b2378392.html)

Moscow’s demands to return to the Black Sea deal

President Putin stated Moscow’s position that it would return to the Black Sea grain deal as soon as the West met its five key demands. Since Monday, Russia has backed out of the deal, which allowed Ukraine to continue exporting grain to alleviate a global food crisis.

Of his five conditions, Putin enumerated:

-readmission of the Russian Agricultural Bank (Rosselkhozbank) to the SWIFT payment system;

-resumption of exports of agricultural machinery and spare parts to Russia;

-removal of restrictions on insurance and access to ports for Russian ships and cargo;

-reinstatement of a now-damaged ammonia export pipeline from Russia’s Togliatti to Odesa in Ukraine;

-the unblocking of accounts and financial activities of Russian fertiliser companies.

“If all these conditions are fulfilled, which we previously agreed on -they are not something I have invented now -but as soon as they are fulfilled, we will immediately return to the deal,” Putin said.

Wednesday 19 July 2023 21:00 , Holly Evans President Vladimir Putin has accused Western countries of perverting the expired Black Sea grain deal for their own ends, after targeting the port city of Odesa for two nights.

However, he said Russia would immediately return to the agreement if all its conditions were met.

On Monday, Moscow had quit the deal, under which it had allowed Ukraine to export grain from its Black Sea ports despite the war to alleviate a global food crisis/

It said a parallel memorandum signed at the same time, intended to facilitate its own grain and fertiliser exports in the face of the Western sanctions imposed on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine, had been ignored.

“Initially, the essence, the meaning of the grain deal has a colossal humanitarian significance,” Putin said.

“The West has completely emasculated and perverted this essence, and instead of helping countries in real need, the West used the grain deal for political blackmail, and in addition ... made it a tool for enriching transnational corporations, speculators in the global grain market.”

US announces new $1.3 billion in military aid to Ukraine

The Pentagon has announced a new $1.3 billion package of long-term military aid to Ukraine, including four air defense systems and an undisclosed number of drones.

The new assistance comes on the heels of a meeting Tuesday by defense and military leaders from around the globe to discuss ongoing efforts to give Ukraine the weapons it needs in its battle to retake territory seized by Russian forces.

Included in the aid, which is being provided under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative, will be funding for four National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System, or NASAMS, and munitions for them, as well as Phoenix Ghost and Switchblade drones.

Unlike the presidential drawdown authority that the Pentagon has used repeatedly over the past 17 months to pull weapons from its own stocks and quickly ship them to Ukraine, the USAI-funded equipment could take a year or two to get to the battlefront.

As a result, this new package will do little to help Ukraine in its current offensive, but will help in future defense of its country.

Irish prime minister meets Ukrainian actor assaulted in Dublin

Taoiseach Leo Varadkar has met with a Ukrainian actor who was assaulted in Dublin last month.

Oleksandr Hrekov was attacked in Dublin city centre shortly after performing at the city’s Abbey Theatre.

He was part of a Kyiv theatre company that had travelled to Dublin to put on a production of Translations by Irish playwright Brian Friel. The actor required stitches in hospital.

Mr Varadkar visited the Lesya Ukrainka National Academic Drama Theatre company in Kyiv on his visit to the Ukrainian capital on Wednesday.

They performed a song for the Taoiseach before presenting him with a copy of Translations signed by the cast.

Mr Varadkar then spoke with Mr Hrekov, shaking his hand and inquiring about his well-being since the assault.

Putin says Russia would return to grain deal if conditions met

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Wednesday blamed western countries he said “completely distorted” the expired Black Sea grain deal, but said Russia would “immediately” return to the deal if all its conditions for doing so were met.

Earlier on Wednesday, Russia’s Defence Ministry said Moscow would consider all vessels heading to Ukrainian ports as potential carriers of military cargoes, days after the collapse of the grain deal, which Russia had repeatedly criticized in recent weeks.

Zelensky meets with Samantha Power to discuss further support

USAID administrator Samantha Power met with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky on Wednesday afternoon to discuss further support following Russia’s strikes on the Black Sea port of Odesa.

Ukraine values active cooperation with the United States Agency for International Development, USAID. Today I met with USAID Administrator Samantha Power [*@PowerUSAID*](https://twitter.com/PowerUSAID?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). We discussed further support for Ukraine, our people, and our economy. We discussed in detail the consequences… [*pic.twitter.com/n39uxffTlQ*](https://t.co/n39uxffTlQ) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1681692445090762753?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia says it will consider Ukraine-bound ships as potential carriers of military cargo Wednesday 19 July 2023 18:00 , Holly Evans Reuters has reported that Russia’s Defence Ministry has said it would consider all ships traveling to Ukrainian ports on the Black Sea as potential carriers of military cargoes from midnight on Thursday morning Moscow time (2100 GMT on Wednesday), following the end of the Black Sea grain deal.In a statement posted on the Telegram messenger app, the ministry said that it was declaring southeastern and northwestern parts of the Black Sea’s international waters as unsafe for navigation, and that the flag states of ships travelling to Ukrainian ports would be considered parties to the conflict on the Ukrainian side.Ukraine says Russia ‘blackmailing world with hunger’Wednesday 19 July 2023 17:40 , Holly Evans Kyiv has accused Moscow of “blackmailing the world with hunger” after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) launched its fiercest attack yet on [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s port city of Odesa, destroying 60,000 tonnes of grain and key infrastructure.Odesa’s mayor said Tuesday night was “one of the most terrifying” for the Black Sea city since the start of President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) ’s full-scale invasion of the country last February.For a second consecutive night, Russia bombarded the southern coast, destroying food terminals and tens of thousands of tonnes of grain that was due to be shipped out via a United Nations-brokered grain corridor, [*according to*](https://minagro.gov.ua/news/mikola-solskij-pro-obstril-rosiyanami-morskih-portiv-lyudstvo-opinilosya-v-zaruchnikah-u-krayini-terorista-yaka-shantazhuye-ves-svit-golodom) Ukraine’s Ministry of Agriculture.Bel Trew has more [*Ukraine says Russia ‘blackmailing world with hunger’ after attack on Odesa port*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-odesa-putin-b2378276.html) Ukraine adviser says they need more weapons to defend grain suppliesWednesday 19 July 2023 17:30 , Holly Evans Volodymyr Zelensky’s chief of staff has said Ukraine needs more defensive weaponry to protect grain supplies from Russian airstrikes. Writing on Telegram, Andriy Yermak said: “Russian attacks on the infrastructure of the ‘grain agreement’ are attacks on global food security.“It is possible to protect the infrastructure -more ABM (anti-ballistic missile) systems are needed for Ukraine to repel air attacks.”It comes after Ukraine’s agriculture minister said that 60,000 tonnes of grain had been lost when Russia fired cruise missiles on the port of Odesa last night.Wednesday 19 July 2023 17:00 , Holly Evans The Irish prime minsiter Leo Varadkar has placed a soft toy at a memorial in central Kyiv for the children who have died in the conflict. The Taoiseach, who was told the youngest victim of the war was just two days old, paused for a moment’s silence before setting the toy lamb among other teddies.He has also visited the Verkhovna Rada parliament where he met with its chairman Ruslan Stefanchuk before he went to the National Museum of the History of Ukraine, where he paused to view the striking Ukrainian Motherland Monument.Ukraine setting up temporary shipping route to help grain exports after Russian strikesWednesday 19 July 2023 16:30 , Holly Evans Ukraine is setting up a temporary shipping route to maintain grain shipments after Russia quit a deal allowing Ukrainian exports via a UN-backed safe corridor in the Black Sea, Kyiv said on Wednesday.Russia attacked Ukraine’s Black Sea Odesa port for the second consecutive night on Tuesday after quitting the deal on Monday, which included Moscow revoking guarantees for safe navigation.In an official letter letter dated July 18 submitted to UN shipping agency, the International Maritime Organization (IMO), Ukraine on Wednesday said it had “decided to establish on a temporary basis a recommended maritime route”.“Its goal is to facilitate the unblocking of international shipping in the north-western part of the Black Sea,” Vasyl Shkurakov, Ukraine’s acting minister for communities, territories and infrastructure development, said in the letter.Ukraine added in the letter that it would establish shipping traffic routes close to the waters around Chornomorsk, Odesa, Pivdennyi, the three Ukrainian ports that were part of the corridor, leading up to the territorial waters and the exclusive maritime economic zone of Romania.Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy has said the Black Sea grain deal could continue without Russian participation, and Ukraine is working on options to keep its commitments on food supplies.Probe under way into image of drone in Ukraine with Ireland stamp – VaradkarWednesday 19 July 2023 16:10 , Tara Cobham Irish premier Leo Varadkar has said an investigation is underway into an image of a drone downed in Ukraine which had a "Made In Ireland" stamp on it.A post on Twitter shared the image and stated that the drone was shot down over the Mykolaiv region in southern Ukraine, near the Black Sea.Asked about the issue during a press conference in Kyiv, the Taoiseach said: "We are aware of that, and we are investigating it at the moment. We don't believe any Irish companies have evaded sanctions, but there are third parties that find ways around the sanctions, and it's really important that we crack down on that and we do take it very seriously."Former foreign affairs minister Charlie Flanagan called it "a matter of some concern".Under EU sanctions imposed on Russia, there is a ban on the sale, supply or export of drone engines and electronic components, along with other items, that may contribute to Moscow's military or the development of its defence and security sector. The list of restricted items also includes toy drones and various technologies.Putin will not attend South Africa summit – where he faced risk of arrestWednesday 19 July 2023 15:53 , Tara Cobham Vladimir Putin will not attend a summit in South Africa next month – allowing the hosts to avoid a decision whether or not to arrest the Russian leader thanks to an international warrant over war crime allegations.As a signatory to the International Criminal Court (ICC) which issued the warrant, South Africa would be expected to detain Mr Putin once he sets foot in the country. Although it has refused to honor that obligation in the past, allowing safe passage to Sudan's then-President Omar al-Bashir in 2015 who was facing allegations of war crimes against his own people.Chris Stevensonreports:[*Putin will not attend South Africa summit – where he faced risk of arrest*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-ukraine-war-crimes-south-africa-b2378198.html) Wagner’s Prigozhin says in video his mercenaries will not fight in Ukraine for nowWednesday 19 July 2023 15:11 , Tara Cobham Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin was shown in a video welcoming his Wagner fighters to Belarus and telling them they would for now take no further part in the Ukraine war.In the video, the authenticity of which Reuters could not immediately verify, a man whose voice and Russian sounded like Prigozhin's is heard welcoming his men. The video was reposted by his press service on Telegram."Welcome lads... Welcome to Belarusian soil," Prigozhin said. The video was shot after night had fallen and it was only possible to discern what looked like Prigozhin's profile."We fought honourably," said Prigozhin. "You have done a great deal for Russia. What is going on at the front is a disgrace that we do not need to get involved in."Prigozhin then tells his men to behave well towards the locals and orders them to train the Belarusian army and collect their strength for a "new journey to Africa.""And perhaps we will return to the SMO (special military operation in Ukraine) at some point when we are sure that we will not be forced to shame ourselves," Prigozhin said.A man who sounded like Dmitry Utkin, who helped found Wagner, then spoke to the men."This is not the end. This is just the beginning of the biggest work in the world that will be carried out very soon," Utkin said, before switching to English. "And welcome to hell!"Revealed: Ukraine’s chilling warning to Tony Blair about PutinWednesday 19 July 2023 14:55 , Tara Cobham Newly unsealed government documents reveal that Tony Blair received a chilling warning that Ukraine feared the West was nurturing too “rosy” a view of Vladimir Putin – two decades before Russia’s invasion.At a time when the Labour prime minister argued that Mr Putin should be given a seat at the international “top table”, having been the first Western leader to visit him in Moscow, files now issued to the National Archives show that Ukrainian officials harboured eerily prescient concerns about the relationship.In addition to revelations about Mr Blair’s fears over Italy’s Silvio Berlusconi – and admiring letters from Margaret Thatcher to the Labour prime minister – the documents show that Mr Blair was urged by aides not to snuff out Kyiv’s aspirations to join the EU, arguing that the presence of Ukraine within the alliance could form a “formidable barrier” to Russian imperialism.Andy Gregory reports:[*Revealed: Ukraine’s chilling warning to Tony Blair decades before invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/tony-blair-ukraine-putin-national-archives-b2377475.html) Video surfaces purporting to show Wagner chief welcoming men to BelarusWednesday 19 July 2023 14:35 , Tara Cobham A video purporting to show Russian mercenary boss Yevgeny Prigozhin welcoming his Wagner fighters to Belarus surfaced on Wednesday on one of his official Telegram channels.In the video, the authenticity of which Reuters was unable to immediately verify, a man whose voice sounded like Prigozhin's is heard welcoming his men, telling them to behave, and saying theie training will make the Belarusian army the second-best in the world.The video was shot after night had fallen and it was only possible to discern what looked like Prigozhin's profile.He is heard saying that his men will stay in Belarus for some time and calling what is happening on the front line in Ukraine a "disgrace" that Wagner should not take part in.British troops to use e-bikes to sneak up on enemyWednesday 19 July 2023 14:01 , Tara Cobham The British army is trialling battery-powered bikes to gain a tactical advantage on the battlefield, following Ukraine’s example in its war against Russia.During the early days of the invasion, Ukrainian troops attacked Russian tanks using Delfast e-bikes that have a range of around 200 kilometres.Now, British soldiers are experimenting with using Carl Gustaf shoulder-fired rifles from a £6,500 electric bike called the Stealth H-52, that would enable fighters to attack the enemy undetected.Maanya Sachdevareports:[*British troops to use e-bikes to sneak up on enemy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/british-troops-electric-bikes-trials-b2377902.html) Zelensky thanks Ireland for welcoming 86,000 Ukrainian refugeesWednesday 19 July 2023 13:12 , Holly Evans Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has thanked the people of Ireland for taking in thousands of ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** since the Russian invasion.He was speaking as he met with Irish premier Leo Varadkar on his unannounced visit to Ukraine.Mr Zelensky said that although Ireland was a neutral country, it did not mean they were not helping Ukraine and that he was “very grateful” the Taoiseach began his visit in Kyiv’s conflict-hit suburbs of Moschun, Irpin and Bucha. “You have seen with your own eyes the consequences of the war, the consequences of Russia’s aggression,” he said.“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.“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.”Irish prime minister insists Ukraine would win the war during Kyiv visitWednesday 19 July 2023 12:58 , Holly Evans During an unannounced visit to Kyiv, Irish prime minister Leo Varadkar told a press conference “Russia cannot be allowed to succeed.”As well as meeting Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Varadkhar visited cities and villages where scores of civillians had been killed under Russian occupation. “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.”Welcome to Ukraine, Taoiseach Leo Varadkar [*@LeoVaradkar*](https://twitter.com/LeoVaradkar?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw). Today, we will hold important negotiations -security, political cooperation, justice for Ukraine and our economic cooperation.Although Ireland is a neutral country, this neutrality does not mean indifference, and this is… [*pic.twitter.com/qzxvkXw7uV*](https://t.co/qzxvkXw7uV) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1681625066965024768?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Kremlin says it did not tell South Africa that Putin arrest would mean warWednesday 19 July 2023 12:49 , Holly Evans Russia did not tell South Africa that arresting President Vladimir Putin on an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court (ICC) would mean “war”, the Kremlin said on Wednesday.Shortly after the Kremlin’s comments, South Africa said that Putin would not attend a summit of the BRICS group of nations in South Africa in August “by mutual agreement.”The ICC has accused Putin and his children’s commissioner Maria Lvova-Belova of the war crime of deporting children from Ukraine to Russia, something Moscow rejects as false.A local court submission published on Tuesday had shown that South African President Cyril Ramaphosa had asked permission from the ICC not to arrest Putin in the context of the BRICS summit because to do so would amount to a declaration of war.Speaking before South Africa said Putin would not be attending, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that everyone understood -without having it explained to them -what an attempt to infringe on Putin’s rights would mean.Russia says it seizes railway station in Ukraine's Kharkiv regionWednesday 19 July 2023 12:32 , Holly Evans The Russian Defence Ministry said on Wednesday that its forces had captured Movchanove railway station in Ukraine’s northeastern Kharkiv region, the TASS news agency reported.Ukraine, which recaptured much of the region last September, said this week that Russia was again on the offensive there and that “heavy fighting” was taking place.Zelenskiy claims Russians ‘deliberately targeted’ grain terminals in latest strikeWednesday 19 July 2023 12:17 , Holly Evans Ukraine have accused Russia of intentionally striking grain terminals and infrastructure in the Black Sea port of Odesa, with one official saying the main aim was to stop Kyiv shipping grain from there.Russia attacked Odesa for the second consecutive night after quitting a deal on Monday that allowed the safe passage of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea.The Black Sea grain deal, which was agreed in July last year, was intended to combat a global food crisis worsened by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. “Russian terrorists absolutely deliberately targeted the infrastructure of the grain deal,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on the Telegram messaging app. “Every Russian missile -is a strike not only on Ukraine but on everyone in the world who wants normal and safe life.”On the ground in Ukraine, there’s one weapon troops want from the UKWednesday 19 July 2023 11:57 , Askold Krushelnycky in Bakhmut, Ukraine I am standing outside a base – concealed by camouflage netting – for soldiers of the air defence units belonging to Ukraine’s 10th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade. Beside me, the commander, a captain, identified by his war name “Kamin” (which translates as “rock”), reels off the impressive amount of Russian hardware his men have shot out of the sky. Eight fighter jets, six helicopters, and more than three dozen drones of varying types – worth tens of millions of pounds.We talk not far from the front lines around Bakhmut in eastern Ukraine, although Kamin has asked for the exact location to remain unsaid. The Brigade – consisting of thousands of men – was moved here last year to face some of the bloodiest, most intense fighting of Russia’s invasion so far. The job of Kamin’s four battalions? To protect from overhead assault the men, equipment, trenches and fortifications of the brigade, which stretch out across 20 miles of this key front line, as Ukraine pushes on with its counteroffensive to retake territory occupied by Russian forces.Read more:[*On the ground in Ukraine, there’s a weapon troops really want from the UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-weapons-bakhmut-b2377382.html) Russia on grain deal: ‘We can restart talks if UN meets our needs within three months’Wednesday 19 July 2023 11:25 , Tara Cobham Russia said on Wednesday the United Nations had three months to implement the terms of a memorandum that would facilitate Russian agricultural exports if it wanted Moscow to resume talks about allowing Ukrainian grain exports to restart.Russia said on Monday it was halting participation in a year-old UN-brokered deal that let Ukraine export grain through the Black Sea, complaining that promises to facilitate its own shipments of food and fertilisers had not been kept.The Black Sea deal was brokered by the UN and Turkey in July last year to help combat a global food crisis and overcome additional obstacles thrown up after Russia sent troops into Ukraine.Kyiv and Moscow are among the world's top grain exporters.Russia's withdrawal meant that the related pact to assist its own grain and fertiliser exports was also terminated, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres signalled at the time.Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Radio Sputnik on Wednesday the onus was now on the United Nations to implement the Russian deal if it wanted Moscow to return to wider talks about it helping revive Ukrainian exports.Ukraine says Russia intentionally struck grain terminals in OdesaWednesday 19 July 2023 11:05 , Tara Cobham Russia intentionally struck grain terminals and port infrastructure in Odesa in its latest air strikes, a senior Ukrainian presidential adviser said on Wednesday.Political adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said on Twitter that the attacks on Ukraine's main Black Sea port reflected Russia's attitude towards food security."The main objective is to destroy the possibility of shipping Ukrainian grain," he said after Russia attacked Odesa port for the second successive night.Russia quit a deal allowing the safe passage of Ukrainian grain through the Black Sea on Monday, a move that raised concerns in Africa and Asia about rising food prices and hunger.The deal was brokered by the U.N. and Turkey in July last year to combat a global food crisis worsened by Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and a blockade of Ukrainian ports.Andriy Yermak, head of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office, called for tighter international sanctions on Moscow and more military aid to Ukraine.Video reportedly showing destruction by Russian strikes on OdesaWednesday 19 July 2023 10:47 , Tara Cobham A video reportedly showing the destruction caused by Russian airstrikes on Ukraine’s port city of Odesa overnight has been posted on social media by the Advisor to the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine.Anton Gerashchenko also wrote in his tweet of a nine-year-old boy being among six people injured in a blast.The Independent has not been able to independently verify the footage.Massive Russian attack on Odesa last night.️X-22 and Oniks missiles hit a grain and oil terminals: reservoirs and equipment damaged, a fire started.️A blast wave damaged residential buildings. At least 6 people, including a 9 year old boy, were injured ️Ukrainian air… [*pic.twitter.com/13C0S4zsJF*](https://t.co/13C0S4zsJF) — Anton Gerashchenko (@Gerashchenko\_en) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Gerashchenko_en/status/1681574062043037696?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russians against Ukraine war should spy for the UK, MI6 boss saysWednesday 19 July 2023 10:17 , Tara Cobham The head of MI6 has urged Russians appalled by the war in Ukraine to “join hands” with his spy service and bring the bloodshed to an end.In his second speech since becoming chief of the Secret Intelligence Service in 2020, Richard Moore said there appeared little prospect of Vladimir Putin’s forces regaining momentum in Ukraine – whose long-awaited counteroffensive is now under way.Delivering his speech at the British embassy in Prague, the MI6 chief likened the current situation in Ukraine to the Prague Spring in 1968, when the Soviet Union quashed liberalising reforms.Andy Gregory reports:[*Russians against Ukraine war should spy for the UK, MI6 boss says*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/russia-ukraine-war-mi6-spy-b2377938.html) In pictures: ‘Hellish’ Russian strikes on Ukraine’s Odesa port for second nightWednesday 19 July 2023 10:00 , Tara CobhamUK MI6 spy chief says Putin 'clearly under pressure'Wednesday 19 July 2023 09:54 , Tara Cobham The head of Britain's MI6 foreign spy service said the Wagner group's mutiny attempt in June showed Russian President Vladimir Putin was under pressure, adding he was optimistic about Ukraine's counter offensive."He's clearly under pressure," Richard Moore, chief of the Secret Intelligence Service, said of Putin.Head of UK’s MI6 tells Russians: ‘Join us as agents to end war’Wednesday 19 July 2023 09:45 , Tara Cobham The head of Britain's MI6 foreign spy service appealed on Wednesday to Russians appalled by the war in Ukraine to "join hands" with his intelligence service and bring the bloodshed to an end.In his second speech since becoming chief of the Secret Intelligence Service in 2020, Moore said there appeared little prospect of Russia regaining momentum in Ukraine.Delivering his speech at the British embassy in Prague, he likened the current situation in Ukraine to the Prague Spring in 1968 when the Soviet Union quashed liberalising reforms."As they witness the venality, infighting and callous incompetence of their leaders -the human factor as its worst -many Russians are wrestling with the same dilemmas as their predecessors did in 1968," Moore said."I invite them to do what others have done this past 18 months and join hands with us. Our door is always open ... Their secrets will be safe with us and together we will work to bring the bloodshed to an end."He described Iran's decision to supply Moscow with suicide drones for the Ukraine conflict as "unconscionable" and it had provoked internal quarrels at the highest level of the regime in Tehran.Fire at Crimean military facility 'was Ukrainian operation’Wednesday 19 July 2023 09:30 , Tara Cobham A fire that broke out at a military training base in occupied Crimea was a Ukrainian operation, it has been claimed.The Kyiv Independent reported the chief of military intelligence Kyrylo Budanov said an explosion of an ammunition warehouse in the Kirovske district on Wednesday was a Ukrainian special operation."We successfully conducted an operation in occupied Crimea. The enemy hides the extent of the damage and the number of casualties," Budanov reportedly wrote on his Telegram channel.️Intelligence chief: Crimea military facility explosion was Ukrainian operation.Chief of military intelligence Kyrylo Budanov said that the explosion of an ammunition warehouse in occupied Crimea on July 19 was a Ukrainian special operation.— The Kyiv Independent (@KyivIndependent) [*July 19, 2023*](https://twitter.com/KyivIndependent/status/1681577534612176896?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Chechen leader's 'dear' nephew made head of Russia's Danone subsidiary

A nephew of Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov has been appointed the new head of Russia's Danone subsidiary after the Kremlin ordered the state to take temporary control of the French yoghurt maker's business in Russia.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, many Western companies have fled Russia and some assets have been put under state management, with close allies of President Vladimir Putin gaining day-to-day control.

According to a decree signed by Putin on Sunday, the Russian state had taken control of Danone's Russian subsidiary along with beer company Carlsberg's stake in a brewer.

Yakub Zakriev, 32, a deputy prime minister of Chechnya and the republic's agriculture minister, took the post of general director of Danone Russia on Tuesday, Interfax's SPARK database of company disclosure documents in Russia showed.

Kadyrov, a close ally of Putin, has referred on social media to Zakriev as his "dear nephew". Zakriev is the son of Zulai, one of Kadyrov's elder sisters, and studied economics at Moscow State University.

The appointment is another indicator of the scope of the transfer of assets underway in Russia since the Ukraine war triggered the biggest crisis in Moscow's relations with the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. It also indicates the considerable clout of Kadyrov, the son of former Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov who was assassinated in a 2004 bombing in Grozny.

Russia strikes Ukraine's Odesa port in 'hellish' attack, says official

Russia launched a massive air attack on the Ukrainian port of Odesa for a second night in a row, which one Ukrainian official on Wednesday described as "hellish".

However, authorities vowed they would not be intimidated, saying they would continue work to export grain.

The attack was "very powerful, truly massive," Serhiy Bratchuk, spokesperson for the Odesa military administration, said in a voice message on his Telegram channel on Wednesday. "It was a hellish night," he said, adding that details on damage and casualties would come later.

The attacks on Odesa, one of Ukraine's main ports for exporting grain, followed a pledge of retaliation by Russia after a blast on a bridge linking Russia to the Crimean Peninsula on Monday that Moscow blamed on Ukraine.

Shortly after the bridge was hit on Monday, Moscow withdrew from a year-old Black Sea grain agreement that allowed for the safe export of Ukraine's grain, a move the United Nations said risked creating hunger around the world.

"(They) are trying to scare the whole world, especially those who want to work for the grain corridor ... Ukraine, Turkey and the United Nations," said Bratchuk.

Ukraine's air force says it destroyed 37 of 63 targets in overnight attack

Ukraine's air force said on Wednesday it downed 37 out of 63 targets in a vast Russian overnight missile and drone attack, including 23 suicide drones and 14 cruise missiles.

The air force said critical infrastructure and military facilities had been attacked in the nighttime strikes, and that the main target was Ukraine's southern Odesa region.

More than 2,000 to be evacuated from near military base on fire in Crimea, says official

More than 2,000 people from the area near the Kirovske military base in Crimea will be temporarily evacuated after a fire broke out at the base, Russian-installed Governor Sergei Aksyonov of Crimea said on Telegram.

“It is planned to temporarily evacuate residents of four settlements -this is more than 2,000 people,” Aksyonov said.

Russia claims advances in Kharkiv

Moscow and Kyiv have presented vastly different accounts of fighting in northeastern Ukraine.

A Russian defence ministry spokesperson said its forces had advanced by up to 2km (1.2 miles) in the direction of Kupiansk, an important railway junction in the northeastern Kharkiv region.

Contesting the claims, Ukrainian deputy defence minister Hanna Maliar said the initiative in the area had switched to Ukrainian forces.

She said Ukrainian forces made new gains near Bakhmut in the east, a town that was captured by Russian forces in May after months of battles.

Six weeks since Ukraine launched a counteroffensive in the east and south, Russia is mounting a ground offensive of its own in the northeast.

‘Hellish’ attack on Ukraine’s Odesa port – official

Russia launched a massive air attack on the Ukranian port of Odesa for a second night in row, which one Ukrainian official described as “hellish”.

The Ukrainian authorities maintained they have not been intimidated and will continue to work to export grains.

The attack was “very powerful, truly massive,” Serhiy Bratchuk, spokesperson for the Odesa military administration, said in a voice message on Telegram.

“It was a hellish night,” he said, adding that details on damage and casualties will come later.

UN says ideas 'floated' on how to get Ukraine, Russia grain to world

There are a “number of ideas being floated” to help get Ukrainian and Russian grain and fertilizer to global markets after Moscow quit a deal allowing the safe Black Sea export of Ukraine grain, the United Nations said yesterday.

The Black Sea deal was brokered by the UN and Turkey in July last year to combat a global food crisis worsened by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. Ukraine and Russia are among the world’s top grain exporters.

Russia’s withdrawal on Monday, which included revoking its guarantees for safe navigation, also ended a pact between the United Nations and Moscow in which UN officials agreed to help Russian food and fertilizer exports reach world markets.

However, UN secretary-general Antonio Guterres “will continue to explore all possible avenues to ensure that Ukrainian grain, Russian grain, Russian fertilizer are out on the global market,” UN spokesperson Stephane Dujarric said.

“There are a number of ideas being floated,” he told reporters, without giving details.

Ukraine’s foreign minister Dmytro Kuleba said an alternative to the Black Sea grain deal had to be found and “there are very active discussions now.”

Fire breaks out at military base in Crimea, major highway closed

A fire broke out at the military training grounds in the Kirovske district on the Crimean peninsula, the Moscow-backed governor of Crimea said today.

The fire forced the closure of the nearby Tavrida Highway, Russian-installed governor Sergei Aksyonov of Crimea said on Telegram.

Earlier, the RBC-Ukraine news agency reported that there were explosions on the military training grounds.

Russian air strikes continue for second night on Ukraine port

Ukrainian air defence systems were engaged in repelling a Russian air attack on the southern port of Odesa for a second consecutive night, the region’s governor said today.

Russia struck Ukrainian ports last night, a day after pulling out of a UN-backed deal for safe Black Sea grain exports, a decision that raised concern primarily in Africa and Asia of rising food prices and hunger.

“Do not approach the windows, do not shoot or show the work of air defence forces,” Odesa governor Oleh Kiper said on Telegram

All of the eastern part of Ukraine was under air raid alerts, starting soon after midnight.

US general defends Ukraine counter-offensive, says ‘far from failure'

The top US general has warned that while Ukraine’s slow-moving counteroffensive against Russian invasion is far from failure, the war ahead will be long and bloody.

“I think there’s a lot of fighting left to go and I’ll stay with what we said before: This is going to be long. It’s going be hard. It’s going to be bloody,” General Mark Milley, chair of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told reporters.

Asked whether the counter-offensive was a failure, at least so far, he said: “It is far from a failure. I think that it’s way too early to make that kind of call.”

He confirmed that the counteroffensive will be slow, and was asked about another round of talks on arms for Ukraine.

In a delayed counteroffensive that began only a few weeks back, casualties on both sides mount and the frontlines have moved only incrementally.

The United States and other allies have spent months building Ukraine a “mountain of steel” of weaponry and training Ukrainian forces in combined arms techniques to help Kyiv pierce formidable Russian defences during its counteroffensive.

Kyiv has recaptured some villages in the south and territory around the ruined city of Bakhmut in the east, but has yet to attempt a major breakthrough across heavily defended Russian lines.

Kyiv says it is deliberately advancing slowly to avoid high casualties on fortified defensive lines strewn with landmines, and is focused for now on degrading Russia’s logistics and command. Moscow says the Ukrainian counteroffensive has failed.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

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[*Russia-Ukraine war – live: Drones shot down above Moscow after Putin’s largest aerial assault on Kyiv*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69PY-1M61-JBNF-W19B-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:19

**Length:** 9707 words

**Byline:** Tom Watling and Matt Mathers

**Highlight:** Drones target four Russian regions as flights cancelled or delayed at Moscow’s main airports

**Body**

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has targeted [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) with a major drone assault overnight, after [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) unleashed [*its most significant aerial attack on Kyiv in months*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kyiv-drones-russia-ukraine-vitali-klitschko-b2453372.html).

Russia claimed at least 20 drones were shot down as they made their way to Moscow. Whether any buildings in the Russian capital sustained damage remains unclear.

Flights were delayed or cancelled at Moscow’s main airports due to the attacks, reported the Kommersant newspaper.

“A mass drone attack was attempted overnight,” said mayor Sergei Sobyanin.

[*Ukrainian drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-crimea-moscow-b2452885.html) were shot down over four regions, including Moscow, said Russia’s defence ministry.

This comes after [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) launched [*dozens of Russian kamikaze drones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/kyiv-attack-ukraine-russia-war-b2453402.html) that were heard circling [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) early Saturday morning for roughly six hours before being intercepted by Ukrainian air defences.

Drone engines and explosions were heard overnight in Kyiv.

It was the most significant attack since May this year, in which residents were targeted at least 15 times in a month.

Key Points

Ukraine targets Moscow in major drone assault Explosions heard overnight in Kyiv as Putin launches biggest drone attack yet Vladimir Putin suffering losses ‘well behind the front line’, says UK Ukrainian troops ‘standing their ground’ in battle for Avdiivka, claims Kyiv

Ukraine targets Moscow in major drone assault

Ukrainian drones targeted four Russian regions, the country’s defence ministry said on Sunday.

It comes after Ukraine capital Kyiv faced Vladimir Putin’s biggest drone attack in the early hours of Saturday.

The drones targeted four regions: Moscow, Tula, Kaluga and Bryansk. At least 20 drones were intercepted in the Russian capital, said Moscow’s officials.

One person was left injured in Tula after an intercepted drone hit an apartment building, said the region’s governor Alexei Dyumin.

Flights were delayed or cancelled at Moscow’s main airports due to the attacks, reported the Kommersant newspaper.

One person was injured in Tula when an intercepted drone hit an apartment building, the region’s governor Alexei Dyumin said.

Russian consumers feel themselves in a tight spot as high inflation persists

The shelves at Moscow supermarkets are full of fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat. But many of the shoppers look at the selection with dismay as inflation makes their wallets feel empty.

Russia’s Central Bank has raised its key lending rate four times this year to try to get inflation under control and stabilize the ruble’s exchange rate as the economy weathers the effects of Russia’s military operation in Ukraine and the Western sanctions imposed as a consequence.

Full report:

[*Russian consumers feel themselves in a tight spot as high inflation persists*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-moscow-ukraine-latvia-b2452757.html)

Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report

[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has reportedly pardoned two Russian men convicted of [*cannibalism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cannibalism) after they deployed to the frontline in the war with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

One of the men, Denis Gorin, was recruited into a private military company after signing a contract with the Russian ministry of defence but is known to have been convicted thrice for murdering at least four people between 2003 and 2022.

He was also convicted of eating the remains of his victims along with his brother, [*reported*](https://www.sibreal.org/a/putin-pomiloval-lyudoeda-s-sahalina/32696870.html) Sibir Realii, a news outlet aligned with Radio Free Europe.

Arpan Rai reports:

[*Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-pardons-cannibals-russia-war-ukraine-b2452758.html)

Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight western ‘monopoly'

[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has announced a plan to endorse a national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence, claiming it’s essential to prevent a western ‘monopoly’.

Speaking at an AI conference in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) on Friday, Putin noted that “it’s imperative to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable and transparent artificial intelligence systems that are also safe for humans.”

“Monopolistic dominance of such foreign technology in Russia is unacceptable, dangerous and inadmissible,” Putin said.

He noted that “many modern systems, trained on western data are intended for the western market” and “reflect that part of western ethics, norms of behavior, public policy to which we object.”

During his more than two decades in power, Putin has overseen a multi-pronged crackdown on the opposition and civil society groups, and promoted “traditional values” to counter purported western influence — policies that have become even more oppressive after he sent troops into [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) in February 2022.

Monument to soldier shot dead after declaring ‘Glory to Ukraine'

A Ukrainian soldier posthumously awarded a medal after a widely shared video showed him declaring “Glory to Ukraine“ before apparently being shot dead, has been commemorated with a statue in his hometown.

The video shared in March showed a man the military later named as Oleksandr Matsievskiy, a sniper with a unit from the region of Chernihiv, saying “Slava Ukraini,” a phrase more than a century old that has become a popular expression of resistance to Russia’s February 2022 invasion.

Standing smoking a cigarette in a wooded area, carrying no visible weaponry, Matsievskiy is then seen slumping to the ground, apparently struck repeatedly by unseen shooters.

Kyiv blamed “brutal and brazen” Russians for his death, as did his mother Paraska Demchuk, 68.

“He would have taken all of them with him if he had a grenade,” she said, as she proudly showed the medal President Volodymyr Zelenskiy bestowed on her son representing the “Hero of Ukraine“ honour.

“He would say to me, ‘Mum, I will never let them capture me’,” she said through tears. “He wouldn’t just bandy words about. It was on the inside, it was like a core inside him,” she said.

Kyiv has opened a criminal investigation into the death of Matsievskiy, who was quickly talked of as a hero on social media, where many supporters posted the words “Heroyam Slava,” or “Glory to the Heroes,” the traditional response to Slava Ukraini.

A new mural has appeared in Kyiv by French artist Christian Guemi honouring Oleksandr Matsievskiy, the Ukrainian soldier who defiantly declared “Glory to Ukraine” before being gunned down by Russian troops while unarmed and captive [*pic.twitter.com/yX4WV3ElEF*](https://t.co/yX4WV3ElEF) — Business Ukraine mag (@Biz\_Ukraine\_Mag) [*April 29, 2023*](https://twitter.com/Biz_Ukraine_Mag/status/1652284456080637952?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Attack carried out on anniversary of Soviet famine 02:00 , Matt Mathers The attack on Kyiv was carried out on the morning of Holodomor Memorial Day, which commemorates the manmade famine in Soviet Ukraine that killed millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933. It is marked on the fourth Saturday in November.Speaking at the Grain from Ukraine summit on Saturday, which saw leaders and parliamentary representatives from Belgium, Ireland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Poland and Estonia meet with Zelenskyy in Kyiv to discuss global food security, the Ukrainian president warned that “if (Russian President Vladimir) Putin could arrange another Holodomor for Ukraine, he would do it.Besides Kyiv, the Sumy, Dnipropetrovsk, Zaporizhzhia, Mykolaiv and Kirovohrad regions were also targeted.Meanwhile, shelling killed one person and wounded three in the southern Kherson region, regional Gov. Oleksandr Prokudin said Saturday. According to Prokudin, the region had been shelled 100 times over the previous 24 hours.Recap: Thousands left without power after attacks01:00 , Matt Mathers At least five civilians were wounded in the hourslong assault on Kyiv, which saw several buildings damaged by falling debris from downed drones, including a kindergarten.The wounded included an 11-year-old child, according to Kyiv Mayor Vitali Klitschko. In the city’s Solomiansky district, debris left a crater in the courtyard of a residential area, and the windows of a nearby building were blown out. Residents, most of them elderly, received medical attention at the scene. Others took shelter in a nearby subway station. As people were clearing up debris and broken glass in the neighborhood, the hum of a fresh wave of drones could be heard nearby. The assault on Kyiv began at 4 a.m. local time, continuing in waves for more than six hours, and caused power outages in 77 residential buildings and 120 institutions, according to Popko. Ukraine‘s Energy Ministry said 17,000 people were without power in the Kyiv region as a result of the attack, noting that four power lines were damaged. Power was restored in the early afternoon. “Our soldiers shot down most of the drones. Unfortunately, not all,” Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky wrote on Telegram. “But we continue to work to strengthen our air defense and shoot down more.” Recap: Largest drone attack in war so far00:01 , Sam Rkaina Russia on Saturday morning launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since the beginning of its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting the Ukrainian capital, military officials said.In total, Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 74 were destroyed by air defenses, Ukraine‘s air force said.“Kyiv was the main target,” Ukrainian Air Force Commander Mykola Oleshchuk wrote on his Telegram channel.The attack was “the most massive air attack by drones on Kyiv,” said Serhii Popko, head of the Kyiv city administration. Ukrainian air force spokesman Yurii Ihnat confirmed later that the air defenses shot down 66 air targets over the capital and surrounding region throughout the morning.EU pledges 50 million for Ukraine port repairsSaturday 25 November 2023 23:00 , Sam Rkaina European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen pledged support in a letter to Zelensky that she shared on X, saying the Commission would make available 50 million euros for “quick repairs and upgrades of infrastructure in Ukraine‘s ports.”The Ukrainian president said Kyiv hoped to solve its air defence shortage through new supplies from partners and increasing its own production capacity, something on which he said there had been progress.“As of today, I can’t say details what we are making and where, but there is progress,” he said.Despite the war, Ukraine keeps feeding the world.In this effort, you can count on the EU.We continue enhancing our Solidarity Lanes and will provide €50 million to repair your port infrastructure.Together we ship Ukrainian grain to the world.[*@ZelenskyyUa*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/2kEELoEKKD*](https://t.co/2kEELoEKKD) — Ursula von der Leyen (@vonderleyen) [*November 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/vonderleyen/status/1728402568567767479?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Zelensky blames Polish and Slovak trucker protesters on internal politicsSaturday 25 November 2023 22:10 , Sam Rkaina Ukraine, a major exporter of grain, has been exporting grain via unilateral corridors through the Black sea, after Russia withdrew in July from a UN-brokered deal to allow grain ships through its blockade.Ukraine‘s current Black sea grain export corridors all start from ports in Ukraine‘s southern region of Odesa.“There are certain air defence systems... we are asking for them,” Zelensky said. “We’ve already got an answer when those systems will start to guard that region. Because there, both the corridor and the people are important.”Asked about the protests by Polish and Slovak truckers which have blocked much of Ukraine‘s road-based cargo supply in recent days, Zelensky blamed the problem on the internal politics of those countries.“I believe that there are difficulties on the border first and foremost because of certain political steps by our neighbours,” he told a press conference after the summit.Zelensky said he was confident the issue would be solved if Ukraine‘s neighbours were given “a bit of time” to deal with the dispute.Ukraine needs more air defences to protect grain exports, Zelensky urgesSaturday 25 November 2023 21:30 , Sam Rkaina Ukraine needs more air defences to protect its grain export routes as well as regions bordering Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday, as he addressed an international summit on food security in Kyiv.“There is a deficit of air defence -that is no secret,” Zelensky told the Grain from Ukraine summit, which was attended by senior officials from European countries, including Swiss President Alain Berset and Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte.The president was speaking after Russia attacked Ukraine with 75 drones overnight, the biggest drone assault of the war. The joint press conference of the three leaders was cut short by another air raid siren.Zelensky said Ukraine would be supplied by its foreign partners with vessels to accompany convoys of cargo ships from Ukraine‘s ports to guarantee their security.“I have agreements with several countries about powerful accompaniment of convoys by Ukrainians, but using (foreign) equipment,” he said.Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'Saturday 25 November 2023 20:40 , Matt Mathers[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) on Friday announced a plan to endorse a national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence, emphasizing that it’s essential to prevent a Western monopoly.Speaking at an AI conference in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , Putin noted that “it’s imperative to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable and transparent artificial intelligence systems that are also safe for humans.”Full report: [*Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-russia-moscow-ukraine-b2453029.html) Kyiv hit by biggest Russian drone attack since war beganSaturday 25 November 2023 20:00 , Matt Mathers[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) has launched its most intense drone attack on Ukraine since its full-scale invasion in 2022, targeting Kyiv.Moscow launched around 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against Ukraine, of which 71 were destroyed by air defense, Ukraine’s armed forces said.Full report: [*Kyiv hit by biggest Russian drone attack since war began*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/kyiv-drones-russia-ukraine-vitali-klitschko-b2453372.html) Swiss president pledges more support for Ukraine in Kyiv visitSaturday 25 November 2023 19:04 , Matt Mathers Swiss President Alain Berset pledged his long-term support for Ukraine on Saturday in a meeting with his Ukrainian counterpart in Kyiv, where he also attended an international summit on food security, the Swiss government said.Ukraine is hosting an international summit to promote its efforts to export grain despite an ongoing Russian blockade of the Black Sea, its main export route."In talks with President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, President Berset stressed that Switzerland stands in solidarity with Ukraine for the long haul, even in times of multiple concurrent crises," the Swiss government said. Zelenskiy said on X that mine clearing, peace proposals and the use of profits from frozen Russian assets were also discussed.Switzerland has previously said it has frozen some 7.5 billion Swiss francs ($8.5 billion) in Russian assets.Blinken to attend NATO ministerial meeting on Russia, Balkans -US State DeptSaturday 25 November 2023 18:16 , Matt Mathers US secretary of state Antony Blinken will attend a meeting of NATO foreign ministers next week to highlight the alliance’s commitment to Ukraine in its war against Russia, the State Department said on Saturday.NATO is actively supporting Ukraine and Kyiv hopes one day to join the military bloc. NATO itself is not at war with Russia, a situation that Western leaders say they want to avoid given Moscow’s vast nuclear arsenal.In a statement, the State Department also said Blinken would emphasize US support for democracy and regional stability in the western Balkans. NATO is examining a more permanent ramp up of troop numbers in the region to keep tensions under control.The meeting will take place from Nov 27-29 in Brussels.Ukraine needs more air defences to protect grain exports -ZelenskySaturday 25 November 2023 17:00 , Matt Mathers Ukraine needs more air defences to protect its grain export routes as well regions bordering Russia, President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday, as he addressed an international summit on food security in Kyiv."There is a deficit of air defence -that is no secret," Zelensky told the Grain from Ukraine summit, which was attended by senior officials from European countries, including Swiss President Alain Berset and Lithuanian Prime Minister Ingrida Simonyte.Zelensky was speaking after Russia attacked Ukraine with 75 drones overnight, the biggest drone assault of the war. The joint press conference of the three leaders was cut short by another air raid siren.He said Ukraine would be supplied by its foreign partners with vessels to accompany convoys of cargo ships from Ukraine’s ports to guarantee their security."I have agreements with several countries about powerful accompaniment of convoys by Ukrainians, but using (foreign) equipment," he said.The Ukrainian president also said Kyiv hoped to solve its air defence shortage through new supplies from partners and increasing its own production capacity, something on which he said there had been progress."As of today, I can’t say details what we are making and where, but there is progress," he said.Kyiv nursery destroyed by Russian drone strikeSaturday 25 November 2023 16:15 , Tom Watling Kyiv nursery destroyed by Russian drone strikeKyiv suffers ‘largest ever’ drone attack by Russia leaving ‘five wounded’Saturday 25 November 2023 15:45 , Tom Watling Footage has been released showing multiple air defences at work in Kyiv last night as Russia launched its largest attack on the city in months. You can see the footage below. Israel and Ukraine could face each other in a playoff final for a spot at soccer's Euro 2024Saturday 25 November 2023 14:54 , Tom Watling[*Israel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/israel) and [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , two countries currently fighting wars, could face each other for a spot at next year’s European Championship.The two national teams were put on the same qualifying path in Thursday’s playoff draw, with a possible deciding match in March.Israel was paired with Iceland, while Ukraine will face Bosnia-Herzegovina in the playoff semifinals. The 12 playoff teams will play the six semifinal matches on March 21. All three finals are scheduled for March 26.Neither Israel nor Ukraine can currently host games at home because the wars. If they both advance to the playoff final, they could meet in a neutral country.[*Israel and Ukraine could face each other in a playoff final for a spot at soccer's Euro 2024*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-israel-uefa-switzerland-b2452435.html) Top Ukraine adviser admits ‘winter will be tough’Saturday 25 November 2023 14:20 , Tom Watling A top adviser to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged during a recent visit to Washington that the days ahead “will be tough” as his country battles Russia while US support from Congress hangs in the balance, it has been revealed.President Joe Biden’s nearly $106 billion aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other needs sits idle in Congress, neither approved nor rejected, but subjected to new political demands from Republicans who are insisting on U.S.-Mexico border policy changes to halt the flow of migrants.When Congress returns this coming week from the holiday break, Biden’s request will be a top item on the to-do list, and the stakes couldn’t be higher.Failure risks delaying U.S. military aid to Kyiv and Israel, along with humanitarian assistance for Gaza, in the midst of two wars, potentially undermining America’s global standing.“It’s coming at a crucial time,” said Luke Coffey, a senior fellow at the Hudson Institute, which recently hosted Andriy Yermak, the Ukrainian president’s chief of staff, at the discussion in Washington.Yermak, during his talk in Washington, was reportedly thankful for US support but nonetheless blunt about the need for more.“I tell you the truth, this winter will be tough for us,” he said, urging Americans to back Ukraine at this “historical moment for all of us”.Zelensky hosts Swiss president for international meetingSaturday 25 November 2023 13:47 , Tom Watling Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has hosted his Swiss counterpart Alain Berset for “fruitful talks on humanitarian mine clearing, the use of profits from frozen Russian assets, and the Peace Formula”.You can view a brief video of their meeting below.I hosted Swiss Confederation President [*@alain\_berset*](https://twitter.com/alain_berset?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for fruitful talks on humanitarian mine clearing, the use of profits from frozen Russian assets, and the Peace Formula.I am grateful to Switzerland’s assistance in restoring our infrastructure and providing humanitarian aid. [*pic.twitter.com/ArEpRZzRRm*](https://t.co/ArEpRZzRRm) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*November 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1728404320603836459?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'Saturday 25 November 2023 13:00 , Tom Watling[*Russian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) on Friday announced a plan to endorse a national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence, emphasizing that it’s essential to prevent a Western monopoly.Speaking at an AI conference in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) , Putin noted that “it’s imperative to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable and transparent artificial intelligence systems that are also safe for humans.”“Monopolistic dominance of such foreign technology in Russia is unacceptable, dangerous and inadmissible,” Putin said.He noted that “many modern systems, trained on Western data are intended for the Western market” and “reflect that part of Western ethics, norms of behavior, public policy to which we object.”[*Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-russia-moscow-ukraine-b2453029.html) Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflictSaturday 25 November 2023 12:18 , Tom Watling Slovakia’s new prime minister, [*Robert Fico*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/robert-fico) , said on Friday he considers the war between [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) a frozen conflict that cannot be solved by sending arms to the Ukrainian armed forces.Fico ended his country’s military aid for Ukraine after his new government was sworn in on Oct. 25.After meeting his Czech counterpart, Petr Fiala, in [*Prague*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prague) on Friday, he said he would prefer the Russian and Ukrainian sides sit at a negotiation table. He didn’t say how to achieve that.[*Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-robert-fico-russia-prague-b2453008.html) Ukrainian civilians enjoy live music during Russian drone attack -videoSaturday 25 November 2023 11:30 , Tom Watling Ukrainian civilians gathered in the underground bomb shelters beneath Kyiv have been enjoying some live music while Russian drones swirled above the capital.Russia launched its most significant long range drone attack in months overnight, lasting roughly six hours.While Russian/Iranian drones are hitting apartment buildings all over the city, 50 meters below ground. [*pic.twitter.com/ttuVVhn9Z3*](https://t.co/ttuVVhn9Z3) — Jay in Kyiv (@JayinKyiv) [*November 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/JayinKyiv/status/1728278154207465675?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in fierce battle for AvdiivkaSaturday 25 November 2023 11:00 , Tom Watling[*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s forces [*have halted their fighting*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-latest-bakhmut-avdiivka-putin-b2451466.html) at hotspots on the frontline as [*the war in Ukraine entered*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-kyiv-latest-news-b2452723.html) its 22nd month on Friday.Russian forces continued to pound the battered Ukrainian town of Avdiivka but were unable to breach the defence of Ukraine’s troops as heavy fighting engulfed [*Bakhmut*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bakhmut) , military officials said.“Basically, nothing has changed. Everything is very tough. As regards the city, there is an average number of [*eight to 16 to 18 attacks per day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/avdiivka-battle-ukraine-russia-losses-b2446766.html). Sometimes 30. We don’t have the time to count them,” said Vitaliy Barabash, head of Avdiivka’s military administration.[*Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in battle for Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-avdiivka-bakhmut-latest-b2452727.html) Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – reportSaturday 25 November 2023 10:30 , Tom Watling[*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) has reportedly pardoned two Russian men convicted of [*cannibalism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/cannibalism) after they deployed to the frontline in the war with [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). One of the men, Denis Gorin, was recruited into a private military company after signing a contract with the Russian ministry of defence but is known to have been convicted thrice for murdering at least four people between 2003 and 2022. He was also convicted of eating the remains of his victims along with his brother, [*reported*](https://www.sibreal.org/a/putin-pomiloval-lyudoeda-s-sahalina/32696870.html) Sibir Realii, a news outlet aligned with Radio Free Europe.He is the 17th person convicted for murder to be pardoned by the Russian president between 2022 and 2023. “At the trial, he (Gorin) admitted that they ate the murdered man who was their acquaintance,” said his neighbour Dmitry Vladimirovich.[*Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-pardons-cannibals-russia-war-ukraine-b2452758.html) Swiss president arrives in Kyiv during Russian drone attackSaturday 25 November 2023 10:00 , Tom Watling The president of Switzerland has arrived in the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv to meet Volodymyr Zelensky and attend an international summit on food security as Russian drones were intercepted over the capital.Alain Berset posted a picture of his arrival at Kyiv’s main train station this morning.He had written earlier that he had arrived in the capital.“Arrival in Kyiv where I will be attending the international summit on food security today and meeting President Zelensky,” he wrote.“The focus is on the impact of Russia’s war of aggression on global food security and Switzerland’s long-term support for Ukraine.”Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern citySaturday 25 November 2023 09:30 , Tom Watling Ukraine launched one of the biggest drone attacks on the Moscow-annexed [*Crimean*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/crimea) Peninsula since the full-scale war that started with Russia’s invasion 21 months ago, Russian officials said Friday.At the same time, Ukrainian officials reported that the Kremlin’s forces escalated their weekslong and costly attempt to storm Avdiivka, a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine.The stepped-up efforts came as both sides are keen to show they are not deadlocked as the fighting approaches 2024. Neither side has gained much ground despite a Ukrainian counteroffensive that began in June, and analysts predict the war will be a long one.[*Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-crimea-moscow-b2452885.html) Below are some photos from Kyiv following the Russian drone attackSaturday 25 November 2023 08:55 , Tom Watling Here are some of the latest photos from Kyiv after Russia’s six-hour drone attack. World’s focus must not leave Ukraine, warns former NATO chiefSaturday 25 November 2023 08:26 , Tom Watling The world's attention must "stay on Ukraine" as the Russian invasion continues, a former Nato secretary-general has warned.Lord George Robertson said Russian President Vladimir Putin would be emboldened to extend the attacks beyond Ukraine if foreign governments stop providing weaponry.Lord Robertson, who was in the top Nato role between 1999 and 2003, said: “I think it is inevitable that because we're seeing the television from Gaza every day, that people are paying less attention to Ukraine, but that must change.“We have got to keep the world's attention focused on Ukraine because they are involved in a fight with Russia that has got huge implications for all of us as well.“Vladimir Putin is not simply interested in subjugating Ukraine. He has got a much bigger agenda in the future, and if he succeeds in Ukraine, who knows where he is going to stop.”The conflict in Ukraine has now surpassed 640 days -the invasion began in February 2022 -and Lord Robertson urged Nato member states to continue to press Russia amid Mr Putin's "miserable failure".Russia ‘proud of its ability to kill people’ -ZelenskySaturday 25 November 2023 07:58 , Tom Watling Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has accused Russia of being “proud of its ability to kill people” after it launched a significant drone attack against Kyiv this morning during the remembrance day for those killed in the Holodomor genocide.As the fourth Saturday of November, today marks the Day of Memory for Victims of the Holodomor in Ukraine, honouring those killed in a famine in Ukraine manufactured by Joseph Stalin and the Soviet Union in the 1930s.Estimates suggest that more than three million people, many of whom were farmers and rural villagers, were killed by forced starvation.Russia launched around 70 "Shahed" drones at Ukraine precisely on the eve of the Holodomor genocide commemoration day. Russia’s leadership appears to be proud of its ability to kill people.Our warriors shot down the majority of the drones, but not all of them. We keep working…— Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*November 25, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1728312139910189161?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) At least 5 injured in drone strikes on Kyiv, local mayor saysSaturday 25 November 2023 07:48 , Tom Watling At least five people have been injured as a result of Russian drone attacks on Kyiv, including an 11-year-old child, the local mayor has claimed.Vitali Klitschko said all five were “receiving medical assistance on the spot or in the trauma centre, without further hospitalistion”.He wrote on Telegram: “The enemy continues to terrorise. To intimidate us, sow panic and decay in our cities and towns.“But it won’t be like that! We work for the livelihood of communities, we support each other, together we bring Victory closer!”Russia fire ‘record number’ of drones overnightSaturday 25 November 2023 07:31 , Tom Watling Russia has fired nearly 100 Iranian-made kamikaze drones overnight, mainly on the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. Local reports suggested air raid sirens began at around 3am. Mayor Vilati Klitschko wrote at 3.25: “It’s loud in the capital. Several more groups of ‘Shaheeds’ (Iranian drones) are going to Kyiv. Stay in shelters!”Ukrainian air force commander Mykola Oleschuk said roughly 75 Shahed-131 and 136s were launched overnight, with at least 71 “destroyed by air defence”.“On this night, November 25, 2023, the enemy released a record number of strike UAVs over Ukraine!” he wrote on Telegram. “The main direction of the attack is Kyiv!”Explosions heard overnight in Kyiv as Putin launches biggest drone attack yetSaturday 25 November 2023 07:11 , Anuj Pant Drone engines and explosions were heard overnight in Ukraine’s capital Kyiv in what the country’s air force said was Vladimir Putin’s biggest drone attack yet.The air force said Iran-made Shahed drones were used in the assault that mainly targeted Kyiv, and hit at least three of the capital’s districts.The mass drone attack struck apartment complexes and falling drone fragments set fire to a children’s nursery, said Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko.Two people were also injured in the attack due to the falling drone fragments.Ukraine removes 3 Greek companies from 'international sponsors of war' listSaturday 25 November 2023 07:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine’s National Agency on Corruption Prevention (NAZK) fully removed three Greek shipping companies from the international sponsors of war list after they stopped shipping Russian oil, the NAZK announced on 24 November.Thenamaris Ships Management Inc., Minerva Marine, and TMS Tankers Ltd ceased transporting Russian oil in recent weeks amid tightening U.S. sanctions.“The National Agency is open to cooperation with international business and is ready to consult on the steps necessary to de-list each individual company,” the NAZK said.Mass drone attack strikes KyivSaturday 25 November 2023 06:18 , Anuj Pant A mass drone attack targeted many districts in Ukraine’s capital Kyiv on Saturday, reported Reuters, citing an eyewitness. Mayor Vitali Klitschko on Telegram said two people were injured by fragments from downed drones that hit residential areas and other buildings in at least three Kyiv districts.The fragments from one intercepted drone started a fire at a children’s nursery, said the mayor.Zelensky discusses ammunitation supply with LativaSaturday 25 November 2023 06:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has discussed the production of ammunition supply for his country’s war against Russia with Latvia.“We talked about the defense support of Ukraine, our soldiers. About the stability of such support. We discussed the production and supply of ammunition -artillery, caliber 155 -as well as the issue of “Medevacs” -special armored vehicles for evacuating our wounded soldiers,” Zelensky said.Finland shuts nearly all crossings to RussiaSaturday 25 November 2023 05:00 , Alexander Butler Finland has temporarily closed all but one of its eight passenger crossings to Russia, its border force has announced.“All border crossings and application for international protection at the eastern border is centralised at Raja-Jooseppi starting on 24 November 2023. The decision will remain in force until 23 December 2023,” it said in X.More than 700 migrants from countries such as Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, and Somalia have entered Finland over the past weeks via Russia.All border crossings and application for international protection at the eastern border is centralised at Raja-Jooseppi starting on 24 November 2023.The decision will remain in force until 23 December 2023.More information on our website: [*https://t.co/E1KJe6EV9q*](https://t.co/E1KJe6EV9q) [*pic.twitter.com/jGFM4JdOen*](https://t.co/jGFM4JdOen) — Rajavartiolaitos (@rajavartijat) [*November 23, 2023*](https://twitter.com/rajavartijat/status/1727664338628997280?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine discusses ‘unity’ with Netherlands, Zelensky saysSaturday 25 November 2023 04:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said he discussed the importance of maintaining “European unity” with the Netherlands.“During our call, Mark Rutte and I discussed efforts to maintain European unity. We also discussed the importance of continuing military and financial assistance to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression. “In this regard, the Netherlands’ recent decision to provide Ukraine with an additional €2bn for 2024 is the best signal to other partners. “I am grateful to the Netherlands for all of its assistance, as well as for its support of Ukraine’s Peace Formula and the humanitarian initiative,” Zelensky said on X.During our call, [*@MinPres*](https://twitter.com/MinPres?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Mark Rutte and I discussed efforts to maintain European unity.We also discussed the importance of continuing military and financial assistance to Ukraine in its fight against Russian aggression.In this regard, the Netherlands' recent decision to… [*pic.twitter.com/kjNPF4DD7M*](https://t.co/kjNPF4DD7M) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1728047091841155454?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Up to 25,000 tons of graine destined for Nigeria, Kyiv saysSaturday 25 November 2023 03:00 , Alexander Butler Up to 25,000 tons of grain will be sent to Nigeria from Ukraine, according to Ukraine’s foreign ministry.“In cooperation with UN WFP, in a few days, the loading of vessel with 25K tons of grain to Nigeria will start, as part of the #GrainFromUkraine initiative. “Ukraine is focused on expanding the list of recipient states and is actively considering supplying 12,5K tons to Somalia,” Ukraine’s foreign ministry said.In cooperation with UN [*@WFP*](https://twitter.com/WFP?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) , in a few days, the loading of vessel with 25K tons of grain to [*#Nigeria*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Nigeria?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) will start, as part of the [*#GrainFromUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/GrainFromUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) initiative.Ukraine is focused on expanding the list of recipient states and is actively considering supplying 12,5K tons to Somalia. [*pic.twitter.com/25PVsomHM2*](https://t.co/25PVsomHM2) — MFA of Ukraine (@MFA\_Ukraine) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/MFA_Ukraine/status/1728050850134622492?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Strengthening of Ukraine aids European security, Kyiv saysSaturday 25 November 2023 02:00 , Alexander Butler The strengthening of Ukraine’s military industry is also an investment into European and global security, a Ukrainian official said.“Strengthening Ukrainian military industry is an investment into European and global security, not just Ukraine’s. Our state is a reliable partner in ensuring stability,” Andriy Yermak, the head of the Ukrainian president’s office, said.Strengthening Ukrainian military industry is an investment into European and global security, not just Ukraine's. Our state is a reliable partner in ensuring stability.— Andriy Yermak (@AndriyYermak) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/AndriyYermak/status/1728072484149252597?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukraine prepares army mobilisation reforms as war drags onSaturday 25 November 2023 01:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine is drawing up reforms to its programme for mobilising troops as the war with Russia rages on with no end in sight, President Volodymyr Zelensky said.“The plan will be worked out and all the answers will be there -next week I will see this plan,” he said. Kyiv does not disclose its troop losses or the workings of its mobilisation programme which has been under way since Russia launched its full-scale invasion in February 2022. Zelensky said he had ordered senior officials to draft proposals.Ukrainian resident sentenced to 15 years for aiding RussiaSaturday 25 November 2023 00:01 , Alexander Butler A Ukrainian resident was sentenced to 15 years in prison for passing information to Russia and aiding strikes on Vinnytsia, the Prosecutor General’s Office said.The man was found guilty of treason on account of providing Russia’s Federal Security Service (FSB) with information on local military and civilian infrastructure.The prosecutors pointed to a period between May and June 2023 when the sentenced resident spied on a local defense company’s facility. He also reportedly scanned WiFi networks and cell towers near military facilities using specialized software.Zelensky names ‘three victories’ Ukraine needs on international frontFriday 24 November 2023 23:00 , Alexander Butler Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Ukraine needed to secure three key “victories” abroad, including the approval of major aid packages from the US Congress and European Union, and a formal start of accession talks to join the bloc.“We need three victories. The first one is the victory with US Congress. It’s a challenge, it’s not easy but Ukraine is doing everything,” Zelensky said.“The second is we need the help from the EU on the 50bn euro package,” he added. “And the third is to open a dialogue about our future membership.”President Joe Biden asked Congress to approve many billions of dollars in assistance for Ukraine last month, but Kyiv funding was omitted from a stop-gap spending bill passed last week, raising concerns it may not get through.A vocal bloc of Republicans oppose sending more aid to Ukraine. Opponents of the aid have said US taxpayer money should be spent at home, but a majority of Republicans and Democrats in Congress still support supplying aid.Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflictFriday 24 November 2023 22:00 , Alexander Butler Slovakia’s new prime minister, Robert Fico, said on Friday he considers the war between Ukraine and Russia a frozen conflict that cannot be solved by sending arms to the Ukrainian armed forces.Fico ended his country’s military aid for Ukraine after his new government was sworn in on 25 October.After meeting his Czech counterpart, Petr Fiala, in Prague on Friday, he said he would prefer the Russian and Ukrainian sides sit at a negotiation table. He didn’t say how to achieve that.[*Slovak leader calls the war between Russia and Ukraine a frozen conflict*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-robert-fico-russia-prague-b2453008.html) Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'Friday 24 November 2023 21:00 , Alexander Butler Russian President Vladimir Putin on Friday announced a plan to endorse a national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence, emphasizing that it’s essential to prevent a Western monopoly.Speaking at an AI conference in Moscow, Putin noted that “it’s imperative to use Russian solutions in the field of creating reliable and transparent artificial intelligence systems that are also safe for humans.”“Monopolistic dominance of such foreign technology in Russia is unacceptable, dangerous and inadmissible,” Mr Putin said.[*Putin to boost AI work in Russia to fight a Western monopoly he says is 'unacceptable and dangerous'*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-russia-moscow-ukraine-b2453029.html) Pictured: Ukrainians sit atop German leapord tanksFriday 24 November 2023 20:00 , Alexander ButlerRussia warns Moldova for joining EU sanctionsFriday 24 November 2023 19:00 , Alexander Butler Russia has vowed to retaliate against Moldova for joining European Union sanctions against it.“We regard this as yet another hostile step by the Moldovan leadership, which is fully integrated into the anti-Russian campaign of the ‘collective West’,” the Russian foreign ministry said.“Its aim is the complete destruction of Russian-Moldovan relations, which, through the fault of official Chisinau, are already in a very deplorable state.”Denmark gives Ukraine £300m in military supportFriday 24 November 2023 18:00 , Alexander Butler Denmark will increase its military support for Ukraine by £302m this year, its defence ministry has said.This is in addition to the £629m it has already pledged to spend on military donations for Kyiv.Interestingly, Denmark, which is a NATO member, said it would include this funding for Ukraine towards its alliance obligations.Putin calls on Russia to rival West in AI developmentFriday 24 November 2023 17:07 , Alexander Butler Russian president Vladimir Putin has urged his country to rival the West in its development of artificial technology.“In the very near future, as one of the first steps, a presidential decree will be signed and a new version of the national strategy for the development of artificial intelligence will be approved,” Mr Putin said.More than 150 ships travel through Black Sea grain corridorFriday 24 November 2023 16:35 , Alexander Butler More than 150 ships carrying grain and other cargo have now travelled through Ukraine’s Black Sea corridor, according to the US ambassador in Kyiv.“As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world,” ambassador Bridget A. Brink said on X.As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world. [*pic.twitter.com/KQvupHiXo7*](https://t.co/KQvupHiXo7) — Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/USAmbKyiv/status/1728000209941041391?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Full report: Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture eastern cityFriday 24 November 2023 15:56 , Andy Gregory Ukraine launched one of the biggest drone attacks on the Moscow-annexed Crimean Peninsula since the full-scale war that started with Russia’s invasion 21 months ago, Russian officials said Friday.At the same time, Ukrainian officials reported that the Kremlin’s forces escalated their weekslong and costly attempt to storm Avdiivka, a strategically important city in eastern Ukraine.The stepped-up efforts came as both sides are keen to show they are not deadlocked as the fighting approaches 2024.Illia Novikov has the full report:[*Ukraine aims a major drone attack at Crimea as Russia tries to capture a destroyed eastern city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-kyiv-crimea-moscow-b2452885.html) More than 150 ships have passed through Black Sea corridor, says US diplomatFriday 24 November 2023 13:29 , Andy Gregory Some 153 ships have so far passed through Ukraine’s humanitarian corridor in the Black Sea since Russia pulled out of the UN-brokered grain deal in July, the US ambassador in Kyiv has said.As of today, 153 ships carrying over 5.6 million metric tons of grain and other cargo have gone through Ukraine’s Black Sea humanitarian corridor, supporting farmers and other businesses in Ukraine and providing food and other products to the world. [*pic.twitter.com/KQvupHiXo7*](https://t.co/KQvupHiXo7) — Ambassador Bridget A. Brink (@USAmbKyiv) [*November 24, 2023*](https://twitter.com/USAmbKyiv/status/1728000209941041391?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Germany extends protection status for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** until March 2025

The residence permits of refugees from Ukraine who fled the war and received protection status in Germany will be extended until March 2025, the interior ministry has said.

The Bundesrat upper house of parliament had approved the decree from the ministry on Friday, the ministry said in a statement.

This means that those affected do not have to apply for an extension of their residence status, and no associated appointments with the immigration authorities are necessary, it added.

Dutch minister says she hopes aid to Ukraine will continue despite election outcome

Dutch defence minister Kajsa Ollongren has said she hoped the country’s military support to Ukraine would continue even under a new government led by anti-EU populist Geert Wilders – who has said the Dutch should stop providing Kyiv with arms.

Ms Ollongren said Mr Wilders’ victory in this week’s elections had led to concerned phone calls from colleagues around Europe asking whether the Dutch stance on Ukraine would change.

“In the Netherlands there is broad support for our help to Ukraine,” she told reporters on Friday. “I hope and expect this will not change in the new parliament. But the PVV is now the largest party and they have never been enthusiastic about support to Ukraine. They have even been pro-Russia at times. So that has me worried.”

The Dutch government last week earmarked an additional €2bn in military aid for Ukraine in 2024, taking total support since the start of the Russian invasion to around €7.5bn.

It is still unclear how Dutch talks that began on Friday on the formation of a new government will unfold, but none of the PVV’s potential coalition partners share his views on ending support for Ukraine.

Moscow accuses Ukraine of launching huge drone attack on Crimea

Ukraine has launched one of its largest drone attacks on Crimea since Moscow’s invasion last February, Russian officials have claimed.

Vladimir Saldo, governor in Russian-occupied parts of Kherson, said claimed dozens of drones were shot down over the region and in northern Crimea after Ukraine launched a major attack early on Friday.

The Russian defence ministry said air defences downed 13 Ukrainian drones over Crimea and three more over southern Russia’s Volgograd region.

Hopes fade for quick end to Polish lorry protests, as two Ukrainian drivers die in cold

Ukraine’s top hauliers’ union has warned that hopes of a rapid end to Polish lorry driver protests at the border were fading, as Kyiv prepared to evacuate its drivers stranded in Poland.

Two Ukrainian drivers have died and thousands of lorries have been stuck for days in the winter cold as Polish truckers blocked the roads to four crossings on the border.

“Frankly speaking, the more we talk to them the less hope we have,” Leonid Kostiuchenko, president of the Ukrainian Association of International Carriers, told Ukrainian broadcasters.

“I spoke to the leader of the protesters and his attitude is that we will block for such a long time that you will ... celebrate New Year in a queue. I don’t understand this humour.”

The Polish truckers say they are losing out to Ukrainian companies who offer a cheaper rate and are now transporting goods within the European Union, and not just back and forth to Ukraine.

Russian and Chinese executives holding secret talks on underwater tunnel to Crimea

Russian and Chinese business executives have been secretly discussing the construction of an underwater tunnel from Russia to annexed Crimea, Ukraine’s security services claim.

Kyiv claims to have intercepted transmissions about plans to build a vast tunnel under the Kerch strait, as Vladimir Putin’s prized 11-mile bridge there comes under sustained Ukrainian attacks.

The emails – handed to the Washington Post, which claims to have corroborated them in its own reporting – suggest one of China’s largest construction companies has indicated its willingness to be involved, and mention meetings with Chinese delegates in Crimea.

The emails also reportedly reveal efforts to maintain secrecy, with one emphasising that the company will participate only under a “strict provision of complete confidentiality”, with its name will be replaced by “another, unaffiliated legal entity” on any contracts. Another email mentions a Chinese bank willing to “convert its dollar funds into rubles for their transfer to Crimea to fund [consortium] projects”, The Post reports.

Experts told the newspaper that any such construction would likely not be completed for many years – but that this may well fit into Mr Putin’s longer-term planning for the Ukrainian peninsula illegally seized by Russia in 2014.

Kremlin expresses concern over Nato calls for military ‘Schengen Zone'

Nato’s desire to create a military equivalent of the Schengen Zone has ratcheted up tensions and is a cause for concern, the Kremlin has said.

The chief of Nato’s logistics command, Lieutenant-General Alexander Sollfrank, told Reuters in an interview on Thursday that he would like to see such a zone, as he was worried that too much red tape across Europe was hindering troop movements.

Mr Sollfrank said it was a problem that could cause major delays were a conflict with Russia to erupt.

Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov retorted on Friday that Russia would respond if the proposal became a reality.

Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in fierce battle for Avdiivka

Russia’s forces have halted their fighting at hotspots on the frontline as the war in Ukraine entered its 22nd month on Friday, my colleagueArpan Raireports.

Russian forces continued to pound the battered Ukrainian town of Avdiivka but were unable to breach the defence of Ukraine’s troops as heavy fighting engulfed Bakhmut, military officials said.

“Basically, nothing has changed. Everything is very tough. As regards the city, there is an average number of eight to 16 to 18 attacks per day. Sometimes 30. We don’t have the time to count them,” said Vitaliy Barabash, head of Avdiivka’s military administration.

Russia’s troops have unleashed “the fiercest” attacks on Avdiivka – Moscow’s newest target after the bloody battle of Bakhmut.

“I am pleased the defence line has been holding for a month and a half. It has not been breached, no matter what they say,” Mr Barabash said in a daily update of fighting on Thursday.

[*Russia pauses attacks across Ukraine frontline amid losses in battle for Avdiivka*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-avdiivka-bakhmut-latest-b2452727.html)

Pictured: Snow hits Kyiv and hampers efforts on frontline

Snow has been pictured falling as far west as Kyiv in recent days, with Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky warning that the changing weather would make the situation more difficult on the frontline.

Finland closes all but one crossing on Russian border

Finland has temporarily closed all but one of its eight passenger crossings to Russia.

Helsinki has accused Russia of funnelling asylum-seekers to its border, after more than 700 people from nations such as Yemen, Afghanistan, Kenya, Morocco, Pakistan, Somalia and Syria have entered Finland from Russia in recent weeks.

Having last week closed four border stations, Finland overnight closed all remaining passenger crossings except its northernmost one – Raja-Jooseppi, in the Arctic region – for a month.

Raja-Jooseppi opened its gates for traffic this morning and will continue to accept asylum applications during its four daily opening hours, the Finnish Border Guard said.

No migrants arrived overnight outside opening hours, it added.

The European Union’s border agency Frontex said on Thursday it would deploy 50 border guard officers and other staff to Finland along with equipment such as patrol cars to bolster control activities along the Russian border.

High inflation persists in Russia

The shelves at Moscow supermarkets are full of fruit and vegetables, cheese and meat. But many of the shoppers look at the selection with dismay as inflation makes their wallets feel empty.

Russia’s Central Bank has raised its key lending rate four times this year to try to get inflation under control and stabilize the ruble’s exchange rate as the economy weathers the effects of Russia’s military operation in Ukraine and the Western sanctions imposed as a consequence.

The last time it raised the rate – to 15 per cent, doubled that from the beginning of the year – the bank said it was concerned about prices that were increasing at an annualised pace of about 12 per cent. The bank now forecasts inflation for the full year, as well as next year, to be about 7.5 per cent.

Although that rate is high, it may be an understatement.

“If we talk in percentage terms, then, probably, (prices) increased by 25 per cent. This is meat, staple products — dairy produce, fruits, vegetables, sausages. My husband can’t live without sausage! Sometimes I’m just amazed at price spikes,” said Roxana Gheltkova, a shopper in a Moscow supermarket.

[*Russian consumers feel themselves in a tight spot as high inflation persists*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ap-moscow-ukraine-latvia-b2452757.html)

Putin’s troops suffering mass casualties ‘well behind the front line’, says UK

Ukrainian long-range precision strikes are inflicting mass casualties among Vladimir Putin’s forces gathering in large groups “well behind the frontline”, as lengthy deployments to the front leave commanders with “an acute dilemma” of whether to keep troops separate or arrange events to boost morale, the UK has claimed.

“Russian forces in Ukraine continue to suffer mass casualties from Ukrainian long-range precision strikes well behind the front line,” said Britain’s Ministry of Defence.

“On 10 November 2023, likely over 70 Russian troops were killed in a strike on a convoy of trucks 23km behind the front line in the village of Hladkivka, Kherson Oblast. Subsequently, on 19 November 2023, a strike on Russian troops attending an award ceremony or concert in Kumachove, 60km inside Russian-controlled territory, likely caused tens of casualties.

“Ukraine has also suffered similar incidents: a Russian ballistic missile killed 19 members of Ukraine’s 128th Separate Mountain Assault Brigade at a medal ceremony on 3 November 2023.

“Deployed soldiers are typically well aware of the ranges of their adversary’s weapons systems. However, faced with the reality of very long combat deployments, commanders face an acute dilemma.

“They must balance the best practice of keeping the troops dispersed, and less vulnerable to strikes, and the day-to-day requirement to gather units together to conduct administration and to maintain morale.”

Putin pardons two cannibals who joined Russia’s war in Ukraine – report

Vladimir Putin has reportedly pardoned two Russian men convicted of cannibalism after they deployed to the frontline in the war with Ukraine.

One of the men, Denis Gorin, was recruited into a private military company after signing a contract with the Russian ministry of defence but is known to have been convicted thrice for murdering at least four people between 2003 and 2022. He was also convicted of eating the remains of his victims along with his brother, reported Sibir Realii, a news outlet aligned with Radio Free Europe.

Another man, Nikolai Ogolobyak, was convicted of ritual murders, according to the Russian media reports.

He was sentenced to 20 years in prison in 2019 for murdering four teenagers and then consuming their remains. The 33-year-old man was reportedly pardoned this week by the Russian president for fighting in the invasion of Ukraine.

My colleague Arpan Rai has the full report here:

Estonia accuses Russia of weaponising immigration at Europe’s borders

Estonia has accused Russia of weaponising immigration on Europe’s eastern borders amid a rise in the number of asylum seekers trying to enter its territory and Finland.

Speaking during a meeting in Stockholm of Nordic and Baltic defence ministers, Hanno Pevkur, Estonia’s defence minister, claimed the hundreds of people who had arrived at the borders of the two countries in recent weeks were a “fully state-orchestrated” operation by Moscow.

Latvia’s defence minister, Andris SprÅ«ds, went a step further, blaming the Russian president, Vladimir Putin, who he described as the “puppet master”.

Ukrainian embassy asks Warsaw to unblock border following 2nd driver's death

The Ukrainian embassy in Poland appealed to Warsaw to end a haulers’ blockade at the Polish-Ukrainian border after a second trucker died while waiting in the line, Ambassador Vasyl Zvarych said.

Polish protesters have been blocking the movement of cargo vehicles at several border crossings with Ukraine since early November in a protest against the EU’s liberalization of transport rules for Ukrainian trucks.

EU border agency to bolster Finland's border

The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) plans to deploy 50 border guard officers and other staff, as well as equipment, to Finland amid a growing migrant crisis on the border with Russia, the agency announced on Nov. 23.

November saw an unusually high number of third-country asylum seekers coming to the Finnish border from Russia.

Helsinki accused Moscow of orchestrating the migrant influx as retribution for the country’s entry to NATO and moved to close all but one border crossing with its eastern neighbor.

Ukraine sanctions over 300 Russian, foreign companies

Ukraine has introduced economic sanctions against more than 300 companies around the world, President Volodymyr Zelensky announced.

A number of energy companies from across Russia have been targeted by five-year sanctions, while sanctions lasting 10 years were imposed on 87 individuals, among them Ukrainian citizens.

A separate decree imposed 10-year sanctions on Swiss, Cypriot, British, Uzbek, and Russian citizens, as well as companies based in Malta, China, Turkey, Cyprus, the United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Russia.

**Load-Date:** November 26, 2023

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# [*Royal news -latest: Coronation preparations step up after Charles and Camilla’s Germany trip*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:67XD-S311-JBNF-W1XH-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:5

**Length:** 9753 words

**Byline:** Eleanor Noyce,Peony Hirwani and Kate Ng

**Highlight:** The crowning of the King and Queen Consort will take place on 6 May

**Body**

King Charles III and the Queen Consort’s coronation is just over a month away, with preparations throughout the UK getting into full swing for the big bank holiday weekend.

The [*ceremony will take place on Saturday 6 May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-decorations-bank-holiday-weekend-date-b2308174.html) , and Britons are being given a bank holiday on Monday 8 May to continue the celebrations. A [*coronation concert will be held on Sunday 7 May*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-whos-playing-tickets-b2309454.html) , and will feature performances from “global music icons and contemporary stars”.

The monarch has just returned from Germany for his first state visit since ascending the throne. The three-day visit [*has been hailed as a success as he became the first monarch to address the German parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/king-charles-germany-visit-brexit-b2312239.html) , the Bundestag.

While he remains in the country after his High Court Hearing, Prince Harry is[*not expected to see his father, the King, or his brother, the Prince of Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-charles-associated-newspapers-high-court-prince-b2308607.html) , as relations among the family remain strained after he released his tell-all memoir, Spare.

The Duke and Duchess of Sussex have[*indicated that they have received email correspondence from Buckingham Palace about attending*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-meghan-markle-king-charles-coronation-b2294749.html) the coronation, but have not disclosed any details about [*whether they will be among the other guests*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-coronation-harry-and-meghan-b2308167.html).

Key Points

Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha as Florida judge dismisses case Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

Will Camilla be crowned Queen at King Charles’ coronation?

The title of Queen Consort Camilla, who was previously the Duchess of Cornwall is expected to change following King Charles’ coronation.

Find out how:

[*Will Camilla be crowned Queen at King Charles’ coronation?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-coronation-crown-b2312641.html)

Camilla impresses with fashion choices on state visit to Germany

The King and Queen Consort recently visited Germany on their first trip to the country since Charles’ reign began.

A regal wardrobe was required for the string of high profile engagements, and Camilla wowed the crowds with her outfits.

[*Camilla impresses with fashion choices on state visit to Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/camilla-frankwalter-steinmeier-queen-consort-germany-berlin-b2310866.html)

King’s inaugural state visit boosted by Germany’s warm welcome

Completing a major milestone for the first time can be daunting even for a King but the inaugural state visit of Charles’s reign appears to have been a success.

It did not begin in auspicious circumstances, with the first leg to France postponed after days of protests against President Emmanuel Macron’s pension age reforms culminated in violent scenes from Paris to Bordeaux.

Read more:

[*King’s inaugural state visit boosted by Germany’s warm welcome*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/germany-france-paris-frankwalter-steinmeier-queen-consort-b2312062.html)

Everything you need to know about Queen Consort Camilla’s family tree

The Queen Consort will be crowned alongside her husband, King Charles III, at the highly anticipated coronation ceremony on 6 May.

The royal, 75, is expected to be crowned Queen instead of Queen Consort after the coronation, with the coronation edition of the Bible reportedly dropping the title in its commemoration message.

As the nation prepares for the major ceremony – the UK’s first coronation since the late Queen Elizabeth II’s in 1953 – many people are interested in learning more about the new monarch’s wife and her family tree.

[*Everything you need to know about Queen Consort Camilla’s family tree*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-consort-camilla-family-tree-b2311108.html)

Paul O’Grady once tried to convince Queen Elizabeth II to adopt a rescue corgi

The late Paul O’Grady once attempted to persuade Queen Elizabeth II to adopt her own rescue corgi when she visited Battersea Dogs and Cats Home, it has been revealed.

Ali Taylor, a friend of O’Grady and head of behaviour at the animal charity, said that the actor comedian had such a passion for rescue dogs that he tried to get the late monarch to take one home to Buckingham Palace with her.

[*Paul O’Grady once tried to convince Queen Elizabeth II to adopt a rescue corgi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/paul-ogrady-queen-elizabeth-corgi-b2312573.html)

King Charles praises Queen’s Green Canopy scheme after 3 million trees planted

King Charles III has offered his “heartfelt thanks” to people involved in the Queen’s Green Canopy (QGC) after the initiative announced it has planted more than three million trees.

The scheme was launched in May 2021 to mark the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, and was extended after her death in September last year to allow people to plant trees in memoriam.

[*King Charles praises Queen’s Green Canopy scheme after 3 million trees planted*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-queens-green-canopy-trees-b2312514.html)

Friends close to Prince Andrew rubbish reports he is planning to write memoir

Friends close to Prince Andrew have hit out at reports that he is planning to write a memoir.

On Sunday, a number of newspapers claimed that the Duke of York was in talks to produce a tell-all autobiography, following the success of Prince Harry’s book ‘Spare’.

However, friends of his family have taken the unusual step to make his views known following the reports.

[*Was Prince Charles's School Boarding School Experience as Awful as The Crown Depicts?*](https://people.com/royals/prince-charles-gordonstoun-prince-philip-the-crown/)

King Charles takes on new title previously held by Queen Elizabeth II

King Charles III has been appointed colonel-in-chief of the Corps of Royal Engineers, a title previously held by his late mother, Queen Elizabeth II.

Buckingham Palace announced the news on Tuesday 28 March, with the position hailed as a “long-standing tradition” in the royal family that began with King Edward VII in 1904.

[*King Charles takes on new title previously held by Queen Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-title-royal-engineers-b2309305.html)

Queen ‘deeply saddened’ by death of fellow dog-lover Paul O’Grady

Camilla has shared her sadness at the news that TV presenter and comedian Paul O’Grady has died aged 67.

The Queen Consort shared a special bond with the late star, and worked closely with him in their support of Battersea Dogs & Cats Home.

[*Queen ‘deeply saddened’ by death of fellow dog-lover Paul O’Grady*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/paul-ogrady-camilla-friends-battersea-b2310027.html)

Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast

The Duchess of Sussex has received a Gracie Award for her work on her Archetypes podcast.

The 48th annual Gracie Awards honoured Meghan Markle as one of its digital media national winners for her Spotify podcast, which sees her speaking to various famous women about the stereotypes they face.

[*Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/meghan-markle-archetypes-gracie-award-b2311544.html)

King becoming ‘frustrated old man’ over attitudes to climate emergency

The King has described how he is becoming “a frustrated old man” over attitudes to the global climate emergency.

A life-long environmentalist, Charles said the world must rely on the younger generation if we are to avert an environmental catastrophe in the next few years.

On a boat ride around Hamburg’s sprawling harbour to view a state of the art electrolyser site, which helps generate power, the King said the world must realise the need to move towards more sustainable practices.

[*King becoming ‘frustrated old man’ over attitudes to climate emergency*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/the-king-frankwalter-steinmeier-charles-hamburg-b2311959.html)

WATCH: King Charles and Queen Consort conclude Germany visit with war remembrance, beer and Beatles

Sarah, Duchess of York: I made endless wrong decisions – but it’s got me to where I am today

The ex-wife of the Duke of York offers her views on Harry and Meghan, the King, and looking after the late Queen’s corgis.

[*Sarah, Duchess of York: I made endless wrong decisions – but it’s got me to where I am today*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/sarah-ferguson-harry-york-fergie-duke-of-york-b2300282.html)

Harry told Queen: ‘We can’t afford private security until Meghan and I earn our own money’

The Duke of Sussex sent an email claiming that he and his wife could not afford their own security until they could earn their own money, court documents have revealed.

The message has been disclosed in papers as part of Prince Harry’s bid to rule that the publishers of the Mail on Sunday libelled him with an article about his quest for police protection when he and his family visit the UK.

[*Harry told Queen: ‘We can’t afford security until Meghan and I earn our own money’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-court-security-mail-sunday-b2303219.html)

Prince Harry blames royal family for delay in hacking suit

Prince Harry blamed the royal family for a delay in bringing a phone hacking lawsuit against the publisher of The Daily Mail as lawyers for the newspaper argued that the case should be thrown out because he didn't file it soon enough.

The Duke of Sussex said “the Institution” — a term he has used in other contexts to refer to the inner workings of Buckingham Palace — had prevented him from learning sooner about the activity of The Daily Mail and related publications by withholding information about phone hacking by other tabloids.

[*Prince Harry blames royal family for delay in hacking suit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/harry-ap-london-diana-news-of-the-world-b2310349.html)

Prince Harry not expected to see Charles or William as he makes surprise return to UK

The Duke of Sussex has made a surprise return to the UK for the first time since the late Queen’s funeral – but is not expected to meet with the King or the Prince of Wales.

His trip – for a High Court hearing in London in his claim against Daily Mail publisher Associated Newspapers over allegations of unlawful information-gathering – will be seen as demonstrating the strength of his determination over the legal action.

[*Prince Harry not expected to see Charles or William as he makes surprise return to UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-charles-associated-newspapers-high-court-prince-b2308607.html)

William and Harry’s treehouse features in Highgrove exhibition staged for King

The King has commissioned a new exhibition telling the story of how he transformed the gardens of his country home Highgrove – including behind-the-scenes sketches of Princes William and Harry’s treehouse.

The then-Prince of Wales had the wooden hideaway, with its pointed, thatched roof, built for his young sons at his Gloucestershire retreat in the 1980s.

[*William and Harry’s treehouse features in Highgrove exhibition staged for King*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/the-king-kitchen-garden-harry-gloucestershire-prince-of-wales-b2311842.html)

‘Disappointment’ that King’s visit to France had to be postponed, experts say

There may be high level disappointment that the King’s first state visit has had to be postponed, royal experts have said.

Charles and Camilla were due to begin a four-day trip to France last week but after a night of violent nationwide demonstrations that led to hundreds of arrests and police officers being injured, the trip was shelved.

[*‘Disappointment’ that King’s visit to France had to be postponed, experts say*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/france-gerald-darmanin-french-charles-royal-b2307519.html)

‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

Prince Harry suffered from “suspicion and paranoia” and lost friends because of newspaper articles, a court heard on Monday, as he launched his campaign to reform the media with a surprise appearance in London.

The Duke of Sussex flew 5,500 miles from his new home in California to attend a High Court hearing as the Daily Mail’s publisher bids to throw out claims against its titles, including accusations of phone-hacking.

Alastair Jamieson has the full story:

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation

King Charles III ascended the throne following the death of his mother, the late Queen Elizabeth II, last September. His coronation takes place more than 70 years after Elizabeth was crowned on 2 June 1953.

During the crowning and anointing parts of the ceremony, which are said to be the most sacred parts, King Charles will sit upon the 700-year-old Coronation Chair.

Read all about the history of the Coronation Chair here:

[*The fascinating history behind the throne King Charles will sit on at his coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-crown-b2308270.html)

Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration

King Charles III’s coronation is less than two months away, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations fast approaching.

Curious about what will take place during the musical celebration of the day? Find out below:

[*Everything you need to know about King Charles’s coronation concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-whos-playing-tickets-b2309454.html)

Sarah Ferguson told that Queen’s corgis diets are ‘off’ by pet psychic

The Duchess of York has been made aware that one of the late Queen’s corgis is looking a little “bloated” recently and could benefit from a diet change.

Appearing on Thursday’s instalment of This Morning, Sarah Ferguson, who was given two of the Queen’s corgis after her death in September, met with a pet psychic who had been studying the two dogs.

Find out what the psychic had to say below:

[*Sarah Ferguson told that Queen’s corgis diets are ‘off’ by pet psychic*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/sarah-ferguson-queen-corgi-pet-psychic-b2311020.html)

‘He’s quite blunt with his views’: Huw Edwards recalls interactions with King Charles

Huw Edwards has spoken out about his interactions with King Charles III ahead of the coronation.

The broadcaster is the lead anchor of BBC News at Ten and has reported on some of the biggest national and international news stories in recent years.

Read what Edwards said about meeting the King here, byNicole Vassell:

[*Huw Edwards shares thoughts on King Charles: ‘He’s quite blunt with his views’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/huw-edwards-king-charles-coronation-b2310114.html)

Joe Biden reportedly expected to miss King Charles’ coronation

Joe Biden has reportedly turned down his invitation to King Charles III’s coronation, which is set for 6 May.

The US president is “not expected” to be in the UK for the King’s big day, according to sources who spoke to The Telegraph. The sources, who have reportedly been involved in the discussion with Biden about the coronation, claimed that he will be sending a delegation in his place. However, there is a possibility that the First Lady of the United States, Jill Biden, will be in attendance.

Read our report by Amber Raiken:

[*Joe Biden reportedly expected to miss King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/joe-biden-king-charles-coronation-b2312119.html)

King Charles wins hearts in Germany with ‘very well-received’ visit

King Charles has left a positive impression among Germans after his three-day visit to the country, his first trip abroad since ascending to the British throne following the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth II last September.

Observers in both London and Berlin said the visit sent a strong message to strengthen ties between the two countries amid frayed relations following Britain’s exit from the European Union.

Sravasti Dasguptareports:

[*King Charles wins hearts in Germany with ‘very well-received’ visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/king-charles-germany-visit-brexit-b2312239.html)

Princes William and Harry's treehouse featured in Highgrove exhibition

The King has commissioned a new exhibition telling the story of how he transformed the gardens of his country home Highgrove -including behind-the-scenes sketches of Princes William and Harry’s treehouse.

The then-Prince of Wales had the wooden hideaway, with its pointed, thatched roof, built for his young sons at his Gloucestershire retreat in the 1980s.

Designs of the den, drawn by architect Willie Bertram, have gone on show at the Highgrove in Harmony: A Royal Vision display at the Garrison Chapel in London.

They include a notation from Bertram about the tall climbing pole designed for the daredevil brothers, which points to one of the wooden broomstick steps high in the tree and reads “Should these go up as high as this?”

A holly leaf-shaped fence surrounds the house and the drawing from 1988 is labelled “Tree house at Highgrove ‘Holyrood House’ for The Princes William and Harry” -a playful reference to the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh which was then their grandmother the Queen’s official residence in Scotland.

Charles refurbished the original treehouse for his eldest grandson Prince George in 2015.

The exhibition also includes never-before-seen graphite sketches by Charles of Highgrove’s Kitchen Garden and its Thyme Walk.

Entry is free and it will run from Monday to Friday at the Garrison Chapel until the end of May.

PA

WATCH: Prince Harry’s two words of advice for media on second day of High Court hearing

VOICES: If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

The Duke of Sussex is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

Tom Peck gives his opinion:

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night

A luxury London hotel has launched a King’s coronation package, which will set guests back a right royal £13,000 per night.

The Crown Jewels Experience is available to book at Hotel Café Royal, fittingly located on Regent Street, and includes an overnight stay in the Royal Suite.

Helen Wilson-Beevers reports:

[*Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/england/london/luxury-london-hotel-kings-coronation-package-b2305932.html)

WATCH: How the royal grandchildren will play a part in King Charles’ coronation

Camilla's subtle tribute to Queen Elizabeth II during royal tour of Germany

Queen Consort Camilla has paid tribute to the queens who came before her while attending a State Banquet in Berlin to honour her and King Charles III’s state visit to Germany.

Camilla pinned a brooch with a portrait of her late mother-in-law, Queen Elizabeth II, onto her black evening dress for the occasion on Wednesday (29 March).

On her head, she wore a tiara that once belonged to the Queen Mother. Her dress, which was covered in silver embroidery, was designed by Bruce Oldfield, who is in charge of creating her coronation dress.

Get all the details here:

[*Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html)

Royal photographer reveals King Charles’ affectionate term for Camilla

A royal photographer who has photographed King Charles III since 1977 has revealed the monarch’s loving moniker when referring to the Queen Consort, Camilla.

Arthur Edwards, who has photographed the royal family for The Sun for more than four decades, reflected on how Camilla “brings out the best” in the King in his new photo book, Behind The Crown: My Life Photographing the Royal Family.

Find out what the term is:

[*Royal photographer reveals King Charles’ affectionate term for Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/charles-camilla-pet-name-b2305801.html)

Harry and Meghan Frogmore eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans to slim down monarchy

King Charles III has put into motion his plan to slim down the monarchy, with the eviction of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from Frogmore Cottage signalling “just the start”, it has been reported.

The monarch, who is set to be crowned alongside Queen Consort Camilla in just six weeks, reportedly wishes to end subsidised rents for members of the royal family over the next five years.

Read more:

[*Harry and Meghan eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans for monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-harry-meghan-monarchy-b2307885.html)

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry

Sir Elton John and David Furnish have a “paternal and protective” friendship with the Duke of Sussex, the singer’s husband has said.

The couple are part of a group – along with Harry, Baroness Doreen Lawrence, former Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes and actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley – bringing claims over allegations Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) carried out or commissioned illegal or unlawful information-gathering.

The allegations – which are denied – include the hiring of private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and the accessing and recording of private phone conversations.

Read more below:

[*Sir Elton John and David Furnish have ‘paternal’ friendship with Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/elton-john-david-furnish-prince-harry-b2309945.html)

Who is Princess Eugenie and how is she related to the King?

King Charles’ siblings, sons and grandchildren will be in attendance at his coronation this May. The children of Charles’ siblings will also be attending the event.

As the younger daughter of Prince Andrew and Sarah, Duchess of York, Princess Eugenie is expected to be in attendance.

Here’s everything you need to know about Eugenie:

[*Who is Princess Eugenie and how is she related to the King?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/princess-eugenie-king-charles-coronation-b2309964.html)

Succession’s Brian Cox says Meghan’s marriage into royal family is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’

Brian Cox has claimed that Meghan Markle’s marriage into the royal family is a “fairytale that went horribly wrong”.

In a new interview with the Radio Times, the Succession star said that he understood why Meghan was attracted to marrying into the royal family, due to its “fairytale” image.

Read more about what Cox said here:

[*Brian Cox says Meghan’s royal marriage is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/succession-brian-cox-meghan-markle-harry-b2309966.html)

Prince Harry asked to give a month’s notice before making trip to the UK, reports claim

Prince Harry was told to give 28 days’ notice of his planned trips to the UK, it has emerged.

The Duke of Sussex was told that the time would allow for security requests to be processed and that it would be a matter for the Home Office to consider whether the requested security arrangements were necessary.

According to The Telegraph, Harry pushed back on the decision, asking the Home Office committee responsible for royal security to give him an example of a person with the same threat assessment as him who had received no security after stepping back from public duty.

My colleagueEllie Muir has all the details:

[*Prince Harry asked to give a month’s notice before UK trips*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-meghan-trip-coronation-b2303793.html)

Visitors to walk on site of King’s coronation for first time – but in socks

Visitors to Westminster Abbey are to be allowed to stand – in socks – for the first time in the exact spot where the King will be crowned.

Special guided “barefoot” tours in celebration of the 6 May coronation will include access to the Cosmati pavement, one of Britain’s greatest medieval art treasures, which is usually roped off to the public.

Find out more below:

[*Visitors to walk on site of King’s coronation for first time – but in socks*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-king-westminster-abbey-socks-b2307133.html)

Who is attending King Charles’ coronation?

The King and Queen Consort will be joined by hundreds of guests at Westminster Abbey at their coronation, including senior members of the royal family, politicians and celebrities. The Archbishop of Canterbury will conduct the ceremony.

While the venue can seat up to 2,200 guests, it is unknown how many invites Buckingham Palace has sent out, and many attendees won’t be confirmed until the actual day of the event.

Ellie Muir reports:

[*All of the celebrities and royals attending King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-coronation-harry-and-meghan-b2308167.html)

Prince Harry not expected to see Charles or William as he makes surprise return to UK

The Duke of Sussex has made a surprise return to the UK for the first time since the late Queen’s funeral – but is not expected to meet with the King or the Prince of Wales.

His trip – for a High Court hearing in London in his claim against Daily Mail publisher Associated Newspapers over allegations of unlawful information-gathering – will be seen as demonstrating the strength of his determination over the legal action.

Maryam Zakir-Hussain has the full story:

[*Prince Harry not expected to see Charles or William as he makes surprise return to UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-charles-associated-newspapers-high-court-prince-b2308607.html)

Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration

King Charles III’s coronation is less than two months away, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations fast approaching.

The official coronation takes place on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place the following evening on Sunday 7 May.

Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from “global music icons and contemporary stars”.

My colleagueIsobel Lewis has the rundown:

[*Everything you need to know about King Charles’s coronation concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-whos-playing-tickets-b2309454.html)

Everything you need to know about Queen Consort Camilla’s family tree

The Queen Consort will be crowned alongside her husband, King Charles III, at the highly anticipated coronation ceremony on 6 May.

As the nation prepares for the major ceremony – the UK’s first coronation since the late Queen Elizabeth II’s in 1953 – many people are interested in learning more about the new monarch’s wife and her family tree.

We take a detailed look below:

[*Everything you need to know about Queen Consort Camilla’s family tree*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/queen-consort-camilla-family-tree-b2311108.html)

WATCH LIVE: King Charles welcomed by Hamburg mayor as he arrives

King Charles’ watercolour paintings to go on display at Sandringham

More than 40 watercolours painted by King Charles III are to be displayed in an exhibition at Sandringham House in Norfolk.

The collection, featuring interpretations of British landscapes and royal residences, will be put on view in the ballroom at the estate.

The exhibition contains a range of scenes painted in the Welsh hills, the highlands of Scotland and at Windsor Castle, Highgrove, Birkhall Castle and the surrounding Norfolk countryside at Sandringham.

Read more below:

[*King Charles’ watercolour paintings to go on display at Sandringham*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-painting-watercolours-sandringham-b2311650.html)

William and Kate ‘considering Prince George role’ at coronation

Prince George might be given an official role at his grandfather’s coronation on Saturday 6 May, it has been reported.

The Prince and Princess of Wales are said to be considering whether their eldest child, nine-year-old George, and second in line to the throne, should be included in the congregation at Westminster Abbey.

It has also been said that Camilla’s five grandchildren, may have a role in the coronation.

Ellie Muir has the story:

[*William and Kate ‘considering Prince George role’ at coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-george-king-charles-coronation-b2290852.html)

Meghan Markle shares ‘famous’ cake recipe in chef José Andrés’ new cookbook

Meghan Markle has shared one of her signature cake recipes in chef José Andrés’ newest cookbook.

Earlier this week, Penguin Random House announced that the Spanish chef’s nonprofit World Central Kitchen would be releasing its first book, The World Central Kitchen Cookbook: Feeding Humanity, Feeding Hope, which is set to come out in September 2023. The publisher also noted the cookbook will feature recipes from some famous faces, including the Duchess of Sussex’s recipe for her Lemon Oil Cake.

My colleagueAmber Raiken reports:

[*Meghan Markle shares ‘famous’ cake recipe in chef José Andrés’ new cookbook*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/meghan-markle-cake-recipe-wck-cookbook-b2301629.html)

Harry and Meghan Frogmore eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans to slim down monarchy

King Charles III has put into motion his plan to slim down the monarchy, with the eviction of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from Frogmore Cottage signalling “just the start”, it has been reported.

The monarch, who is set to be crowned alongside Queen Consort Camilla in just six weeks, reportedly wishes to end subsidised rents for members of the royal family over the next five years.

Get the whole story below:

[*Harry and Meghan eviction ‘just the start’ of King Charles’ plans for monarchy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-harry-meghan-monarchy-b2307885.html)

WATCH LIVE: King Charles arrives at Berlin train station ahead of Hamburg visit

Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast

The Duchess of Sussex has received a Gracie Award for her work on her Archetypes podcast.

The 48th annual Gracie Awards honoured Meghan Markle as one of its digital media national winners for her Spotify podcast, which sees her speaking to various famous women about the stereotypes they face.

Get the full story below:

[*Meghan Markle wins Gracie Award for her Archetypes podcast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/meghan-markle-archetypes-gracie-award-b2311544.html)

Prince Harry claims Buckingham Palace ‘withheld’ information about historic phone hacking for ‘long time’

The Duke of Sussex has accused the royal family of withholding information from him about phone hacking because they did not want him to bring a claim as it would “open a can of worms”.

In a witness statement submitted before his civil claim against Daily Mail publisher Associated Newspapers, Prince Harry said that he was conditioned to accept his family’s rule to “never complain, never explain” when dealing with the press.

Thomas Kingsley reports.

[*Duke says royal family ‘without doubt’ withheld phone hacking information from him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-royal-family-phone-hacking-evidence-b2309942.html)

Oprah weighs in on Harry and Meghan attending King Charles’ coronation

Oprah Winfrey has weighed in on speculation as to whether the Duke and Duchess of Sussex will attend King Charles III’s coronation this May.

“I think they should do what they feel is best for them,” the television host said.

[*Oprah weighs in on Harry and Meghan attending King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/harry-meghan-king-charles-oprah-winfrey-b2302793.html)

Succession’s Brian Cox says Meghan’s marriage into royal family is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’

Brian Cox has claimed that Meghan Markle’s marriage into the royal family is a “fairytale that went horribly wrong”.

In a new interview with the Radio Times, the Succession star said that he understood why Meghan was attracted to marrying into the royal family, due to its “fairytale” image.

Ellie Muir reports.

[*Brian Cox says Meghan’s royal marriage is a ‘fairytale gone horribly wrong’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/succession-brian-cox-meghan-markle-harry-b2309966.html)

Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against half-sister Samantha as Florida judge dismisses case

Meghan Markle, the Duchess of Sussex, has emerged victorious from a defamation lawsuit filed against her by her half-sister Samantha Markle.

The actor and estranged royal had been accused by her relative of spreading “malicious lies” during an explosive 2021 interview with Oprah Winfrey and alleged statements to journalists in 2020.

But on Thursday a Florida judge dismissed the lawsuit, saying that Ms Markle’s statements were pure opinion and “not capable of being proved false”.

Io Dodds reports:

[*Meghan Markle wins defamation lawsuit against her half-sister Samantha*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/meghan-markle-samantha-defamation-lawsuit-b2311419.html)

Prince Harry has begun his ‘life’s work’ – by turning up in court when he didn’t need to be there

“The very best satire has a remarkable knack for changing absolutely nothing. Harry and Meghan were made to look so perfectly absurd by [*South Park’s “Worldwide Privacy Tour” episode*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/harry-meghan-south-park-episode-worldwide-privacy-tour-b2288647.html) that the California-based campaigners have evidently concluded that they have been left with little choice but to carry on precisely as normal.

“The Worldwide Privacy Tour made an unexpected stop in London on Monday morning, [*when Prince Harry arrived at the High Court to attend a preliminary hearing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-trial-daily-mail-live-b2308564.html) in one of his many legal actions against an extremely large section of the British newspaper industry.

“He didn’t need to be there. He wasn’t required to participate in any way in the hearing. But the act of taking everyone by surprise by actually turning up is certainly the prince’s first big shot in [*what he told Tom Bradby*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/harry-itv-interview-talking-points-b2258282.html) was going to be his “life’s work” from now on: that of holding the [*press*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/press) to account.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Prince Harry has begun his ‘life’s work’, apparently | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html)

Meadows to be established at historic English sites to mark King’s coronation

One hundred wildflower meadows are to be created or enhanced at historic sites across England including Stonehenge and Westminster’s Jewel Tower in celebration of the King‘s coronation.

English Heritage said the project would leave a natural legacy by working to restore the country’s lost flower-rich glasslands, in tribute to Charles‘s love of the natural world.

Some 97% of the UK’s meadows have disappeared since the 1930s, with many remaining fragments left unprotected.

Seventy-five of the meadows will be brand new and 25 are existing ones which will be developed.

English Heritage’s chosen locations include 43 castles and forts, 22 abbeys and priories and 10 historic houses.

Whitby Abbey in Yorkshire, Queen Victoria’s former home Osborne on the Isle of Wight and Tintagel Castle in Cornwall are among them.

At the world-famous prehistoric stone circle Stonehenge in Wiltshire, a new field of wildflowers is planned for outside the visitor centre to greet people on arrival.

The banks of the monument are already a county wildlife site, with flowers such as orchids found in the outer grassland near the stones.

If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started.

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) is suing the Daily Mail for running what he alleges to be a covert surveillance operation on him, yet his witness statement on the matter appears to be more concerned with ramping up another conflict – with his own family.

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Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night

A luxury London hotel has launched a King’s coronation package, which will set guests back a right royal £13,000 per night.

The Crown Jewels Experience is available to book at Hotel Café Royal, fittingly located on Regent Street, and includes an overnight stay in the Royal Suite.

Helen Wilson-Beevers reports:

[*Luxury London hotel launches King’s coronation package for £13,000 per night*](https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/uk/england/london/luxury-london-hotel-kings-coronation-package-b2305932.html)

King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) received a rousing standing ovation from [*German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/german) politicians after addressing the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) in both fluent German and [*English*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/english).

The monarch made history on Thursday 30 March, becoming the first member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) to speak in Germany’s federal [*parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/parliament) while it is in session.

During his address, Charles spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

Camilla, Queen Consort, was watching his speech from the Bundestag floor.

Watch:

[*King Charles receives standing ovation after delivering historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-germany-bundestag-speech-b2310877.html)

‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears

In case you missed it...

[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) suffered from “suspicion and paranoia” and lost friends because of newspaper articles, a court heard on Monday, [*as he launched his campaign to reform the media with a surprise appearance in London*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html).

The [*Duke of Sussex*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/duke-of-sussex) flew 5,500 miles from his new home in California to attend a High Court hearing [*as the Daily Mail’s publisher bids to throw out claims against its titles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-latest-b2309134.html) , including accusations of phone-hacking.

Also in court were Sir [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) , Sadie Frost, and [*Baroness Lawrence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/doreen-lawrence) , who are among the public figures suing [*Associated Newspapers*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/associated-newspapers) for alleged unlawful activity.

Alastair Jamieson reports:

[*‘Paranoid’ Prince Harry lost friends over ‘unlawful’ newspaper stories, court hears*](https://www.independent.co.uk/independentpremium/lifestyle/prince-harry-daily-mail-leaks-paranoid-b2309250.html)

War in Ukraine has inflicted the “most unimaginable suffering”, King Charles says

The King has made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror – but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity – in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

King hails ‘special bond’ between UK and Germany in Bundestag address

The King has celebrated the “special bond” between the UK and Germany as he became the first British monarch to address the Bundestag during his historic state visit to the country.

Speaking in both German and English, Charles said he could “hardly begin to express the pride” he felt in the relationship between the two countries and spoke fondly of his “cherished” family ties to Germany.

He also thanked the country for its kindness following the death of his mother, the late Queen.

He said: “Today, it gives me particular pride to be with you ... and to renew the special bond between our two countries.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

With a quip about the Lionesses’ victory over Germany at Euro 2022, the monarch hailed it as “just one example of how our countries, together, can offer a compelling example to the world”.

“Faced with so many shared challenges, the United Kingdom and Germany are together providing leadership to secure our shared future,” he added.

King Charles makes historic address to Bundestag parliament in fluent German

[*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) has made history as he becomes [*the first British monarch to address German politicians*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-iii-germany-prince-harry-court-b2310740.html) from the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) , while the parliament is in session.

Charles is delivering a speech in German which celebrates the deep-rooted links between [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany) and the UK on his first state visit to the country.

The King spoke of the importance of renewing the “special bond of friendship” between the two countries.

[*Maryam Zakir-Hussain reports:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/maryam-zakir-hussain)

[*King Charles makes historic address to German parliament in fluent German*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html)

I’m an artist who paints in blood – this is why I’m so angry with Prince Harry

“I am an anti-war artist and a former Soviet soldier. I reject Harry’s comments about killing people as though they are pieces on a chessboard. [*I am drenching St Paul’s Cathedral in Royal Blood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/andrei-molodkin-prince-harry-taliban-afghanistan-b2308471.html) – the UK’s Royal Coat of Arms filled with the blood of Afghan people who have not forgotten the illegal war on their land and who are against Harry’s comments about his desensitised killings.

“As Harry is in London, I have contacted him to set up a meeting, as an ex-militarist myself, to discuss my ideas for the computer game I am producing inspired by his time in Afghanistan. We have much to discuss.

“[*He is in court against Associated Newspapers Limited over allegations of criminality against him*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-court-daily-mail-latest-news-b2309372.html) – “unlawful information gathering”. From what I have seen, he keeps himself in the spotlight, [*bringing attention to his personal life*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-london-phone-hacking-b2308793.html) , while going to extreme lengths to plead for privacy.

“[*Boasting about killing,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-killed-25-taliban-military-b2257584.html) whether for democracy or not, is something I do not accept. During military service in the Soviet Union, I saw a fellow soldier put a gun to his heart and shoot himself. Later, we were eating in the canteen and the guards pulled him through the room. His body and clothes were covered in blood, so he left a line like a signature behind him. A bloodline.”

[*Andrei Molodkin writes:*](https://www.independent.co.uk/author/andrei-molodkin)

[*Opinion: I’m an artist who uses blood – this is why I’m angry with Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/royal-blood-artist-st-paul-prince-harry-b2309953.html)

Prince Harry’s relationship with the press used to be ‘mutually parasitic’ – now it’s openly antagonistic

“Up on the third floor, in the strip-lit, pine-clad bowels of the Royal Courts of Justice there’s a sign on the door of Court 76 that says “Sussex and Others”. You could be forgiven for thinking you’d got lost in a very sterile beer festival or a Shakespearean costume store.

“On Monday, Court 76 broke all attendance records for a pre-trial hearing, at least in the view of its presiding judge Mr Justice Nicklin. [*Elton John*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/elton-john) and David Furnish, Doreen Lawrence, Sadie Frost and of course Sussex himself all lined up to listen to interminable legal argument that will cost you about £800 an hour just to pay someone to understand for you.

“Day two, by contrast, was for the diehards, and Sussex – also known as [*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) – is going to be dying very hard indeed. This is only a pre-trial hearing in his action against the publishers of the Daily Mail, over breaches of privacy and the illegal gathering of information (chiefly by private investigators), which Associated Newspapers denies. It is the sort of thing that the rich and famous rarely bother with, but arguably, it’s certainly bothering the most famous person in the world right now.”

Tom Peck writes:

[*Harry’s relationship with the press isn’t parasitic, it’s antagonistic | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/daily-mail-court-case-prince-harry-b2309946.html)

King Charles ‘really showed interest in everyone’s stories’, refugee centre manager says

During his state visit to Germany with the Queen Consort, Charles was given a tour of the Ukraine Arrival Centre by German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier on Thursday.

Stopping to speak to families registering after just arriving, asked: “Was it very difficult to get out of Ukraine? Are you pleased to be here?”

Charles took up the offer of a game of table football in the refugee centre’s games room and joked: “I remember trying this when I was younger.”

But when he conceded a goal, he replied: “Amazing, two hands you are the experts.”

Speaking afterwards through a translator Olena Ochkiviska, 40, said: “I told him everyone was caring after us and they are working on the negatives.

“He said that he was praying for us all. I’m the luckiest lady in the world.”

Kleopatra Tummler, operations manager of the refugee centre, who also worked 15 years as Take That’s tour manager, said afterwards: “He really showed interest in everyone’s stories.

“He learned that some said there were not enough cellars in Ukraine for people to hide.

“There was a family who had just arrived and registered here who he stopped to talk to.”

Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address

In case you missed it...

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) continues his visit to [*Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/germany).

The monarch addressed the [*Bundestag*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/bundestag) on Thursday 30 March during a high-profile trip that will attempt to rebuild some of the European ties damaged by [*Brexit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brexit).

His remarks marked the first time that a member of the British [*royal family*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/royal-family) has spoken to members of Germany’s lower house of parliament while it is in session.

On Wednesday night, Charles pledged to “strengthen the connections” between the two nations while speaking at a banquet at Schloss Bellevue presidential palace in Berlin.

He also spoke in German to say he and Camilla were “deeply touched” by the warm welcome they had received and he praised the “very special” nation.

Oliver Browning reports:

[*Watch as King Charles continues Germany trip with historic Bundestag address*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/germany-king-charles-visit-speech-b2310750.html)

Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort

[*Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-consort) [*Camilla*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/camilla) has paid tribute to the queens who came before her while attending a State Banquet in [*Berlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/berlin) to honour her and [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) ’s state visit to Germany.

Camilla pinned a brooch with a portrait of her late mother-in-law, [*Queen Elizabeth II*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/queen-elizabeth-ii) , onto her black evening dress for the occasion on Wednesday (29 March).

On her head, she wore a tiara that once belonged to the Queen Mother. Her dress, which was covered in silver embroidery, was designed by Bruce Oldfield, [*who is in charge of creating her coronation dress*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-coronation-outfit-queen-consort-b2306836.html).

The glittering Boucheron tiara was gifted to the Queen Consort by the late Elizabeth. Camilla also wore a fringed necklace from the late Queen’s jewellery collection.

The brooch is the Queen’s Family Order, the sovereign’s highest personal order of merit, and showcases a hand-painted miniature portrait of a young Queen Elizabeth.

Kate Ng reports:

[*Camilla pays tribute to predecessors during first state visit as Queen Consort*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/camilla-queen-consort-brooch-tiara-b2310887.html)

Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit

Watch as [*King Charles III*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii) meets with members of a German-British battalion during his first overseas trip as sovereign.

The King was greeted by [*Brandenburg*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/brandenburg) state premier Dietmar Woidke upon his arrival to the base in Finowfurt.

The head and deputy head of the battalion, Stefan Klein and Ian Higginbotham, also met with the monarch during his visit.

King Charles became the first monarch to address Germany’s parliament, the Bundestag, earlier on Thursday.

During his address, he stressed the close bonds between the United Kingdom and Germany.

Watch here:

[*Watch: King Charles visits joint military battalion during Germany visit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/king-charles-germany-military-battalion-b2310948.html)

Prince Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as King Charles visits Germany

Prince has returned to court for his ongoing case against the publisher of the Daily Mail, just as his father Charles visits Germany in his first overseas visit as king.

After missing the third day of the hearing, the Duke of Sussex reappeared at the [*High Court*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/high-court) on Thursday, as his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher to end the legal action.

Earlier in the day his father -who it was reported would not be seeing his US-based son during his surprise visit to the UK -[*gave a historic address to the German parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/king-charles-speaks-german-b2310878.html).

[*Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/harry) and other high-profile individuals accuse Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL) of having “concealed wrongdoing” over the alleged unlawful gathering of their private information.

ANL, which denies the allegations, says a judge should rule in its favour without a trial because the legal challenges against it are brought “far too late”.

Tom Pilgrim reports:

[*Harry returns to court for phone-tapping fight as father Charles visits Germany*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/prince-harry-king-charles-daily-mail-b2310991.html)

In pictures: King Charles and Queen Consort’s visit to Germany

The King and the Queen Consort are halfway through their first state visit to Germany, taking place in Berlin, Brandenburg and Hamburg from Wednesday, 29 March to Friday, 31 March, 2023.

Their visit to France, which was scheduled for 26-29 March, has been postponed due to ongoing mass strikes and protests.

Today, Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

Public says allegations “unfounded"

Adrian Beltrami KC, for the publisher, previously told the court: “The claims are rejected by the defendant in their entirety as are the unfounded allegations that are repeatedly made that the defendant either misled the Leveson Inquiry or concealed evidence from the Leveson Inquiry.”

The lawyer said the legal action against it has “no real prospects of succeeding” and is “barred” under a legal period of limitation.

The duke and others allege that ANL hired private investigators to place listening devices inside cars, “blag” private records, and access and record private phone conversations.

Six of those bringing cases against the publisher have referred to alleged confessions by private investigator Gavin Burrows in their claims, but ANL has highlighted a later contrasting witness statement from Mr Burrows in which he denies being commissioned by its newspapers to conduct unlawful information gathering.

Court told of “systemic wrongdoing by the defendant”

In written arguments, Mr Sherborne added there were “vociferous and prolific denials of any wrongdoing by the defendant, made on oath to the Leveson Inquiry by its senior executives, and repeated ever since”, which the duke and others “were entitled to and did believe”, and which prevent the publisher from arguing that material could have been discovered earlier.

He said the group had since “uncovered concealed and systemic wrongdoing by the defendant” through information allegedly provided by private investigators and in new documents.

Mr Furnish, and later Baroness Lawrence, were also present in court again on Thursday, following visits this week from Sir Elton and Ms Frost.

“I’m praying for you”, King Charles tells Ukrainians during historic Bundestag address

The King has told Ukrainians “I’m praying for you” after condemning the “unimaginable suffering” caused by President Vladimir Putin’s invasion of their homeland.

Charles met families who escaped to Germany after he praised the nation’s “courageous, important and appreciated” decision to send “significant” military support to Ukraine in a historic address to the Bundestag.

At Berlin’s old Tegel Airport the King met recently arrived Ukrainians, a few of more than a million who have sought refuge in the country, and in a lighter moment played table football with some of the group.

On several occasions Charles clasped his hands together and told refugees “I’m praying for you”.

The King made history by delivering the first speech by a British monarch during a session of the Bundestag.

He told the packed chamber: “The unprovoked invasion of Ukraine has inflicted the most unimaginable suffering on so many innocent people.

“Countless lives have been destroyed; freedom and human dignity have been trampled in the most brutal way. The security of Europe has been threatened, together with our democratic values.

“The world has watched in horror -but we have not stood by. Even as we abhor the appalling scenes of destruction, we can take heart from our unity -in defence of Ukraine, of peace and freedom.

“Germany and the United Kingdom have shown vital leadership. As Europe’s two largest donors to Ukraine, we have responded with taking decisions which might previously have seemed unimaginable. Germany’s decision to send such significant military support to Ukraine is remarkably courageous, important and appreciated.”

Baroness Lawrence ‘was gaslit'

Mr Sherborne later read out extracts from Baroness Lawrence’s witness statement in which she said she felt “played for a fool” by the Daily Mail, believing the newspaper “really cared” about the injustice of the murder of her son Stephen Lawrence.

The baroness said she learned a journalist allegedly instructed a private investigator to target her, saying that she “never thought to blame” the newspaper.

“They were supposed to be our allies and friends, the good people, not the bad,” she said, adding that she had believed that information in articles about her came from the police.

Mr Sherborne told the court: “That is nothing short of gaslighting Baroness Lawrence, that’s the form of concealment we are talking about.”

Daily Mail publisher ‘ commissioned 19 different private investigators'

On the final day of a preliminary hearing in London on Thursday, David Sherborne, representing Harry and others, said ANL’s challenge to their legal action was as “ambitious as it is unattractive”.

He accused the publisher of seeking an “impermissible mini-trial or worse” before further documentation and evidence was secured in the cases.

The barrister said the group, which also includes actresses Sadie Frost and Liz Hurley and ex-Liberal Democrat MP Sir Simon Hughes, had a “compelling case”.

Mr Sherborne said ANL was alleged to have commissioned 19 different private investigators to carry out a series of unlawful acts from 1993 to 2011 and beyond, which in some instances informed articles.

He told the court the group was “thrown off the scent by the way in which the articles were written”.

Latest photos from Charles and Camilla’s Germany visit

Tom Peck: If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023

In the modern world, when conflicts turn hot, they also turn complicated. When one country invades another, it is not uncommon for it to end up with less, not more, than when it started, (writesTom Peck).

Not that long ago, capitalism and communism were engaged in what really should have been a straightforward existential struggle, but it hadn’t even been going for all that long before America was secretly selling guns to Iran and sending the profits to a guerrilla movement in Nicaragua for reasons that really don’t make sense even on the tenth reading of the Wikipedia page on the subject.

[*If Prince Harry has his way, this is going to be the story of 2023 | Tom Peck*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/prince-harry-court-hearing-daily-mail-royal-family-b2310616.html)

Prince Harry spotted wearing £800 Dior shirt, complete with 18-carat gold embroidery

Prince Harry donned an £800 Dior shirt as he reappeared at the High Court for the final day of a preliminary hearing in London.

The shirt, which the luxury designer describes as being “crafted in luxurious and soft white cotton poplin”, is emblazoned with an embroidered bee, sewn using 18-carat gold thread.

Dior recommends the shirt be worn either with a suit “for a timeless look” or with jeans “for more laid-back allure,” according to its description.

The Duke of Sussex opted for the former after his lawyers resisted an “ambitious” and “unattractive” bid by the publisher of the Daily Mail to end his legal action against it.

Baroness Doreen Lawrence arrives at High Court

Baroness Doreen Lawrence has arrived in the courtroom for the final day of the preliminary hearing involving Associated Newspapers Limited.

Harry pictured arriving at High Court

Harry arrives at High Court

Prince Harry has arrived at the Royal Courts of Justice in London for the final day of a preliminary hearing in a set of privacy claims against Associated Newspapers Limited (ANL).

He arrived through the building’s side entrance around 1:45pm.

King Charles visits ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** in Berlin

The King has been photographed visiting the Tegel Refugee Centre in Berlin, where he is seen talking to Ukrainian people and families given refuge there.

Latest images of Charles and Camilla’s trip to Germany

UK’s friendship with Germany ‘meant so much to my beloved mother’, says Charles

King Charles spoke earnestly of late Queen Elizabeth II’s affection for Germany during his historic address to the Bundestag on Thursday.

“This friendship meant so much to my beloved mother, the late Queen, who often spoke of the 15 official visits she made to Germany, including her five state visits,” he said.

“The first of those, in 1965, came when our continent was still deeply scarred by war, and the trauma of conflict. Hers was the wartime generation, and like my father, the Queen had served in uniform.

“That my parents’ 11-day tour of Germany should prove to be a pivotal moment in the reconciliation between our nations was, therefore, a matter of great personal significance to them both.

“My mother understood the immense achievement that reconciliation represented, and in returning to Germany time and again, she was determined to play her own part. It is, perhaps, for this reason that Her late Majesty won a particular place in the affection of the German people.”

Watch: King Charles receives rousing standing ovation after delivering Bundestag address in German

**Load-Date:** April 2, 2023

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[*Ukraine-Russia war – live: Dozens injured in Kyiv missile strike as ‘90% of Putin’s pre-war troops lost’*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:69VR-VD81-DY4H-K30T-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:19

**Length:** 10864 words

**Byline:** Tom Watling ,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Athena Stavrou

**Highlight:** Six children, including a five-year-old, were injured during the attack

**Body**

At least 51 people, including six children, were injured in a [*Russian missile attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-losses-counter-offensive-b2463071.html) on [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) in the early hours of Wednesday as Putin’s pre-war troops suffers devastating losses.

Loud explosions rocked Kyiv at 3am as the city’s air defences started intercepting Russian missiles headed for the peaceful capital for the second time this week.

Kyiv mayor [*Vitali Klitschko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vitali-klitschko) said debris from the intercepted missiles fell in the capital’s eastern Dniprovskyi district, damaging several buildings including a children’s hospital and the water supply system.

All missiles targeting the capital were downed by [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s air defence systems, Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv’s military administration said.

The attack comes as a war monitoring think-tank reported that pre-war Russian forces have been devastated.

The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), citing a declassified US intelligence document, said Putin’s army has lost 87 per cent of their pre-war active-duty ground troops.

The intelligence assessment reportedly stated that Russian forces lost 315,000 out the 360,000 military personnel in their inventory before February 2022.

Although intelligence suggests 420,000 Russian personnel are currently in occupied Ukraine, the ISW said they “likely have lower combat capabilities” than those they replaced.

Key Points

Kyiv children’s hospital damaged in missile strike Russia ‘lost 87% of pre-war troops’ in war Fears of winter push by Moscow ahead of Vladimir Putin elections in March Ukraine soldier says situation in Avdiivka is ‘very difficult’

EU unblocks billions for Hungary even though its leader threatens to veto Ukraine aid

The European Union on Wednesday relented and granted [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) access to billions of euros in frozen funds just as Prime Minister Viktor Orban appeared ready to defy his EU partners and veto the opening of membership talks and vital financial aid for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

A year ago, the European Union’s executive branch blocked substantial amounts of money out of concern that democratic backsliding by Orban’s nationalist government could put the bloc’s budget at risk.

The billions withheld mostly concern “cohesion funds” earmarked for Hungary. This envelope of money, one of the biggest slices of the 27-nation bloc’s budget, helps countries maintain their infrastructure at EU standards. They must apply for the money to fund building and other projects.

[*EU unblocks billions for Hungary even though its leader threatens to veto Ukraine aid*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/viktor-orban-ap-hungary-ukraine-european-commission-b2463522.html)

Analysis -Russia’s intensifying missiles strikes on Ukraine’s cities are a grim reminder how key Western support is

With critical military supplies from [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s most important ally, America, in danger of drying up, [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) is stretching Ukraine’s air defences to the limit with an [*intensified onslaught*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-in-ukraine-war-cia-b2463129.html) using drones and ballistic missiles.

[*More than 50 people*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-missile-attack-ukraine-kyiv-injured-latest-b2463088.html) , including six children, were injured after Russia launched 10 ballistic missiles at the Ukrainian capital, [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) , early on Wednesday.

Ballistic missiles are more difficult to detect than other types like cruise missiles or drones, whose entire journey is powered by engines. The important difference in ballistic missiles is that the last stage of their trajectory is unpowered giving less warning where they will land.

Askold Krushelnycky has the full report

[*Russia’s intensifying strikes on Ukraine’s cities show how vital Western support is*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-missiles-kyiv-us-b2463556.html)

US lawmakers grapple with border security deal details linked to foreign aid

U.S. lawmakers and the White House are discussing what level of border arrests should trigger stringent new asylum rules under a possible border security deal that would also include aid for Ukraine and Israel, a Republican senator said on Wednesday.

Senator Thom Tillis, a Republican involved with bipartisan talks over a border deal, said the White House had offered a proposal that included the creation of a new migrant expulsion authority similar to the COVID-era Title 42 policy.

“The administration has set something forward,” Tillis told reporters. “It’s not a detailed proposal, but it actually does define some of the contours that I think could dramatically reduce future flows.”

A group of Senate lawmakers have been negotiating a border agreement that would be paired with the Ukraine and Israel military aid. But they face a tight timeline to pass a bill amid opposition from both liberals and conservatives. Lawmakers are scheduled to leave Washington at the end of the week for a three-week holiday break.

The White House offer raised hopes that the Senate could act before Christmas on a bill the Republican-led House of Representatives could then take up in January. But some lawmakers warned that such a move would doom the legislation.

The House has pushed to pair aid for Ukraine with an enforcement-focused immigration bill known as H.R. 2., a measure Democrats have opposed.

Meet the women helping Putin’s frontline

Natalia Yermakova’s husband, Alexander, has been fighting in Ukraine for over a year after responding to President Vladimir Putin’s mobilisation call as a volunteer. Wounded in the leg, he was operated on and then sent back to the front.

A believer in what Russia calls its “special military operation” against Ukraine, Natalia is toiling as a volunteer in a “Family Battalion” in Moscow.

She is one of a group of around 40 mostly female relatives of mobilised men who thread camouflage netting, make signs to mark minefields, gather candles to be used in dug-outs, and put food parcels together in their free time.

As Putin positions himself to win a fifth presidential term in March, casting himself as the right man to lead a military campaign that the West says is a colonial-style war of aggression, it is people like Yermakova whom Putin is relying on to hold his support base together.

Her work takes place in an office belonging to the ruling United Russia party, which is adorned with Russia’s red, blue and white flag and portraits of politicians such as Putin.

There are similar groups working around Moscow, she said.

The relatives take turns accompanying the deliveries they assemble -in a more-than-30-year-old van -to the Russian military in what Yermakova calls “the new territories” -Ukrainian land annexed by Russia.

“We really want to support them (the soldiers) morally and emotionally and send them a message...that what they are doing there is needed by people here,” Yermakova told Reuters, while taking a break from threading a giant camouflage net.

00:15 , Lydia Patrick Germany’s government clinched a last-minute deal on its 2024 budget on Wednesday that will see Berlin return to its self-imposed limits on new debt despite warnings this could hamper growth in Europe’s top economy and its green transition.

Chancellor Olaf Scholz’s three-party coalition was faced with either suspending what is known as the debt brake or finding some 17 billion euros ($18.3 billion) in savings and tax hikes after a Nov. 15 constitutional court ruling threw its plans into disarray.

Weeks of tense talks that had raised doubts the coalition could survive ended at around 5 a.m. (0400 GMT) on Wednesday with an agreement to go down the path of austerity -a win for fiscally hawkish junior partner, the Free Democrats (FDP).

Scholz of the centre-left Social Democrats (SPD) nevertheless said the brake to limit debt could be suspended again if Ukraine needed more funding to fight off Russia’s invasion. He was speaking hours before flying to Brussels to an EU summit at which support for Kyiv will be top of the agenda.

“The government will stick to its goals ... but we must do so with less money which means cuts and savings,” Scholz told a press conference flanked by Finance Minister Christian Lindner of the FDP and Economy Minister Robert Habeck of the Greens.

After the court ruled that 60 billion euros of unused pandemic debt could not be moved to a climate and transformation fund, Scholz said that fund would be reduced by 12 billion euros in 2024 and by 45 billion euros in budget planning up to 2027.

US says Russia has lost 315,000 troops in Ukraine, equivalent to 90% of invading force

[*Russia has had 315,000 of its troops killed or injured*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-losses-ukraine-war-300000-uk-data-b2447476.html) in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , the equivalent of nearly 90 per cent of the total number of soldiers [*it sent to war when the invasion first*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-putin-losses-counter-offensive-b2463071.html) began, a declassified US intelligence report said.

[*Vladimir Putin’s personnel losses*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-losses-general-deaths-war-b2458444.html) in the 22 months of the conflict have set back [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ’s military modernisation by 18 years, a source familiar with the assessment told Reuters.

The numbers represent a far greater tally than Russian officials have ever admitted to, and also outstrip Western estimates of Ukrainian losses.

Russia launched a [*full-scale invasion of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-losses-update-b2391513.html) [*with a total of 360,000 personnel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-losses-update-b2391513.html) in February last year. After failing in its attempts to rapidly capture the Ukrainian capital Kyiv, Moscow has since launched several major recruitment drives to further bolster its numbers on the frontline, and replace tiring troops.

[*US says Russia has lost 315,000 troops in Ukraine, equivalent to 90% of invading men*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-in-ukraine-war-cia-b2463129.html)

Voices -The mysterious prison disappearance of Putin’s most powerful opponent

Russia’s best-known opposition figure [*Alexei Navalny has gone missing*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/alexei-navalny-vladimir-putin-russia-president-b2462091.html) , from the one place you would have thought no one could go missing: a high-security Russian prison camp.

The alarm was sounded by his lawyers, who said they had been told that Navalny was no longer listed at the penal colony north of Moscow, but were not informed of his whereabouts. Amnesty International has [*designated Navalny a prisoner of conscience*](https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/press-release/2021/05/statement-on-alexei-navalnys-status-as-prisoner-of-conscience/) and called [*on the Russian authorities*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/russia-vladimir-putin-2024-election-b2461080.html) to “disclose his fate and whereabouts immediately”.

The most prosaic explanation for Navalny’s disappearance is that he is in the process of being transferred to another camp. In August, [*he was sentenced to an additional 19 years for offences*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/navalny-ap-russia-vladimir-putin-germany-b2448738.html) , including “inciting and financing extremism”, which his supporters see as politically motivated.

Read the full comment piece by Mary Dejevsky here

[*Has anyone seen Alexei Navalny? No? This is why it matters...*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/alexei-navalny-where-missing-russia-prison-b2463231.html)

ICYMI -10 Russian drones shot down over night

10 Russian drones were shot down, most of them in the Odesa region, the Ukrainian air force said.

The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe said in a report that Russian forces this year have “continued to use explosive weapons with wide area effects in their attacks on densely populated urban areas of Ukraine ... both in areas close to heavy fighting and in cities far from the contact line”.

The governmental organisation added in the report published on Wednesday that Ukrainian armed forces, though on a much smaller scale, also shelled populated areas of Ukraine that are occupied by Russia, causing civilian casualties and damage to civilian infrastructure.

Polish PM Tusk: "apathy on Ukraine is unacceptable"

Poland’s new Prime Minister Donald Tusk, arriving at a European Union summit in Brussels, said that his role would be to strengthen European determination to effectively support Ukraine against Russia’s invasion.

“Apathy on Ukraine is unacceptable,” Tusk said, adding that he will try to convince “some member states”.

Hungary locked horns with fellow European Union members on Wednesday over Ukraine‘s bid to join the bloc, aggravating a dispute that could hold up Kyiv’s membership drive and was set to overshadow an EU summit.

Latest pictures from Ukraine

ICYMI: Major Russian missile attack on Kyiv injures 51 and damages children’s hospital

At least 51 people, including six children, were injured in a Russian missile attack on Kyiv in the early hours of Wednesday in a sign of a renewed winter offensive by Vladimir Putin on Ukrainian civilians miles away from the war’s frontlines.

This is the second missile assault on Ukrainian civilians within 48 hours as Volodymyr Zelensky is in the US seeking help to save the besieged nation from Russian aggression.

Kyiv mayor Vitali Klitschko said debris from the intercepted missiles fell in the capital’s eastern Dniprovskyi district, damaging several buildings and the water supply system.

Of the total injured, 18 people were hospitalised while 27 others were receiving medical treatment on the spot. The oldest person hurt in the attack is 80 and the youngest is 5, officials said.

The debris from the missile assault damaged an apartment building, a private house, and set several cars ablaze. It also shattered the windows and entrances of a nearby children’s hospital.

Deputy editor of Putin’s favourite newspaper ‘found dead just one year after boss’

The deputy editor of Russian president Vladimir Putin’s “favourite newspaper” has reportedly been found dead at her Moscow apartment.

Anna Tsavera was found by her parents at her home just one year after the mysterious death of her former boss Vladimir Sungorkin, police told Russian news agency TASS.

Ms Tsavera was the deputy editor-in-chief of Komsomolskaya Pravda, a daily tabloid newspaper described by Mr Putin as his “favourite newspaper”, according to a document from the European Commission.

Russian media outlet Baza, which has links to Russia’s security services, wrote on their Telegram channel that on 10 December, Ms Tsareva spoke with her parents on the phone and complained of feeling unwell.

She reportedly was working the next day, but in the evening her father and landlord found her dead in her bed.

Police have opened an investigation but initial reports suggest there were no signs of a struggle or a violent death.

Ms Tsavera had been in her role at the newspaper for six years.

Voices: The mysterious prison disappearance of Putin’s most powerful opponent

Russia’s best-known opposition figure Alexei Navalny has gone missing, from the one place you would have thought no one could go missing: a high-security Russian prison camp.

The Independent’s foreign affairs columnist Mary Dejevsky writes how although conspiracy theories are rife, Mr Navalny’s disappearance has more serious repercussions.

Read the full premium article here:

[*Has anyone seen Alexei Navalny? No? This is why it matters...*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/alexei-navalny-where-missing-russia-prison-b2463231.html)

Denmark promise 1 billion euro support package for Ukraine

Nordic nations have vowed to keep supporting Ukraine following Zelensky’s surprise visit to Oslo on Wednesday.

Together, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland said they would support Ukraine “for as long as it takes” in a joint statement released on Wednesday.

Separately, Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen said her government would present a new support package for Ukraine worth one billion euros (£858 million)to parliament this week.

Additionally, Norway’s Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said they would donate three billion crowns (£218 million) to Ukraine as part of a package previously approved by Norway’s parliament.

“We are providing targeted, long-term support to assist Ukraine in its battle for freedom and democracy,” Stoere said in a statement.

Orban has no reason to block Ukraine’s EU membership, Zelensky says

President Volodymyr Zelensky has said Hungary has no reason to block their EU membership talks.

It comes after Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orban has repeatedly spoken out against Ukraine’s goal to join the bloc.

Most of the European Union’s 27 members want to open talks on Ukraine’s accession at a summit this week and agree on billions of euros in further support for Kyiv in its war against Russia‘s invasion.

Mr Orban is blocking both moves. Hungary relies on Russia for much of its energy supply, and Mr Orban is seen as Russian President Vladimir Putin’s strongest ally in Europe.

Speaking to lawmakers in Hungary’s parliament on Wednesday, Mr Orban said that the time for bringing Ukraine into the EU had “not yet come”, and that the development of a strategic partnership with Kyiv should be a prerequisite for beginning membership talks.

“The government’s position is currently that Ukraine’s rapid entry into the European Union would come with unforeseeable consequences.

“Ukraine’s fast-track accession does not serve the interests of either Hungary or the European Union,” he said.

Germany renews support for Ukraine in budget

German chancellor Olaf Scholz said support for Ukraine would continue as he announced the country’s budget today.

Scholz’s government has pledged to double support for Kyiv to 8 billion euros next year compared to the current year. There will be 6 billion euros additionally for ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees***.

He added that the budget agreement meant support for Ukraine would continue for as long as it was needed and said Putin is betting on international support for Ukraine faltering.

Russia lose 90% of invading force, US say

Russia has had 315,000 of its troops killed or injured in Ukraine, the equivalent of nearly 90 per cent of the total number of soldiers it sent to war when the invasion first began, a declassified US intelligence report said.

The numbers represent a far greater tally than Russian officials have ever admitted to, and also outstrip Western estimates of Ukrainian losses.

“The scale of losses has forced Russia to take extraordinary measures to sustain its ability to fight. Russia declared a partial mobilisation of 300,000 personnel in late 2022, and has relaxed standards to allow recruitment of convicts and older civilians,” the assessment said.

Read the full report here:

[*US says Russia has lost 315,000 troops in Ukraine, equivalent to 90% of invading men*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russian-losses-in-ukraine-war-cia-b2463129.html)

Pictures: Overnight strike on Kyiv

Debris from intercepted Russian missiles devasted Ukraine’s capital overnight.

Over 50 were injured in the attack, including six children.

Ukraine’s biggest mobile network hope to restore services following cyber attack

Ukraine’s biggest mobile network, Kyivstar, is hoping to restore some of its services today following an “unprecedented cyber attack”.

The country’s security service is investigating the possibility that Russia may have been behind the attack on Tuesday, which saw 24.3 million mobile subscribers knocked out of services.

The attack -thought to be the largest attack since the war began -even damaged IT infrastructure and air raid alert systems in some regions.

“We expected that we would be able to return some services in the first half of the day today. We see that this will not happen, but we are moving towards starting to restore some services in the second half of the day,” the company’s CEO Oleksandr Komarov said in televised comments.

In a separate statement on Facebook, Kyivstar reiterated that personal client data was safe, and systems storing it were not damaged.

Moscow has not given an immediate comment.

North Korea hosts Russian governor for talks

A North Korean minister met with a Russian governor to discuss economic cooperation, state media KCNA reported on Wednesday.

The talks were between North Korea’s External Economic Relations Minister Yun Jong Ho and Oleg Kozhemyako, the governor of the Russian far eastern region of Primorsky, which borders the country.

Discussions focused on “elevating economic cooperation to a higher level,” KCNA said.

“This is the first visit after a long break caused by the pandemic,” Kozhemyako said on his Telegram channel. “Our delegation’s program includes many meetings to develop humanitarian ties between Primorye and the DPRK. First of all, in the field of culture, tourism and sports.”

In November, Kozhemyako told the Russian TASS state news agency that Primorye was ready to consider the possibility of providing part of its agricultural land for farming by North Korean farmers.

Kozhemyako’s visit marks the latest in a flurry of bilateral visits since North Korean leader Kim Jong-un visited Russia in September and met President Vladimir Putin to discuss deepening military cooperation.

Russia investigating radio journalist

Russian investigators have opened a criminal case against a Russian-American journalist for spreading misinformation about the army, a state-affiliated media outlet reported on Tuesday.

Alsu Kurmasheva, a journalist for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty has been detained since October 18 after being briefly detained in June while trying to fly out of Russia after visiting her mother.

Her employer said she was being unfairly and cruelly persecuted.

According to Tatar-Inform a state-affiliated media outlet she has been formally accused of deliberately gathering military information that could be used against Russia.

They said the case centred on a book she promoted by a Prague-based journalist which told stories of Russians who opposed the war in Ukraine.

Her promotion of the book was reportedly seen by state investigators as deliberately distributing false information about the Russian army out of political hatred.

There was no immediate comment from Russian authorities on the Tatar-Inform report.

Zelensky arrives in Norway ahead of EU summit

Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky has arrived in Norway to discuss further military and financial aid.

Mr Zelensky is meeting with Nordic leaders ahead of the European Union summit this week where a decision on whether Ukrainian membership talks is expected.

Speaking on Wednesday, Mr Zelensky said the summit would not be easy but he insisted that Kyiv had fulfilled all demands.

I have arrived in Oslo for the second Ukraine-Northern Europe Summit.Together with the leaders of Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Finland, and Sweden, we will discuss strengthening defense, political, and economic cooperation, as well as our common future in Europe. Our goal is… [*pic.twitter.com/q0JsvYJJJP*](https://t.co/q0JsvYJJJP) — Volodymyr Zelenskyy / Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*December 13, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1734857763837133008?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Russia ‘lost 87% of pre-war troops’ in war Wednesday 13 December 2023 10:02 , Athena Stavrou Pre-war Russian forces have been devastated by the war in Ukraine, a war monitoring think-tank has said.The Institute for the Study of War (ISW), citing a declassified US intelligence document, said Putin’s army has lost 87 per cent of their pre-war active-duty ground troops.The intelligence assessment reportedly stated that Russian forces lost 315,000 out the 360,000 military personnel on their inventory before February 24 2022.Russia has reportedly also lost two-thirds of the tanks in its pre-war inventory and over a quarter of their stockpiles of military equipment as of November 2023.The ISW says that Russia has managed to partially offset these losses and continues to prepare for a long war.Intelligence suggests 420,000 Russian personnel are currently in occupied Ukraine, although they “likely have lower combat capabilities” than those they replaced.Russia’s military command is also pursuing a “long-term restructuring and expansion” to prepare for a potential future conflict against NATO, ISW reported.Russia use new missile launch site to ‘complicate Ukrainian air defence efforts'Wednesday 13 December 2023 09:27 , Athena Stavrou Russia brought a new launch site into use on Tuesday in an effort to “complicate Ukrainian air defence efforts”, the UK’s Ministry of Defence said.In their latest defence intelligence update, the MoD said Russia launched at least 15 Shahed One Way Attack Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles (OWA UAV) from the Balaklava district of Crimea.This is now the fifth confirmed OWA UAV launch site being used in Russian operations against Ukraine alongside the sites at Cape Chauda, Yeysk, Primorsko, and Kursk.The Ministry of Defence said: “Russia is highly likely dispersing its OWA UAV launch capabilities across several locations as both a force protection measure and to complicate Ukrainian air defence efforts.“Russia will likely use additional launch sites in response to Ukrainian attacks, forcing Ukraine to adapt to new transit corridors of these systems.”Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 13 December 2023. Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/TzsUcPGtVV*](https://t.co/TzsUcPGtVV) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/NxHlg5QG0i*](https://t.co/NxHlg5QG0i) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*December 13, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1734847781901090836?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) EU chief says support Ukraine for ‘as long as it takes'Wednesday 13 December 2023 09:09 , Athena Stavrou The European Union’s chief executive urged the bloc on Wednesday to continue supporting Ukraine for “as long as it takes”.Ukraine is looking to a key European leaders’ summit on Thursday for a positive signal on its future in the European Union.“As the war drags on, we must prove what it means to support Ukraine for as long as it takes,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen told the European Parliament ahead of the leaders’ summit.Her Commission has proposed that the summit takes a decision this week to start EU membership talks with Ukraine once it meets the four outstanding conditions set out previously to advance Kyiv’s EU hopes. The Brussels EU executive suggested that could happen in March.Hungary is opposed to granting Ukraine more financial aid and has threatened to veto plans to advance Kyiv’s EU membership.Hungary reinforces opposition to Ukraine’s EU membership talksWednesday 13 December 2023 08:25 , Athena Stavrou Hungary has stuck to its opposition stance on Ukraine’s membership talks with the EU.Prime minister Viktor Orban said Ukraine should aim for a strategic partnership instead in an interview with local news broadcasters this morning.“The EU is preparing to make a terrible mistake and we must prevent that even if 26 (members) want to make the mistake,” Mr Orban said in the interview.“If we want to give support to Ukraine, a geostrategic signal, then we should, but this is not membership.”The Hungarian PM was seen engaging in a heated discussion with Ukrainian prime minister Volodymyr Zelensky in Argentina over the weekend.Mr Orban has repeatedly opposed Ukraine’s EU membership and boasts about his ties with Russian President Vladimir Putin.Russian offensives primarily ‘aimed to weaken Western support'Wednesday 13 December 2023 08:05 , Athena Stavrou Russia’s autumn offensive operations were primarily aimed at weakening Western support, US intelligence reportedly assessed.War monitoring think-tank The Insititute for the Study of War (ISW) cited the intelligence that said the operational objectives of Putin’s offenses were considered secondary aims.US intelligence reportedly concluded that offensives have only resulted in heavy Russian losses and no operationally significant Russian battlefield gains.US National Security Council Spokesperson Andrienne Watson reportedly stated that Russian forces have suffered more than 13,000 casualties and lost 220 combat vehicles along the Avdiivka-Novopavlivka axis since launching offensive operations in October 2023, ISW said.Western weapons should not be doubted, Kyiv official saysWednesday 13 December 2023 07:28 , Athena Stavrou Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky’s chief of staff said the effectiveness of Western weapons should not be doubted, in light of last night’s attack.The Ukrainian air force said it had downed 10 Russia-launched ballistic missiles overnight. “The effectiveness of Western weapons in the hands of Ukrainian soldiers cannot be doubted,” Zelensky’s chief of staff, Andriy Yermak said on the Telegram messaging app.“But there are victims as a result of falling fragments of Russian missiles, houses were burned. Kyiv is being hit with ballistic (missiles).”Over 50 civilians, including a five-year-old child, were injured as a result of debris from intercepting missiles during the attack.51 injured in Kyiv missile strikeWednesday 13 December 2023 07:18 , Athena Stavrou At least 51 people, including six children, were injured in a Russian missile attack on Kyiv in the early hours of Wednesday.Loud explosions rocked Kyiv at 3am as the city’s air defences started intercepting Russian missiles headed for the peaceful capital for the second time this week.Kyiv mayor [*Vitali Klitschko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vitali-klitschko) said that the debris from intercepted missiles damaged an apartment building, a private house, and set several cars ablaze. It also shattered the windows and entrances of a nearby children’s hospital.All missiles targeting the capital were downed by [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ’s air defence systems, Serhiy Popko, head of Kyiv’s military administration said.Andriy Shevchenko urges the world not to forget Ukraine: ‘The cold is coming. Russia will try to hit our energy’Wednesday 13 December 2023 07:00 , Lydia Patrick On the morning of 24 February 2022 – a date etched in every Ukrainian’s mind – [*Andriy Shevchenko*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/andriy-shevchenko) was woken by a phone call from his mother. She told him through tears that Russia was invading. Shevchenko was in London, where he lives with his wife and four sons; his mother and wider family were in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , under attack.Read the full voices piece by Lawrence Ostlere here[*Andriy Shevchenko on Ukraine: ‘The cold is coming. Russia will try to hit our energy’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/football/andriy-shevchenko-ukraine-italy-euro-2024-b2449276.html) Voices-Zelensky’s extraordinary visit can’t fix the fact America’s Ukraine aid is deadWednesday 13 December 2023 06:00 , Lydia Patrick In December of last year, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky arrived in Washington as a hero, delivering a joint address to Congress. The select committee investigating the January 6 riot postponed the release of its final report as Congress rolled out the red carpet for the leader of the country pushing back against aggression from Russia.But the warm welcome underlined the fact that Democrats, who at the time controlled the majority in the House, knew that passing aid to Ukraine would be much harder come January when Republicans took control of the House of Representatives.And indeed, on Tuesday 12 December, despite arriving in the US Senate in his trademark fatigues flanked by Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, most Republicans remained wholly unmoved in their opposition to assisting Ukraine.There is truly no way around it: Congress is wholly at an impasse when it comes to passing aid to Ukraine, and no dramatic plea from Zelensky can change it.[*Zelensky’s extraordinary visit can’t fix the fact America’s Ukraine aid is dead*](https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/zelensky-capitol-hill-ukraine-aid-b2462894.html) Watch -Biden slams GOP ‘gift’ to Putin and calls for Congress to pass Ukraine fundingWednesday 13 December 2023 04:00 , Lydia PatrickHomeless will not rise despite cuts to help to Ukrainians in Ireland, says ministerWednesday 13 December 2023 03:00 , Lydia Patrick Minister for Children and Integration Roderic O’Gorman has said that he does not expect homelessness to rise in Ireland amid plans to pare back state supports being offered to arriving Ukrainians.The Government has agreed to cut financial support for Ukrainians who are given state accommodation from the end of January, and will also provide state accommodation only for a maximum of 90 days.During that period, arrivals will be paid a 38.80 euro subsistence allowance and an additional 29.80 per child per week “in recognition of the fact that accommodation has been provided”, according to the Taoiseach.Arrivals had been entitled to a jobseeker’s allowance of 220 euro per week.Mr O’Gorman said that the proposal is similar to one proposed at Cabinet several weeks ago, but with a “significant change” in the form of the social welfare reduction.He also said that a number of properties around the country are to be set up solely for use as reception centres, alongside vacancies in hotel and guesthouse properties.Meals and laundry services, integration support and access to education for children will be provided in those reception centres.Top US Senate Republican says Ukraine aid deal ‘practically impossible’ before ChristmasWednesday 13 December 2023 02:00 , Lydia Patrick U.S. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said on Tuesday it would be “practically impossible” for Congress to pass a supplemental funding package including aid for Ukraine before Christmas.McConnell told reporters that a deal will not happen until President Joe Biden and Republicans reach agreement with Republicans, who want to link funding for Ukraine to new border security measures.US concern over Alexei Navalny ‘unacceptable meddling’, Kremlin saysWednesday 13 December 2023 01:00 , Lydia Patrick US concern over the condition of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny is unacceptable meddling in Russia’s domestic affairs, the Kremlin said.Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said he was unaware of the whereabouts of Navalny, who has been moved from his penal colony to an undisclosed location.It comes after the White House national security spokesperson John Kirby called for the immediate release of Navalny, saying “he should never have been jailed in the first place”.MI6 chief thanks Putin’s TV channel for help in encouraging Russians to spy for the UKWednesday 13 December 2023 00:00 , Lydia Patrick The head of Britain’s foreign intelligence agency has thanked Russian state television for its “help” encouraging Russians to spy for the U.K. after it translated and broadcast part of a speech he gave earlier this year in which he called on Russians to “join hands with us.”Anchor Maria Butina — herself a former Russian spy — included the clip at the top of a program about [*Richard Moore*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/richard-moore) , the head of [*Britain*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/britain) ‘s Secret Intelligence Service, also known as [*MI6*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/mi6). Moore gave the speech in July at the British Embassy in Prague where he openly encouraged Russians faced with “the venality, infighting and sheer callous incompetence of their leaders” to spy for Britain.On Monday, Moore tweeted that the British foreign intelligence agency had been “puzzling over how to get my message to our target audience in Russia — we never thought Russian state TV would step in to help.”[*MI6 chief thanks Putin’s TV channel for help in encouraging Russians to spy for UK*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/putin-russia-spy-uk-mi6-skripal-b2462666.html) Polish far-right politician extinguishes Hanukkah candle in parliamentTuesday 12 December 2023 23:00 , Lydia Patrick A far-right lawmaker in the [*Polish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/polish) parliament used a fire extinguisher on Tuesday and put out a candle on a menorah that was lit for the [*Jewish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jewish) holiday Hannukah.All major political forces quickly denounced the incident carried out by Grzegorz Braun, and said there would be no tolerance for antisemitic and xenophobic behavior in the Sejm, the Polish parliament.The speaker of the parliament, Szymon Holownia, called the act “absolutely scandalous” and excluded him from the day’s parliamentary proceedings. He said he was reporting him to prosecutors.“Poland is home of all religions,” Holownia said.[*Polish far-right politician extinguishes Hanukkah candle in parliament*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/poland-jewish-donald-tusk-ukraine-b2462799.html) Defence secretary Grant Shapps confirms transfer of two navy minehunters to UkraineTuesday 12 December 2023 22:00 , Lydia Patrick Britain is sending two Royal Navy minehunter ships to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) [*to boost its Black Sea capabilities in the face of Russia’s aggressive invasion*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-royal-navy-norway-mod-grant-shapps-b2461719.html) , officials said.UK defence secretary [*Grant Shapps*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/grant-shapps) said the aid is part of the [*collaborative effort between Britain and Norway*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-uk-norway-capability-coalition-b2461941.html) to bolster the Ukrainian Navy. Strong maritime forces are critical to fight Russia’s aggression and facilitate grain and steel shipments through the Black Sea, Mr Shapps said.[*UK is also sending amphibious armoured vehicles*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-grant-shapps-navy-minehunter-ship-b2461850.html) and coastal raiding boats to the nation under siege.“It’s not just those couple of ships, but we’re launching something called the ‘Maritime Coalition’, which is a British-led...but international plan to ensure that not only can they be-mine that part of the sea, but Ukraine can build a navy for the future,” Mr Shapps told the BBC.[*Defence secretary Grant Shapps confirms transfer of two navy minehunters to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/navy-minehunters-ukraine-grant-shapps-britain-norway-b2462457.html) Ukrainian commanders not about to be dismissed, defence minister saysTuesday 12 December 2023 21:00 , Lydia Patrick Ukrainian Defence Minister Rustem Umerov rejected any notion on Tuesday that two of the country’s top military commanders were about to be dismissed.“On this matter, there is no such question,” Umerov told a news conference alongside his Latvian counterpart. “On this matter, I am always open and if the question is ever raised, I will say something immediately. There are no such issues.”At issue at the news conference was the future of Commander in Chief Valery Zaluzhnyi and Joint Forces Commander Serhiy Nayev.The possibility of change in Ukraine‘s top military ranks has been raised several times since relations cooled between President Volodymyr Zelenskiy and Zaluzhnyi over the commander’s view of the conduct of the 21-month-old war against Russia.Zaluzhnyi, in a published essay last month, said the war was entering a phase of attrition similar to World War One battles.The president disagreed with any notion that the war was subject to a stalemate, though he has acknowledged that a counteroffensive launched in the east and south in June has moved more slowly than had been hoped.Umerov, appointed in September, made a similar denial last month that changes in Ukraine‘s command were under consideration.In his latest comments, Umerov said rotations of positions were a normal part of military operations “but there are no such issues, however much our enemies want to knock us off stride”.“Everyone is subject to change, absolutely everyone,” he told reporters. “We will do everything necessary for our victory, but for today, there is no such issue.”Biden tells Ukraine’s Zelensky: ‘Don’t give up hope'Tuesday 12 December 2023 20:15 , Lydia Patrick U.S. President Joe Biden told Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy not to give up hope in his country’s fight against Russia’s invasion, saying the U.S. Congress should fund additional aid.Biden also announced $200 million in separate military assistance for the country.Top US Senate Republican says Ukraine aid deal 'practically impossible' before ChristmasTuesday 12 December 2023 20:02 , Lydia Patrick U.S. Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell said on Tuesday it would be “practically impossible” for Congress to pass a supplemental funding package including aid for Ukraine before Christmas.McConnell told reporters that a deal will not happen until President Joe Biden and Republicans reach agreement with Republicans, who want to link funding for Ukraine to new border security measures.Zelensky visits Capitol Hill and the White House with US aid for Ukraine at risk of collapseTuesday 12 December 2023 19:13 , Lydia Patrick His country’s future at stake, Ukrainian President Volodymyr used inspirational words, resolve and a nod to Christmas in appealing Tuesday to leaders in Congress for U.S. aid for his fighters in the war with Russia.But as he arrived next at the White House, additional American support was in grave doubt.Zelensky’s visit to Washington came at a grim time, much changed from the hero’s welcome he received last year. President Joe Biden’s request for an additional $110 billion U.S. aid package for Ukraine, Israel and other national security needs is at serious risk of collapse in Congress as Republicans are insisting on linking it to strict U.S.-Mexico border security changes that Democrats decry.“The fight we’re in is a fight for freedom,” Zelensky repeatedly said in the meetings, according to lawmakers.Flanked by Democratic Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Republican Minority Leader Mitch McConnell, Zelensky entered a private meeting with senators with a public bipartisan show of support and to some applause. But more than an hour later few senators’ minds appeared changed.Schumer called it a “very powerful” meeting, but gave no update on stalled negotiations.Next Zelensky visited the House leaders, including privately with new Speaker Mike Johnson, whose hard-right Republicans have been the most resistance to any deal. Johnson insisted afterward: “We do want to do the right thing here.”The White House said the time was right for Zelensky’s trip to Washington as Biden pushes lawmakers approve the aid package before the year-end holidays. A top spokesman said the U.S. can’t let Ukraine aid lapse, especially as the Israel-Hamas war takes attention, and that the president was willing to make compromises with Republicans.“This additional funding will absolutely help Ukraine claw back even more of their territory and kick the Russians right out of Ukraine,” said the White House National Security Council spokesman John Kirby on NBC.Hackers attack Ukraine’s biggest mobile operatorTuesday 12 December 2023 18:00 , Alexander Butler Ukraine’s biggest mobile network operator, Kyivstar, has said it was the victim of a powerful hacker attack this morning.The company said it was working to repair the outage and was cooperating with law enforcement bodies.“Today, a technical failure occurred in our network, as a result of which communication and Internet access services may be unavailable to part of our subscriber base,” the operator said in a statement on Facebook.Moldova can join EU without Transnistria, EU ambassador saysTuesday 12 December 2023 17:00 , Alexander Butler Moldova could be able to join the EU without the contested region of Transnistria, the Kyiv Independent quotes the EU’s ambassador to Moldova, Janis Mazeiks, as saying.Speaking on the NordNews channel, Mr Mazeiks is reported to have said: “We wouldn’t see it fair if [Moldova] is taken hostage by the solution to this quite complex problem.”Transnistria is a breakaway region in eastern Moldova, which is politically, economically and militarily supported by Moscow.Russia and Iran 'working on major new agreement'Tuesday 12 December 2023 16:00 , Alexander Butler Russia will speed up work on a “major new interstate agreement” with Iran, the Kremlin has said.In a statement this morning, Russia said the two countries’ foreign ministers agreed in a phone call on Monday to speed up work on the agreement, which was at “a high stage of readiness”.The ministry provided no details on the planned agreement, which comes amid strengthening trade, political and other ties between Moscow and Tehran in the face of Western economic sanctions.Finland will reopen two border crossings with RussiaTuesday 12 December 2023 15:00 , Alexander Butler Finland will reopen one border crossing in the south of the country and one in the east, the Finnish prime minister Petteri Orpo said.It comes after the Finnish government closed its borders to Russia after accusing the Kremlin of deliberately sending refugees to destabilise the country.Russian troops suffer shortage of night vision technology, MoD saysTuesday 12 December 2023 14:00 , Alexander Butler Russian troops are “highly likely” to struggle fighting at night due to an ongoing shortage of night vision goggles, the UK ministry of defence said.“Russian forces are highly likely to continue to struggle when fighting at night. Numerous reports from combatants have highlighted this trend since the start of the war.“In late November 2023, a social media user claiming to be a Russian soldier serving in Kherson highlighted the shortage of night vision goggles and low-light cameras for uncrewed aerial vehicles,” it said on X.Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine – 12 December 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/TzsUcPGtVV*](https://t.co/TzsUcPGtVV) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/HuhllUsGiK*](https://t.co/HuhllUsGiK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*December 12, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1734489339327832105?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) US concern over Alexei Navalny ‘unacceptable meddling’, Kremlin saysTuesday 12 December 2023 13:00 , Alexander Butler US concern over the condition of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny is unacceptable meddling in Russia’s domestic affairs, the Kremlin said.Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said he was unaware of the whereabouts of Navalny, who has been moved from his penal colony to an undisclosed location.It comes after the White House national security spokesperson John Kirby called for the immediate release of Navalny, saying “he should never have been jailed in the first place”.'Highly worrying' that Alexei Navalny has 'been missing for a week', says EU foreign affairs chiefTuesday 12 December 2023 12:35 , Alexander Butler The EU’s foreign affairs chief Josep Borrell has said it was “highly worrying” that Alexei Navalny, the jailed Russian opposition leader, is reported to have been missing for seven days.“Highly worrying news of Navalny missing for seven days. Russia’s political leadership is responsible for his safety & health in prison for which they will be held to account.“The EU reiterates its call for his immediate and unconditional release from politically motivated incarceration,” Mr Borrell wrote on X.Highly worrying news of [*@Navalny*](https://twitter.com/navalny?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) missing for 7 days. Russia’s political leadership is responsible for his safety & health in prison for which they will be held to accountThe EU reiterates its call for his immediate &unconditional release frompolitically motivated incarceration— Josep Borrell Fontelles (@JosepBorrellF) [*December 12, 2023*](https://twitter.com/JosepBorrellF/status/1734508095890497795?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Ukraine’s biggest mobile network operator victim of major cyberattack

Ukraine’s biggest mobile network operator, Kyivstar, said it was the victim of a major hacker attack on Tuesday morning which has temporarily knocked out its cellular and internet signal, Reuters reports.

The company said it was working to repair the outage and was cooperating with law enforcement bodies.

Separately, the co-founder of Monobank, a major Ukrainian payment system, said his company was currently suffering a distributed denial of service (DDoS) attack, but that everything was “under control”.

Defence secretary Grant Shapps confirms transfer of two navy minehunters to Ukraine

Britain is sending two Royal Navy minehunter ships to Ukraine to boost its Black Sea capabilities in the face of Russia’s aggressive invasion, officials said.

UK defence secretary Grant Shapps said the aid is part of the collaborative effort between Britain and Norway to bolster the Ukrainian Navy. Strong maritime forces are critical to fight Russia’s aggression and facilitate grain and steel shipments through the Black Sea, Mr Shapps said.

UK is also sending amphibious armoured vehicles and coastal raiding boats to the nation under siege.

[*Defence secretary Grant Shapps confirms transfer of two navy minehunters to Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/navy-minehunters-ukraine-grant-shapps-britain-norway-b2462457.html)

Four wounded as Russia attacks Kyiv with ballistic missiles

Russia attacked the Ukrainian capital with eight long-range ballistic missiles before dawn on Monday and four people were wounded by debris after air defences shot down the incoming salvo, officials said.

The strike at around 4am marked the first major attack on Kyiv in recent months using ballistic missiles, which travel faster than drones and cruise missiles and are harder to shoot down.

Four people were hurt by shards of shattered glass in the Darnitskyi district, in southeastern Kyiv, and needed medical assistance, the national police said in a statement.

Zelensky says US and European freedom threatened by ‘Putin and his sick clique’

Russia’s real target is freedom in America and Europe despite a continuing war in Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky said in a candid speech at a defence university in Washington on Monday.

The Ukrainian president kick-started his visit to the US to ask for more aid to fight off the Russian invasion of his country.

Mr Zelensky said Russia’s war on Ukraine is not “just about some old-fashioned dictatorship trying to settle scores, real or imagined”.

[*Zelensky says US and European freedom threatened by ‘Putin and his sick clique’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-us-visit-putin-washington-latest-b2462421.html)

Watch -Defence Secretary Grant Shapps confirm transfer of two naval minehunters to Ukraine

Putin visits a shipyard to oversee the commissioning of new Russian nuclear submarines

Russian President [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) on Monday traveled to a shipyard to attend the commissioning of new nuclear submarines, a visit that showcased the country’s nuclear might amid the fighting in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

Putin’s trip to the Sevmash shipyard in Severodvinsk in Russia’s northwestern Archangelsk region comes three days after he declared his intention to seek another six-year term.

Putin announced his decision to run in the March 17 presidential election, which he is all but certain to win, while speaking to soldiers who fought in Ukraine after a [*Kremlin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kremlin) award ceremony — a setting that underlined his focus on the military action in Ukraine.

[*Putin visits a shipyard to oversee the commissioning of new Russian nuclear submarines*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-ukraine-moscow-nato-b2462024.html)

Tuesday 12 December 2023 05:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain[*Schoolboy’s hilarious reaction to Zelensky walking into classroom*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/zelensky-ukraine-schoolboy-video-classroom-b2457301.html)

Zelensky says had ‘frank’ talk with Hungary’s Orban ahead of Nato summit on Kyiv membership

Volodymyr Zelensky said he had a [*“frank” conversation with Hungarian prime minister*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-viktor-orban-hungary-kyiv-b2445188.html) Viktor Orban on Sunday as the two were seen chatting on the sidelines of the inauguration of Argentina’s new president Javier Milei.

“It was as frank as possible – and obviously, it was focussed on [*our European affairs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-eu-b2422864.html) ,” said Mr Zelensky in his nightly address, referring to his interaction with the Hungarian leader.

The two leaders were seen conversing in a corner of the Argentine parliament after Mr Orban [*threatened to block*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-ap-viktor-orban-robert-fico-russia-b2437245.html) more European Union financial support to Kyiv. A nearly 20-second-long video showed Mr Zelensky engaging with Mr Orban animatedly in parliament where hundreds of leaders had gathered.

[*Zelensky says had ‘frank’ talk with Hungary’s Orban ahead of Nato summit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zelensky-orban-nato-hungary-ukraine-war-b2461801.html)

Who is Russian army chief Valery Gerasimov? The country’s top soldier turned Putin’s fall guy

Valery [*Gerasimov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/valery-gerasimov) , an unsmiling, grey-haired giant, stood waiting for [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) outside the entrance to the Russian [*Southern Military Command Centre*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-ukraine-valery-gerasimov-dmitry-peskov-b2445107.html) , about 60 miles from the eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) border.

His clenched hands hung by his sides, like a schoolboy waiting for the headmaster. It was 19 October 2023. The Russian chief of the general staff, Mr Putin’s top soldier, had been appointed the operational commander of the invasion of Ukraine in January.

It was a move akin to the owner of a football club appointing the manager as his captain on the field. Since 2012, when he was appointed chief of the Russian military, his job had been big-picture strategy; from January 2023, he had needed to be engaged in day-to-day tactics as well.

[*Who is Russian army chief Valery Gerasimov? Top soldier turned Putin’s fall guy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/valery-gerasimov-russia-army-chief-putin-b2461796.html)

Tuesday 12 December 2023 02:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Hungary relies on Russia for some of its energy supplies, and Orban is seen as President Vladimir Putin’s strongest ally in Europe. The government in Budapest has routinely blocked work on sanctions against Moscow linked to the war.

In a letter to European Council President [*Charles Michel*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/charles-michel) , who will chair the two-day summit starting on Thursday, Orban warned that forcing a decision on Ukraine could destroy EU unity. Other government leaders, ministers and EU officials admit to being perplexed about what Orban wants.

“The only way I can read the Hungarian position, not just on Ukraine but on many other issues, is that they are against Europe and everything Europe stands for,” Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis said.

Pressure mounts on Hungary to unblock EU membership talks and funds for Ukraine

Pressure mounted on [*Hungary*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/hungary) on Monday not to veto the opening of European Union membership talks and the supply of economic aid to war-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) at a pivotal EU summit this week, after Prime Minister Viktor Orban demanded that the issue be struck from the agenda.

With tens of billions of dollars in military and economic assistance blocked by Senate Republicans in the [*United States*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/united-states) , Ukraine is desperate to ensure longer-term financial and military assistance as fighting in its almost 2-year war with Russia bogs down.

[*Pressure mounts on Hungary to unblock EU membership talks and funds for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-viktor-orban-hungary-united-states-b2461928.html)

Zelensky in Argentina on leader’s first trip to South America

Ukraine‘s president, Volodymyr Zelensky, was in Argentina on Monday, where he attended the swearing-in of the country’s new president, Javier Milei.

It was the Ukrainian leader’s first official trip to South America as Kyiv continues to court support among developing nations for its 21-month-old fight against Russia‘s invading forces.

Mr Zelensky met with Mr Milei as well as with the presidents of Uruguay, Paraguay and Ecuador. During the inauguration ceremony, Mr Zelenskyy could be seen exchanging words with Hungarian leader Viktor Orban, widely considered one of Russian president Vladimir Putin’s closest allies in Europe and one of the few European leaders who has not sided with Ukraine in the war.

In his nightly video address, Mr Zelensky said he had a “highly straightforward conversation” with Mr Orban, “focused on our European affairs”.

He said he also spoke by phone with the French president, Emmanuel Macron, and European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, “about joint work at the EU level and about the joint defence of Europe”.

Ukraine warns Russia will target energy infrastructure

Ukrainian officials have warned that Russia will target energy infrastructure to cause power outages and blackouts like it did last winter.

In an intelligence update over the weekend, the UK Defence Ministry noted that Russia last week used its heavy bomber fleet for the first time since September.

It predicted the start of a more concerted campaign aimed at degrading Ukraine‘s energy infrastructure as winter sets in.

Kyiv is routinely targeted by Russian drone and missile attacks.

Just over two weeks ago, Kyiv came under what Ukrainian officials said was the most intense drone attack since the beginning of Russia‘s full-scale invasion in 2022.

Ukraine‘s air force said Russia launched 75 Iranian-made Shahed drones against the capital, of which 74 were destroyed by air defences.

Ballistic missiles shot down in latest Russian attack on Kyiv

Russia fired eight ballistic missiles at Kyiv early on Monday, all of which were shot down, Ukraine‘s air force said.

The thwarted attack still left one person injured by shrapnel and three more suffered severe stress reactions, officials said.

Several homes were also destroyed and more than 100 were left without electricity.

The predawn attack on Kyiv came amid warnings that Russia will step up its attacks on the country’s energy infrastructure as winter sets in with freezing temperatures.

A series of loud explosions rang out in Ukraine‘s capital just after 4am, as the city was under its nightly curfew, followed by air raid sirens.

Ukraine‘s military said its air defenses intercepted all eight ballistic missiles. However, falling debris from rockets damaged homes on the ground, leaving one person wounded and three others suffering severe shock, officials said.

The attack also left some 120 households in the city without electricity, Ukraine‘s Ministry of Energy said.

Why so many of Nepal’s Gurkhas end up fighting for Russia in Ukraine

Nearly 200 Nepalese nationals are serving as mercenaries in the Russian army – but it’s not only a phenomenon benefitting the Kremlin’s military recruitment, as Namita Singh explains:

Afew months ago, a Ukrainian official posted a video of a man who had been captured while fighting for [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia). The man was neither trained by Russia nor a resident of that country, and he had no direct stake in the [*Ukraine war*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-death-toll-putin-news-b2459883.html). Yet he had flown over 4,000km to serve in “one of the Russian Airborne Forces brigade”, the video said.

Belonging to the [*landlocked Himalayan state of Nepal,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/india-ap-nepal-new-delhi-narendra-modi-b2349516.html) which has a growing population and rising unemployment, Bibek Khatri admits to [*joining the Russian forces solely for the money*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/nepal-gurkhas-russia-ukraine-war-b2459879.html).

[*Why so many of Nepal’s Gurkhas end up fighting for Russia in Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/nepal-gurkhas-russia-ukraine-war-b2461943.html)

Zelensky, in Washington, urges Congress not to play into Putin’s hands

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky told a U.S. military audience on Monday that he hoped he can still count on the United States and urged Congress not play into Russian President Vladimir Putin’s hands, as he started a critical visit to Washington to shore up security assistance.

“We won’t give up. We know what to do and you can count on Ukraine. And we hope just as much to be able to count on you,” Zelensky said in an address to the National Defense University.

U.S. President Joe Biden’s administration has warned Congress that a failure to renew military assistance to Ukraine could tip the nearly two-year-old war in Russia‘s favor, creating national security threats for the West.

Zelensky, in an oblique reference to disputes in Congress over allocating aid, said it was “crucial that politics ... not betray the soldiers.”

“Let me be frank with you, friends. If there’s anyone inspired by unresolved issues on Capital Hill, it’s just Putin and his sick clique,” Zelensky added.

‘Homelessness will not rise in Ireland,’ says Minister for Children

Minister for Children and Integration Roderic O’Gorman has said that he does not expect homelessness to rise in Ireland amid plans to pare back state supports being offered to arriving Ukrainians.

The Government has agreed to cut financial support for Ukrainians who are given state accommodation from the end of January, and will also provide state accommodation only for a maximum of 90 days.

During that period, arrivals will be paid a 38.80 euro subsistence allowance and an additional 29.80 per child per week “in recognition of the fact that accommodation has been provided”, according to the Taoiseach.

Arrivals had been entitled to a jobseeker’s allowance of 220 euro per week.

Mr O’Gorman said that the proposal is similar to one proposed at Cabinet several weeks ago, but with a “significant change” in the form of the social welfare reduction.

Asked if people would be made homeless after the end of the 90-day period, Mr O’Gorman said: “I fundamentally don’t believe that’s going to become an issue because what’s happened in other EU member states is when a limitation has been introduced to the amount of time Ukrainians can stay in accommodation, it hasn’t resulted in homelessness.

“Ukrainians are an extremely mobile population, they have the right under the temporary protection directive to move to other EU member states, they have the right to move back to their own country as well.

“So we’re not seeing, when other member states introduce changes like this, any sort of instances of homelessness there.”

On Ukraine’s frontline, Kyiv’s troops know US funding is vital to keep them alive

Delays in receiving shells and other weapons because of a political spat in Washington will only benefit Vladimir Putin and Russia, writes Askold Krushelnycky:

Ukraine is firing thousands of shells a day on the frontlines against the forces of [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) – and believes it [*needs to be firing thousands more*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-news-today-putin-weapons-latest-b2461754.html) to try and push back [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s troops.

Speaking to soldiers on the frontline in the south and the [*east of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/south-asia/nepal-gurkhas-russia-ukraine-war-b2461943.html) , two of the major theatres of battle, they have been calling for more ammunition and weapons for months. European weapons manufacturers suggest that Ukraine may need up to 1.5 million artillery shells a year. This requires money and time, two things that Kyiv believes it doesn’t have enough of.

[*On Ukraine’s frontline, Kyiv’s troops know US funding is vital to keep them alive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-war-putin-us-funding-b2462221.html)

EU seeks to raise 15 billion euros for Ukraine from Russia's frozen assets -FT

The European Union will propose on Tuesday to ringfence profits generated from Russia‘s frozen assets in the EU, aiming to eventually collect up to 15 billion euros ($16.14 billion) for Ukraine‘s benefit, the Financial Times reported on Monday.

“It’s important to look at how we can use Russian immobilised assets and proceeds from those immobilised assets to support Ukraine,” European Commission Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis told the FT.

Who is Russian army chief Valery Gerasimov? The country’s top soldier turned Putin’s fall guy

Valery [*Gerasimov*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/valery-gerasimov) , an unsmiling, grey-haired giant, stood waiting for [*Vladimir Putin*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/vladimir-putin) outside the entrance to the Russian [*Southern Military Command Centre*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/vladimir-putin-ap-ukraine-valery-gerasimov-dmitry-peskov-b2445107.html) , about 60 miles from the eastern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) border.

His clenched hands hung by his sides, like a schoolboy waiting for the headmaster. It was 19 October 2023. The Russian chief of the general staff, Mr Putin’s top soldier, had been appointed the operational commander of the invasion of Ukraine in January.

It was a move akin to the owner of a football club appointing the manager as his captain on the field. Since 2012, when he was appointed chief of the Russian military, his job had been big-picture strategy; from January 2023, he had needed to be engaged in day-to-day tactics as well.

[*Who is Russian army chief Valery Gerasimov? Top soldier turned Putin’s fall guy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/valery-gerasimov-russia-army-chief-putin-b2461796.html)

IMF chief Georgieva to meet with Ukraine’s Zelenskiy on Monday

International Monetary Fund (IMF) chief Kristalina Georgieva will meet with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy in Washington on Monday, an IMF spokesperson said, as the fund’s executive board prepared to release more funds from the country’s $15.6 billion loan program.

An IMF spokesperson confirmed Georgieva’s meeting with Zelenskiy, but gave no time for that meeting or the meeting where the IMF board will review Kyiv’s progress on a four-year Extended Fund Facility loan approved earlier this year.

The IMF last month announced a staff-level agreement with Ukraine on updated economic and financial policies, paving the way for a $900 million disbursement, once it is finalized by the board.

At the time, the IMF said the Ukrainian economy continued to show “remarkable resilience” despite Russia‘s invasion in February 2022, with recent developments pointing to a stronger-than-expected economic recovery in 2023 and continued growth in 2024.

Zelenskiy is also scheduled to meet with U.S. President Joe Biden and top congressional officials while in Washington as he seeks to shore up support for continued U.S. security assistance to help Kyiv continue its fight against Russia‘s invasion.

Ukraine has received more than $68.5 billion in budgetary support since the war started, finance ministry data shows.

Its government expects a budget deficit of about $43 billion in 2024 and plans to cover it with domestic borrowing and financial aid from its Western partners. But Ukrainian officials are growing worried about the certainty of financing, and some analysts predict Western aid could start diminishing next year.

Navalny’s team says he has vanished in Russia’s prison system

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny has been removed from the penal colony where he had been imprisoned since the middle of last year and his current whereabouts are unknown, his allies said on Monday.

Navalny aides have been preparing for his expected transfer to a “special regime” colony, the harshest grade in Russia‘s prison system, after he was sentenced in August to an additional 19 years in prison on top of 11-1/2 years he was already serving.

The process of moving prisoners by rail across Russia‘s vast territory can take weeks, with lawyers and family unable to obtain information about their location and well-being until they reach their destination. It was unclear if Navalny was already in transit to a new prison.

Navalny’s spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said staff at the IK-6 facility in Melekhovo, 235 km (145 miles) east of Moscow, had told his lawyer waiting outside that the opposition leader was no longer among its inmates.

“Where they have taken him, they refuse to say,” she said on social media platform X.

The United States said it was deeply concerned.

**Load-Date:** December 14, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Coronation – live: William and Kate make unexpected visit to concert queue*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:685W-X621-DY4H-K0H9-00000-00&context=1519360)

The Independent (United Kingdom)

May 7, 2023 Sunday 2:14 PM GMT

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**Section:** ROYAL FAMILY,LIFESTYLE; Version:21

**Length:** 9324 words

**Byline:** Thomas Kingsley,Jane Dalton,Shweta Sharma and Tara Cobham

**Highlight:** ‘Excited’ royal fans started arriving at Windsor Castle hours before the star-studded concert starts at 8pm on Sunday

**Body**

The Prince and Princess of Wales have made a surprise appearance to Windsor to meet fans congregating [*for the coronation concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-latest-live-katy-perry-b2334290.html%22%20title=%22Coronation%20concert%20–%20live:%20Prince%20William%20and%20Katy%20Perry%20prepare%20for%20Windsor%20Palace%20gig%20as%20Zoe%20Ball%20drops%20out).

Crowds started arriving at Windsor Castle hours before the star-studded concert starts at 8pm on Sunday, with many draped in Union flags and wearing Union flag dresses.

William and Kate were seen shaking hands and chatting to revellers, with William telling one group of well-wishers: “Enjoy the concert tonight.”

King Charles III and Queen Camilla will be joining around 20,000 members of the public at the concert in Windsor where, along with other family members, they will see performances by Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Ahead of the show on Sunday evening, thousands of street parties are taking place, with people encouraged to come together across the country for the Coronation Big Lunch.

[*The Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-coronation-day-ceremony-b2334160.html) attended a big lunch in Cranleigh, while [*the Princess Royal and Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-princess-anne-coronation-hat-b2334121.html) will attend a community street party in Swindon, and Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie will attend a big lunch in Windsor.

Coronation news – latest updates

Prince and Princess of Wales sip cocktails with royal fans on surprise walkabout Prince George rocks out to AC/DC, William reveals Celebrations continue up and down Britain: In pictures Coronation hailed as festival of British diversity Princess Anne makes surprise trip to Swindon

William and Kate sip cocktails with fans on Windsor walkabout

The Prince and Princess of Wales sipped homemade cocktails with royal fans as they soaked up the atmosphere in Windsor ahead of Sunday’s star-studded coronation concert, which starts at 8pm.

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.

Watch live as Prince William and Princess Kate do a walkabout in Windsor

Watch live as the Prince and Princess of Wales meet royal fans in Windsor on a walkabout on Sunday, 7 May.

Prince William and Princess Kate are chatting to well-wishers who have lined the streets after King Charles III's coronation.

Read more and watch here:

[*Watch live: William and Kate meet royal fans on walkabout in Windsor after coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-king-charles-william-kate-windsor-b2334369.html)

What’s the story behind King Charles’s ‘sausage fingers’?

Fans of the royal family have previously expressed concern for the king over photos in which his fingers appeared excessively red and swollen.

The images have prompted speculation from various members of the medical community, who have suggested the swelling could be caused due to a condition called oedema.

According to the National Health Service (NHS), oedema is characterised by swelling in the arms, hands, ankles, feet, and/or, legs. This swelling is usually caused by a fluid retention in these areas, as per the NHS’ website.

However, the King’s hands have been a topic of discussion since the day of his birth, as his late mother the Queen observed in a letter to her former music teacher.

Find out what she wrote below.

[*The story behind King Charles’s ‘sausage fingers’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-fingers-sausage-swollen-condition-b2334252.html)

William invokes late Queen’s love in touching tribute to ‘Pa’ King Charles

The late Queen Elizabeth would be “very proud” of King Charles on his coronation, his son William said on Sunday as he celebrated his father at a concert at Windsor Castle, and Britons held thousands of street parties in the king’s honour.

Amid pomp and pageantry, Charles and his wife Camilla were crowned at London’s Westminster Abbey on Saturday in Britain’s biggest ceremonial event in 70 years.

A Buckingham Palace spokesperson said Charles and Camilla 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.”

Charles and Camilla and other senior royals joined an audience of 20,000 members of the public and invited guests for the “Coronation Concert” at Windsor, the king’s palace to the west of London.

“As my grandmother said when she was crowned, coronations are a declaration of our hopes for the future. And I know she’s up there, fondly keeping an eye on us, and she’d be a very proud mother,” Charles’ heir, William, said at a speech at the evening concert, to huge cheers.

William paid tribute to his father’s service and others who serve, including teachers and hospital workers, many of whom have been striking in recent months.

“Pa, we are all so proud of you,” he said.

Police reveal they 64 arrests on coronation day after criticism

The Metropolitan Police said officers arrested 64 people during the King’s coronation day, with four suspects charged with offences including a religiously aggravated public order offence and possession of class A drugs.

The force updated the figure from its previous total of 52.

The wave of arrests led to criticism, with Sue Sim, a former chief constable of Northumbria Police, warning against a “totalitarian police state”, though ministers have defended the police response.

Mayor of London Sadiq Khan said he had demanded “clarity” from the force’s leaders on the arrests.

Republican campaigner Graham Smith, who was released on Saturday night after nearly 16 hours in police custody, said officers should “hang their heads in shame”.

Thousands line village streets to greet Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh

Thousands of people lined the streets of a Surrey village to greet the Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh during its Coronation Big Lunch (Gwynn Wrightwrites).

Edward and Sophie delighted well-wishers in Cranleigh on Sunday, with some fans dressed in Union flag outfits or plastic crowns, eager to catch a moment of history as the couple passed through.

The duke and duchess first delighted children from the Scouts and Beavers who had been waiting outside the door of Cranleigh Village Hall.

Before their car arrived slightly behind schedule, excited children were looking at other cars shouting “hello?”, “where are they?” and “is that them, is that them?”.

On arrival, the couple were welcomed by His Majesty’s Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey before greeting the crowds.

[*Thousands line village streets to greet Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/sophie-edinburgh-surrey-cranleigh-union-b2334448.html)

King complained about ‘boring’ wait outside Westminster Abbey, claims lip reader

The King grumbled “we can never be on time” and “there’s always something” following a hiccup at the start of his coronation, a lip reader has claimed.

Charles and Camilla arrived at Westminster Abbey early, while the Prince and Princess of Wales -accompanied by Princess Charlotte and Prince Louis, were late, missing their scheduled arrival time.

It meant the King and Queen were forced to wait outside, sat in their Diamond Jubilee State Coach, for some time for William and Kate to get there before Charles and Camilla could make their grand entrance.

A lip reader for Sky News said the King complained that it was a “negative”, allegedly remarking: “This is boring.”

“We can never be on time. Yes I’m ... This is a negative. There’s always something ... This is boring,” Sky News reported that the frustrated-looking monarch said.

James Nesbitt hails political ‘progress’ at coronation

James Nesbitt has said he thinks it is a sign of “progress” that every Northern Irish political party turned up for the King’s coronation.

The Northern Irish actor, 58, is taking part in the continued celebrations of the historic event by performing a poetry reading at the coronation concert earlier.

Speaking backstage ahead of the event, he told the PA news agency he had met Charles a few years ago at an event celebrating Northern Irish produce and that he was “very impressed” in the King, as he took “such an interest”.

Reflecting on the coronation, he said: “I’m just so delighted in the sense that every political party turned up yesterday for it and I think that’s progress.

“In a sense, although a lot of people might disagree with me... and we all have our own opinions about it but I feel that I’m representing an awful lot of people from where I come from, and I’m glad that he takes such an interest in the place.”

Hugh Bonneville says monarchy must redefine itself

Hugh Bonneville hailed the King’s coronation as an “extraordinary” event, but thinks the challenge for the future of the monarchy will be to allow the next generation to define what it means to them.

Reflecting on his thoughts surrounding the royal family ahead of the concert, he told the PA news agency: “I think each generation will need to make its own definition of what monarchy means.

“And I think that is the challenge for the future. In our ever-changing world, where does the monarchy stand? What does it mean?

“I mean, for my generation, and for my parents’ generation, it was the glue that bound our nations together, and that glue will need to shift and evolve in order to keep the strength that it’s had in the past.”

Bonneville said he thought the coronation service was “extraordinary” and admitted that he found the moment the King swapped his “robes of status and honour” for a simple white shirt for the private anointing as “particularly touching”.

Head of anti-monarchy protesters says arrests ‘direct attack on our democracy’

The head of an anti-monarchy group arrested ahead of a planned protest on Coronation Day has branded the detention of him and dozens of others a “direct attack on our democracy”.

Republic chief executive Graham Smith, who was released on Saturday night after nearly 16 hours in police custody, said officers should “hang their heads in shame”.

The Metropolitan Police confirmed that 52 people were arrested for affray, public order offences, breach of the peace and conspiracy to cause a public nuisance around the coronation.

Coronation hailed as celebration of British diversity

The coronation was hailed as a diverse, inclusive ceremony that represents a new era in British history by academics, celebrities and members of the public.

For many, the events have shown just how much Britain has changed in the years since the late Queen was crowned in 1953.

The coronation ceremony featured female clergy members for the first time and a Bible reading from the practising Hindu prime minister Rishi Sunak.

The coronation “symbolises moving on from where we were with the virus into that brave new future,” Rhys Mallows, 27, a guest from Cardiff, told the PA news agency.

“This coronation is very different from past ones and represents a more inclusive, more diverse future,” he added.

Dr Olusoga, professor of public history at the University of Manchester, was made an OBE in 2019, and recently provided commentary on the royal family’s relationship to the British Empire for the Duke and Duchess of Sussex’s Netflix documentary.

“Today we’ve been reminded of the deep religious history of the country,” he said, adding the ceremony had “echoes of the mediaeval age”.

“That sense of continuity, that sense of tradition, as a historian is absolutely fascinating.

“I think what you saw today was a strong representation and a huge effort to show the diversity of faith within Britain, one of the things that’s very different between the Britain of today and the Britain of 1953.”

Nicole Sherzinger ‘feels like Disney princess’ at Coronation Concert

Nicole Scherzinger has said she felt like a Disney princess when she was rehearsing her song for the Coronation Concert, which is taking place in the grounds of Windsor Castle.

The Pussycat Dolls frontwoman will perform ‘Reflection’, which was written and produced for Disney’s 1998 animated film Mulan.

Scherzinger told the PA news agency backstage ahead of the event that she felt “overjoyed” and “honoured” to take the stage.

“Now that I’m here, it just feels really surreal. Being on the ground and having Windsor Castle as your backdrop is the dream,” she added.

The singer said she found the coronation service on Saturday to be “remarkable”, as her home country of America does not have the same type of pageantry.

King and Queen arrive at Coronation Concert

King Charles III and Queen Camilla have arrived at the Coronation Concert, as celebrations for the king’s crowing continue.

The king and queen will be treated to performances by acts including Take That, Lionel Richie, Katy Perry, Paloma Faith, Andrea Bocelli, Sir Bryn Terfel, and Alexis Ffrench.

More than 20 million people tuned in to watch the coronation yesterday, while tens of thousands flocked to London to watch proceedings in-person.

You can follow the concert live with Indepedent Culture, here:

[*Royal fans flock to Windsor Castle for coronation concert -live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-live-bbc-windsor-castle-b2334469.html)

Sofia Richie shows off ‘chic’ coronation concert outfit ahead of father Lionel Richie’s performance

Sofia Richie has shared a preview of the outfit she’s chosen for King Charles and Queen Camilla’s coronationconcert, where she will watch her father Lionel Richie perform (Chelsea Ritschel writes).

On 7 May, a day after the King and Queen were crowned in a ceremony at Westminster Abbey, the coronation celebrations will continue with a star-studded concert at Windsor Castle. The concert, which will take place on the East Lawn of the castle’s grounds -the first time a large-scale event has been staged on the property -will feature performances by a number of musical guests including Katy Perry, Richie, Take That, and Andrea Bocelli.

For the occasion, Richie, who recently returned from her honeymoon after exchanging vows with husband Elliot Grainge in a lavish wedding in the South of France last month, has chosen a bright pink outfit.

Click here to read on:

Coronation Concert: Follow live with Independent Culture

Our culture team will be following the coronation concert beat by beat.

The line-up for this evening’s show includes Take That, Lionel Richie, Katy Perry, Andrea Bocelli, Sir Bryn Terfel, and Alexis Ffrench.

Follow the link below for live coverage:

[*Royal fans flock to Windsor Castle for coronation concert -live updates*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-live-bbc-windsor-castle-b2334469.html)

Watch: Windsor Castle abuzz ahead of coronation concert

Crowds are entering Windsor Castle ahead of the King’s coronation concert which starts at 8pm.

Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration

King Charles III’s coronation is well and truly upon us, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations in full swing.

The official coronation took place yesterday, on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place this evening (Sunday 7 May).

Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.

Isobel Lewis brings you the full itinerary, here:

[*Everything you need to know about King Charles’s coronation concert*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-line-up-what-time-performers-b2334286.html)

19:40 , Liam James Take That superfans Dawn Fenwick and Sian Gould are excited to see the group perform at Windsor Castle for the king’s coronation concert.

Ms Fenwick has been taking her daughter Ms Gould to Take That concerts since she was a child.

The pair travelled from High Wycombe.

Watch: Ukraine’s Zelensky congratulates King Charles on coronation

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky congratulated King Charles on his coronation and offered him and the British people thanks for their support in the war against Russia.

He described the king and Queen Camilla, his wife, as “true friends of Ukraine” and said his reign marked “the beginning of a new era for the British monarchy”.

Britain has been a key Western partner supplying military aid to Ukraine since Russia invaded in February last year.

Coronation concert: ‘It’s a big part of history'

Sarah Edwards travelled with her daughter Charlotte from Ipswich for the coronation concert at Windsor Castle.

The journey took them more than two hours.

The mother told the PA news agency: “We watched all the coronation on TV yesterday.

“It made us really excited to be here today. I think it’s a big part of history for my daughter to be a part of.

“I’m really excited to be part of such a big day.”

DJs light up London street for coronation

DJs performed at the Browning Street community street party in Walworth, London.

King Charles asked for Ibiza classics at coronation concert, says DJ

DJ Pete Tong has revealed the King specifically requested Ibiza classics songs as part of his coronation concert.

The BBC Radio 1 DJ, who has been tasked with delivering the King’s wish at the event being held on Sunday evening, said he hopes it will be a “brilliant” way to start the show in the grounds of Windsor Castle.

Speaking to the PA news agency backstage ahead of the event, Tong said: “He wanted Ibiza classics, that was very specific.

“And then they asked us to suggest a couple of songs so we suggested three or four, and he came back with one of them and that’s the one that’s starting the show, so they very much had an involvement in what they wanted us to perform.”

Asked why he felt this genre was among the playlist requests, he added: “I think they want to put across a big variety of UK talent and touch all different demographics and be relevant to different age groups.

“I mean, the shows we do we literally get kids up to pensioners. Relapse ravers, we call them -so maybe there’s a few relapsed ravers in the royal household, we don’t know.”

Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath

Buckingham Palace Mall could be seen littered with rubbish including tents and flags in the aftermath of King Charles III’s coronation.

Some royalists had been out there for as long as a week, and had left their soggy belongings behind after a day of bad weather.

ITV’s Chris Ship, who filmed the clip, described the scene as “an abandoned campsite after a wet weekend at Glastonbury”.

18:50 , Liam James Sheila Holmes, 79, attended the Coronation Big Lunch in Burn, North Yorkshire, with her husband Gordon, 88, who served on the parish council for 43 years.

Mrs Holmes said: “It’s marvellous for such a small village to make such a supreme effort.

“I thought the service yesterday was beautiful. It’s what we do best, being British.”

Parish council chair Chris Phillipson said: “I’ve lived in the village all my life.

“We used to have sports days but as the village got older and children got older and moved away, they stopped, so it’s nice to resurrect some sort of community event.

“It’s really good to get people back together after Covid.”

Blackpool holds parade for King’s coronation

A celebration fit for a king is under way in Blackpool as its famous promenade hosts events for the coronation.

Thousands thronged the Lancashire resort, many wearing red, white and blue as yesterday’s drizzle was replaced with bright sunshine, bringing out the crowds.

The day of festivities began with a parade of 11 heritage trams full of flag-waving passengers travelling in convoy up the seafront before pausing at the Tower Festival Headland below Blackpool Tower.

In the afternoon, Blackpool took part in the nationwide Big Lunch -with families sat around in deck-chairs enjoying picnics and live entertainment.

Kate Shane, chair of the Blackpool Tourism Improvement District, said: “Our coronation event typifies what Blackpool does best -brilliant free entertainment for all the family to enjoy.

“It promises to be a wonderful opportunity to celebrate a moment of history.”

Blackpool celebrates His Majesty The King’s Coronation with a fantastic Heritage Tram Parade along the Promenade [*pic.twitter.com/tRdQsgVtbN*](https://t.co/tRdQsgVtbN) — VisitBlackpool (@visitBlackpool) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/visitBlackpool/status/1655211101087322114?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Princess Anne makes surprise trip to Swindon 18:30 , Liam James Princess Anne greeted royal fans on a surprise walkabout in Swindon.Residents of Belmont Crescent, near Old Town, welcomed the Princess Royal and husband Vice Admiral Sir Tim Laurence.Anne spent just over an hour meeting locals, handing out gifts to children, and chatting in the sunshine.Beatrice and Eugenie at Big Lunch ahead of coronation concert18:24 , Liam James Royal sisters Princess Beatrice and Princess Eugenie met well-wishers at a Coronation Big Lunch in Chalfont St Giles, north of London.Hundreds of thousands of Britons marked the coronation with street celebrations, tea parties and lunches on Sunday as the festivities continued for a second day.Organisers of Big Lunches hailed the community spirit at hundreds of events up and down the country.Police got balance right in handling coronation protesters, minister insists18:20 , Liam James Police got the “balance right” between allowing protest and enjoyment of the King’s coronation, the culture secretary has said.Lucy Frazer defended the Metropolitan Police after the force was heavily criticised by MPs and human rights groups over dozens of arrests.The chief executive of anti-monarchy group Republic, who was among 52 people arrested on Saturday, was released after nearly 16 hours in police custody.Click here to read on:[*Police got balance right in handling coronation protesters, minister insists*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/police-arrests-coronation-protesters-frazer-b2334399.html) Prince George rocks out to AC/DC, William reveals18:05 , Liam James The Prince of Wales has told royal fans his son Prince George is a big fan of rock bands AC/DC and Led Zeppelin during a surprise meet and greet.William and Kate greeted Big Lunch attendees and coronation concert-goers in an unannounced walkabout for around 40 minutes on The Long Walk in Windsor on Sunday.George, nine, played his first major ceremonial role at his grandfather’s coronation as a page of honour.Caroline Mulvihill, from the Rock Choir in Windsor and Maidenhead, spoke to William during the meet and greet.She told the PA news agency: “We were talking about the kind of music we do in Rock Choir and Will was telling us in their household they have a very diverse music taste and George is very much into AC/DC and Led Zeppelin. It was quite interesting to hear that.”Sam Leckenby, another choir member who spoke to William, added: “They mentioned they were quite pleased yesterday’s ceremony wasn’t the original five hours long. They were just really lovely.”Royal fans out in force ahead of Windsor coronation concert18:02 , Liam James Thousands of royal fans travelled to Windsor Castle today ahead of the coronation concert, with crowds also gathering outside Buckingham PalaceThe Prince and Princess of Wales surprised the crowd at Windsor with a walkabout on the Long Walk.Take a look at some of the characters who were there to greet them:Jill Biden appears to inspect cheese and pickle sandwich at coronation lunch with Rishi Sunak17:50 , Liam James First Lady Jill Biden attended a Big Lunch hosted by British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, where she appeared to inspect a classic English sandwich (Meredith Clarkewrites).The United States first lady and her granddaughter, Finnegan Biden, joined the British prime minister and his wife, Akshata Murty, for a banquet at 10 Downing Street to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III.However, a photo from the event captured Dr Biden looking puzzled over her cheese and pickle sandwich. The common British delicacy features cheese and pickled chutney.[*Jill Biden inspects cheese and pickle sandwich at coronation lunch with Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/jill-biden-coronation-lunch-sandwich-b2334428.html) ‘Such an honour’ to be at UK’s premier street party17:25 , Liam James Rishi Sunak and his wife Akshata Murty this afternoon hosted a Big Lunch at Downing Street to celebrate King Charles III’s coronation.Among those attending the lunch at Downing Street was Zoe Clark-Coates, who runs a charity with her husband, Andy, supporting people who have gone through baby loss.She is also co-chairing a pregnancy loss review for the government.She said: “ I was sitting next to the US ambassador, who was lovely, and very close to the First Lady.“It’s such an honour to be amongst so many people doing such great work. It’s so moving.”Met Police arrest of women’s safety volunteers on coronation day branded ‘absolute disgrace’17:12 , Liam James The Met Police has been fiercely criticised by Labour MPs for arresting women’s safety volunteers in central London during the early hours of coronation day (Maya Oppenheim writes).Campaigners told The Independent that volunteers who work for Westminster Council’s night life safety team had been detained in custody for 15 hours.The Metropolitan Police said that, at around 2am on Saturday, three people were stopped by officers and arrested in Soho on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance. Britain’s largest police force said rape alarms were some of the items they seized.Click here to read on:[*Met Police called a ‘disgrace’ for arresting volunteers on coronation day*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/metropolitan-police-volunteers-coronation-day-b2334358.html) ‘I curtsied to the Archbishop of Canterbury’17:00 , Liam James A woman in a Union flag dress and headboppers at the Big Coronation Lunch in Canterbury curtsied when she met the Archbishop as he spoke to attendees.Michelle Downer, 45, from Canterbury, said: “I did this really embarrassing thing. I curtsied to him!“But isn’t it amazing to be at the cathedral and meeting Justin Welby?”On the Big Lunch, she said: “I love seeing everyone come together. Why would you not want to be here?”Regarding the coronation, she said: “I didn’t move from the TV.”Ms Downer then explained how her husband had been decorating and she told him he needed to change before coming in to watch the ceremony – which he took very seriously, changing into a waistcoat and tails for the occasion.Bongbong Marcos meets King Charles16:46 , Liam James Bongbong Marcos, president of the Philippines met King Charles on coronation day.“Deeply honored to attend the royal reception with First Lady Liza Marcos at Buckingham Palace,” he wrote on Twitter.Deeply honored to attend the royal reception with First Lady Liza Marcos at Buckingham Palace.We underscore the thriving relationship between the Philippines and the United Kingdom, which has been promising in increasing trade, investment, and cultural exchanges for the… [*pic.twitter.com/0yuAx4lyxW*](https://t.co/0yuAx4lyxW) — Bongbong Marcos (@bongbongmarcos) [*May 6, 2023*](https://twitter.com/bongbongmarcos/status/1654752422030614529?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) In pictures: Thousands take part in Big Lunch and street parties as coronation celebrations continue16:45 , Liam James Thousands of people across the country have marked the coronation with street celebrations, tea parties and lunches, as the festivities to mark King Charles III’s continued for a second day.Saturday’s ceremony – a mingling of solemn religious rites and royal pomp – saw Charles become the 40th monarch to be crowned in Westminster Abbey since 1066.On Sunday, formality gave way to festivity as Britons joined together to share in a day of eating, drinking and music-making – with the coronation concert set to bring the weekend to a rousing conclusion.[*Coronation celebrations continue as thousands take part in Big Lunch*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronation-celebrations-big-lunch-street-parties-b2334359.html) London’s flag-mad estate hails new king16:35 , Liam James The Kirby estate in Bermondsey, London is known for decorating on national occasions.You may have seen those old flatblocks strewn with England flags for the World Cup last year, or any number of earlier international tournaments.Today, though, they wear the Union Jack as residents gather to celebrate the coronation of King Charles III and Queen Camilla.Celebrities and singers walk red carpet ahead of King Charles's coronation concert16:28 , Liam JamesIndependent TV brings you coverage live from Windsor Castle, where guests and performers are arriving ahead of the 8PM coronation concert:Royal fans left surprised by Prince Harry’s Dior coronation suit16:06 , Tara Cobham[*Prince Harry*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/prince-harry) wore a bespoke suit designed by [*Dior*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dior) to his father’s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) on Saturday (6 May) and royal fans have been sharing their thoughts on the look.Luxury [*fashion house*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fashion-house) Dior tweeted on Saturday that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born [*Kim Jones*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kim-jones) , saying to do so was an “honour”.Royal fans were surprised by Harry’s decision to wear Dior, not least because it was a French brand – royals are typically dressed by British designers for large events – but because the suit simply looked “ordinary”.Ellie Muir reports.[*‘Just ordinary’: Royal fans left surprised by Prince Harry’s Dior coronation suit*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-harry-suit-dior-coronation-b2334390.html) King ‘very pleased’ with coronation and rain ‘didn’t dampen spirits’ -Dean of Canterbury16:02 , Tara Cobham The King was “very pleased” with his coronation day and the rain “didn’t damp the spirits”, the Dean of Canterbury has said.The dean said: “The King’s very pleased with the day and even the rain didn’t damp the spirits.“It was very clear everyone was out to enjoy themselves.”On the Archbishop’s relationship with the King, he said: “Of course, there’s a privacy about that relationship that’s so important, that’s held special and sacred.”Coronation celebrations continue with military parade in Glasgow15:59 , Tara Cobham Cheers rang through the centre of Glasgow as hundreds of military personnel gathered for a special parade to mark the King’s coronation, which was set to be one of the main celebrations north of the border.The city’s Lord Lieutenant, Jacqueline McLaren, made a speech in George Square to launch the event, which also included inspection of a guard of honour and three cheers for the King and Queen, followed by the national anthem.As well as military servicemen and women, veterans and cadets as young as 10 gathered for the march to Glasgow Cathedral.In her speech, the Lord Lieutenant, who attended the coronation at Westminster Abbey on behalf of Glasgow on Saturday, congratulated Charles and Camilla. She said: “On behalf of the city on this day, which marks the first full day of our new King’s reign, I wish the royal couple longevity, happiness and wisdom.”Meanwhile, more than 200 Coronation Big Lunch celebrations have been registered across the weekend.Some 1,500 people attended the Church Green in the Royal Deeside village, on the doorstep of the Balmoral estate.Watch Rishi Sunak host coronation lunch at Downing Street15:55 , Tara Cobham[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and his wife [*Akshata Murty*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/akshata-murty) this afternoon hosted a Big Lunch at [*Downing Street*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/downing-street) to celebrate [*King Charles III’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/king-charles-iii?CMP=ILC-refresh) s [*coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/coronation) (7 May).Community heroes, [*Ukrainian*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukrainian) families and youth groups attended the special event, with US first lady [*Jill Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/jill-biden) even dropping by for a cup of tea.The street was transformed into a symbol of [*patriotism*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/patriotism) , plastered in union jacks while British produce was served up to guests.It’s thought more than 67,000 of the celebratory lunches have been planned across the UK this weekend.Watch here:[*Rishi Sunak and wife host Big Lunch at Downing Street in honour of coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/coronation-big-lunch-rishi-downing-street-b2334393.html) Prince and Princess of Wales share behind-the-scenes footage from coronation15:43 , Tara Cobham The Prince and Princess of Wales have shared behind-the-scenes footage from the coronation of King Charles III.Following King Charles and Queen Camilla’s coronation on 6 May, Prince William and Princess Kate took to social media to thank those who made the historic event possible. “What. A. Day,” the royal couple captioned the post. “Thank you to everyone who made it happen.”The video showed sweet moments of the Waleses and their three children – Prince George, nine, Princess Charlotte, eight, and Prince Louis, four – from their time at the coronation. The clip began with their only daughter dressed in her white Alexander McQueen dress and cape sporting a wide smile, before the family hopped into cars to take them to Westminster Abbey.Watch the video here:[*Prince and Princess of Wales share behind-the-scenes footage from coronation: ‘What. A. Day.’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-charles-coronation-william-kate-video-b2334389.html) Prince William handed royal-themed ale by concert-goer15:34 , Emily Atkinson The Prince and Princess of Wales were showered with affection by concert-goers as they embarked on a spur-of-the-moment walkabout along The Long Walk in Windsor on Sunday.With many raising a toast to the new King across the country — as Britons assemble for street parties and lunches – one royal fan felt Prince William should join in, handing him a royal-themed ale. William was pictured holding a can of what appears to be [*‘Return of the King’ ale*](https://www.beerguild.co.uk/news/return-of-the-king/) – a beer created to celebrate the coronation from Windsor & Eton Brewery.The ale, made using organic barley from the local Royal Farm and organic English hops, is emblazoned with a bust of King Charles, and described by its creators as a fitting tribute to his “lifetime of service to the country and his passionate support of the environment.”Prince William and Princess Kate joke with children as they greet royal fans at Windsor Castle15:17 , Emily Atkinson[*The Prince*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/the-prince) and Princess of Wales surprised royal fans waiting at [*Windsor Castle*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/windsor-castle) for an impromptu walkabout ahead of the coronation concert this evening (7 May).Kate and William arrived at the Long Walk this afternoon sipping gin and beer, as fans, who have waited out for hours, ran over to greet them.One little girl got so overwhelmed that she burst into tears upon meeting the royals, while William could be heard telling another group to “enjoy the concert”.More on this from our video team here:[*Prince and Princess of Wales joke with children during Windsor Castle walkabout*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/windsor-castle-william-kate-walkabout-b2334380.html) Big Lunch highlights15:06 , Emily Atkinson Street parties are in full swing across the country, as the festivities to mark the crowning of King Charles III continue.In a jolly addition to yesterday’s proceedings, Britons are joining together to share in a day of eating, drinking and, later, music – with the coronation concert set to strike up later this evening.Here are some of the highlights from Britain’s bunting-lined streets:In a jolly addition to yesterday’s proceedings, Britons are joining together to share in a day of eating, drinking and, later, music – with the coronation concert set to strike up later this evening.Jill Biden spotted at Downing Street coronation lunch14:17 , Tara CobhamPrince and Princess of Wales surprise coronation concert-goers to greet them in Windsor13:56 , Tara Cobham The Prince and Princess of Wales have made a surprise appearance to greet coronation concert-goers on The Long Walk in Windsor on Sunday.Prince William and Princess Kate are chatting to well-wishers who have lined the streets after King Charles III's coronation.The Prince and Princess of Wales surprised fans in Windsor with a walkabout as the King and Queen thanked well-wishers for their support.William and Kate made the unannounced appearance ahead of Sunday’s star-studded coronation concert at Windsor Castle and were seen shaking hands and chatting to revellers.Scores of people crowded around the couple, with William crouching down to chat to a boy and girl wearing golden crowns.The prince and princess looked relaxed, with William telling one group of well-wishers: “Enjoy the concert tonight.”Rishi Sunak arrives at lunch in Downing Street to celebrate coronation13:53 , Tara Cobham Rishi Sunak has arrived at a lunch in Downing Street to celebrate the King’s coronation.Alongside his wife Akshata Murty and daughters Anoushka and Krishna, he walked out of the famous Number 10 door saying: “Hello, how are you?”He then began mingling with the invited guests.His two daughters and his wife Akshata Murty are also hosting the event.Duke and Duchess of Edinburgh attending Coronation Big Lunch in Cranleigh, Surrey13:50 , Tara CobhamPrince of Wales to give speech at coronation concert13:49 , Tara Cobham The Prince of Wales will take to the stage and give a speech at the coronation concert, Kensington Palace has said.The Palace also tweeted footage of William walking up to a microphone during behind-the-scenes preparations.A voice can be heard saying: “OK, Prince of Wales. It’s time for your rehearsal” before William strides out towards the microphone.Final preparations for this evening’s [*#Coronation*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/Coronation?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Concert… [*pic.twitter.com/3bc8yfiiV8*](https://t.co/3bc8yfiiV8) — The Prince and Princess of Wales (@KensingtonRoyal) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/KensingtonRoyal/status/1655187914668625922?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Guests arrive at Downing Street for coronation lunch with Prime Minister13:27 , Tara Cobham Guests have begun arriving in Downing Street for a lunch with the Prime Minister and his wife to mark the King’s coronation.There was a hum of excited chatter as those invited – including volunteers, ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** and youth group members – sipped fruit drinks and took photos in front of the famous Number 10 door as they awaited the arrival of Rishi Sunak.The street was bedecked in Union flag bunting and music was being played by the RAF Northolt brass quintet.Mr Sunak and Akshata Murty are hosting the event as part of the Big Lunch celebrations taking place across the country over the coronation weekend.King and Queen issue first statement since crowning ceremony13:20 , Tara Cobham The King and Queen were “deeply touched” by the nation’s celebration of their historic coronation, Buckingham Palace has said in its first statement since the couple were crowned in the ceremony on Saturday.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.”Ellie Muir reports:[*King Charles and Queen Camilla issue first statement since crowning ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/king-queen-charles-camilla-statement-b2334353.html) In pictures: Coronation celebrations on day after ceremony13:17 , Tara CobhamAnti-monarchy group head labels arrests ‘direct attack on our democracy’12:59 , Tara Cobham The head of an anti-monarchy group arrested ahead of a planned protest on coronation day has labelled the detention of him and others as a "direct attack on our democracy".Graham Smith, chief executive of Republic, was released by the Metropolitan Police at around 11pm on Saturday after being detained in the morning before the King's procession to Westminster Abbey.In a statement, he said: "Yesterday, as we prepared for a peaceful and lawful protest, a number of Republic's team were arrested and detained for the rest of the day."These arrests are a direct attack on our democracy and the fundamental rights of every person in the country. Each and every police officer involved on the ground should hang their heads in shame. They showed no judgement, no common sense and no basic decency. This was a heavy handed action which had the appearance of a pre-determined arrest that would have occurred regardless of the evidence or our actions."The right to protest peacefully in the UK no longer exists. Instead we have a freedom to protest that is contingent on political decisions made by ministers and senior police officers."The right to dissent and protest is one of the most profound and important rights in a democracy. Many people will disagree with what we were protesting about, but that right to protest must be protected. Anyone may find themselves wanting to protest against a government policy, a grave injustice or in solidarity with victims of a visiting world leader. Such protests must always be freely conducted as a matter of right, not on the basis of permission from the state."What time do the pubs close today?12:54 , Tara Cobham Keen to raise a late-night [*toast*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/toast) to[*celebrate the coronation,*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-king-charles-camilla-today-b2333894.html) or just because you’re enjoying the bank holiday weekend? Depending on what part of the UK you are in, you may well be in luck.[*Pubs*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/pubs) in [*England*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/england) and [*Wales*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/wales) will be able to continue serving customers for two hours beyond their usual closing time, [*with the extended licensing hours applying from 11pm on Friday, Saturday and Sunday*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/coronation-live-updates-charles-camilla-harry-b2333653.html). There won’t be extended licensing hours on the bank holiday Monday (8 May) but you can expect events and activities happening across England and Wales to celebrate the weekend.Ellie Muir reports.[*What time do the pubs close today?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/pubs-closing-time-today-bank-holiday-b2334339.html) Is there a bank holiday tomorrow for the coronation?12:51 , Tara Cobham[*Is there a bank holiday tomorrow for King Charles’ coronation?*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/is-tomorrow-a-bank-holiday-in-uk-b2334336.html) Queen’s coronation bouquet laid in Westminster Abbey12:38 , Tara Cobham The Queen’s coronation bouquet has been laid at the Grave of the Unknown Warrior, Buckingham Palace has said.The flowers were placed on the grave at Westminster Abbey at Camilla’s request following Saturday’s coronation service at the church.A tweet from the King and Queen’s official twitter account – @RoyalFamily – shows a delicate bouquet of yellow, white and pink flowers sitting on the tomb.It is a simple-tied bunch of English spring flowers including auriculas and lily of the valley – both of which featured in the Queen’s wedding bouquet in 2005 – along with hellebores, which the King wore in his buttonhole during the couple’s wedding 18 years ago and are a particular favourite of his.Weather set to warm up for Coronation Big Lunches12:31 , Tara Cobham Sunday looks set to be the hottest day of the year so far as coronation celebrations continue with Big Lunches across the country.Highs of 23C are forecast for the East Midlands and down to London, beating the previous high for this year of 21.2C on April 17.Some showers are predicted across eastern England and Scotland, but the vast majority of the country can expect sunny spells throughout the day, the Met Office said.The warmest temperatures are expected in the late afternoon, when many Britons will be out enjoying their Coronation Big Lunches.It will be welcome news for many royal fans who spent Saturday standing in the heavy rain in central London to catch a glimpse of the coronation procession.However, many said even the wet weather could not dampen their spirits.Natalie Mahone, 32, camped overnight on The Mall with her mother and said she would be out to see the coronation “come rain or shine”.“Come rain or shine we have come to see the coronation and King Charles,” she said. “Everyone I’ve spoken to has said ‘If it rains we’ll get wet, we’ll dry out’ – the weather is not going to put a lot of people off.”Royal fans arrive in Windsor hours before coronation concert starts12:26 , Tara Cobham Royal fans have started arriving in Windsor hours before the coronation concert at 8pm.People draped with Union flags and dressed in Union flag dresses have been flooding off trains at the station.Garry and Donna Howarth travelled down from Bolton after winning tickets to the event.Mr Howarth, dressed in a Union flag blazer, said: “We are here just for the concert. We have come down for the weekend.“We are about 10 hours early but we will have a look around and see what we can.”Mrs Howarth said: “I’m so excited to be here.”The pair are keen to see opera singers perform at the concert and decided to avoid the coronation on Saturday because of the rain.The adorable prince who reinvented the royal wave... how Louis stole the show again12:23 , Tara Cobham Prince Louis may only be five years old, but he’s already perfected the art of an iconic balcony moment.The young prince, who hit the headlines last year when he kept the crowd entertained at his great-grandmother’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations, once again stole the show with an adorable double handed wave when he appeared on the Palace balcony after his grandfather’s crowning moment.Eleanor Noyce and Emily Atkinson report.[*The adorable prince who reinvented the royal wave*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/prince-louis-wave-charles-coronation-b2334269.html) Coronation celebrations in pictures12:13 , Tara Cobham Across the country, coronation celebrations continue, with many taking part in Big Lunches.Penny Mordaunt speaks out after viral moment at King’s coronation12:05 , Tara Cobham Penny Mordaunt has addressed her starring moment at the coronation of King Charles III.The politician, 50, who is the Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was, for many people, the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce teal outfit and robust sword-bearing skills.Mordaunt has now addressed her viral moment at the coronation on Twitter, writing: “Honoured to be part of the coronation with thousands of others who played their part.“I’m very aware that our armed forces, police officers and others have been marching or standing for hours as part of the ceremony or to keep us all safe. In comparison, my job was rather easier.“Huge and heartfelt thanks to all who made this so remarkable. I’m so proud of you all and the King and Queen today.”Ellie Muir reports.[*Penny Mordaunt speaks out after viral coronation moment*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/penny-mordaunt-coronation-sword-blue-b2334308.html) Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath11:56 , Tara Cobham Buckingham Palace Mall could be seen littered with rubbish including tents and flags in the aftermath of King Charles III’s coronation.Some royalists had been out there for as long as a week, and had left their soggy belongings behind after a day of bad weather.ITV’s Chris Ship, who filmed the clip, described the scene as ‘an abandoned campsite after a wet weekend at Glastonbury’.Today’s coronation celebrations (7 May), will take place at Windsor Castle, with the coronation concert happening this evening.Watch here:[*Buckingham Palace Mall littered with soggy tents and union jacks in coronation aftermath*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/coronation-mall-aftermath-litter-tents-b2334318.html) Royal fans spot Queen Camilla had names discreetly embroidered on coronation dress11:42 , Tara Cobham Queen Camilla had the names of her children and grandchildren discreetly embroidered onto the bottom of her coronation dress, alongside a tribute to her rescue dogs.The 75-year-old wore an elegant Bruce Oldfield couture gown to the coronation ceremony on Saturday.Eagle-eyed royal fans spotted the dress appeared to feature the names of her two children, Tom and Laura, along with those of her grandchildren, Gus, Freddy, Louis, Eliza and Lola. They also noticed two puppies embroidered onto the grown, thought to represent Charles and Camilla's Jack Russell Terrier rescue dogs, Beth and Bluebell.Peak TV audience of over 20 million watched coronation11:28 , Tara Cobham The King’s coronation service at Westminster Abbey was watched by more than 18 million viewers in the UK, provisional figures have shown.The lavish ceremony on Saturday which saw Charles and Camilla crowned was broadcast simultaneously on a range of channels between about 11am and 1pm, including BBC One and Two, ITV and Sky News.An average of 18.8 million people watched across 11 channels and services, with audience figures peaking at 20.4 million when the King was crowned just after midday, according to overnight ratings released by the research organisation Barb.The bad weather in much of the UK could have boosted the viewing figures for the coronation by forcing people to stay indoors.Although the figure is not quite as high as the ratings for the funeral service of the late Queen last September which was seen by 26.5 million people across more than 50 TV channels.Follow The Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here11:12 , Tara Cobham A day after King Charles III’s coronation, much of the UK is turning its attention to Windsor Castle, where an extravagent concert is being held in the new monarch’s honour.The line-up of performers for the event includes Take That, Lionel Richie, and Katy Perry.Festivities begin at 8pm. Those not in attendance who wish to do so will be able to watch the concert live on the BBC.The concert will be staged on the East Lawn of the castle’s grounds, marking the first time an event like this has taken place on the property.As well as the acts mentioned above, the night also sees acts such as Italian opera singer Andrea Bocelli, Welsh bass-baritone Sir Bryn Terfel, and classical-soul composer Alexis Ffrench perform.FollowThe Independent’s live coverage of the coronation concert here.[*Coronation concert – live: Katy Perry and Take That prepare to perform as Zoe Ball drops out at last minute*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-latest-live-katy-perry-b2334290.html) Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery11:09 , Tara Cobham Lionel Richie has revealed he has a joke with King Charles III about getting a ‘Hollywood’-style makeover to remain youthful.The pair are 73 and 74-years-old respectively, and became friends after Richie did some work with the Prince’s Trust.“We have a little joke between us”, the singer began.“He says, ‘How do you look the way I look and I look the way I look?’, I said, ‘You come to Hollywood and I can help you’.”Richie is performing at tonight’s coronation concert (7 May).Watch here:[*Lionel Richie reveals inside joke with King Charles III about getting plastic surgery*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/lifestyle/king-charles-botox-lionel-richie-b2334296.html) How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of the coronation10:47 , Tara Cobham Penny Mordaunt, Leader of the House of Commons and Lord President of the Privy Council, was the surprise star of King Charles III’s coronation with her fierce outfit and stoney-faced sword-bearing.Mordaunt on Saturday 6 May became the first woman to carry the sword of state – a symbol of the new king’s authority – during the procession at Westminster Abbey.Her part in the ceremony included carrying the heavy sword for a full 51 minutes, which weighs eight pounds (3.6kg), before exchanging it for the jewelled sword of offering and presenting that to Charles. Mordaunt kept a serious face and did not break a sweat while she was watched by thousands of people.As part of an ancient custom, Mordaunt then “bought back” the glittering sword – part of the new King’s regalia or collection of objects which symbolise his responsibilities as monarch – from the Archbishop of Canterbury in exchange for 100 newly-minted 50p pieces bearing an effigy of Charles.[*Her appearance at the crowning ceremony*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/fashion/best-dressed-coronation-king-charles-b2333740.html) impressed royal fans on Twitter, with one person wondering: “Who had ‘Penny Mordaunt overshadowing everything’ on their bingo card?”Read more here: [*How Penny Mordaunt became the surprise star of King Charles’ coronation*](https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/royal-family/penny-mordaunt-conservative-mp-outfit-designer-b2334257.html) Everything you need to know about coronation concert10:42 , Tara Cobham King Charles III’s coronation is well and truly upon us, with a Bank Holiday weekend full of celebrations in full swing.The official coronation took place yesterday, on Saturday 6 May, with a coronation concert taking place this evening (Sunday 7 May).Staged at Windsor Castle and broadcast across the BBC, the concert will feature performances from Take That, Katy Perry and Lionel Richie.Last summer, a royal concert was staged at Buckingham Palace for the late Queen’s Platinum Jubilee, titled the Party at the Palace concert. Rod Stewart, Diana Ross and Queen were among those to perform.Here’s everything you need to know:[*Coronation Concert: Everything you need to know about King Charles’s musical celebration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/music/news/coronation-concert-line-up-what-time-performers-b2334286.html) Zoe Ball ‘absolutely gutted’ as sickness forces her to pull out of coronation concert10:34 , Tara Cobham Zoe Ball has said she is “absolutely gutted” as she has been forced to pull out of King Charles III's coronation concert due to sickness.The BBC Radio 2 presenter announced on social media on Sunday morning that she is “heading back to bed” instead of covering the concert at Windsor Castle on Sunday evening.The 52-year-old tweeted: “Absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me. Was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the coronation concert on BBC Radio 2 later.”She added Dermot O'Leary and Scott Mills would be covering for her as she recovers from her illness.absolutely gutted… the sickness bug has got me was meant to be heading to Windsor Castle for the [*#coronationconcert*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/coronationconcert?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) on [*@BBCRadio2*](https://twitter.com/BBCRadio2?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) later [*@radioleary*](https://twitter.com/radioleary?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and [*@scott\_mills*](https://twitter.com/scott_mills?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) have got you covered i’m heading back to bed ️— Zoe Ball (@ZoeTheBall) [*May 7, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZoeTheBall/status/1655106691157876741?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Culture Secretary denies police went too far in policing the coronation

The Culture Secretary has denied that police went too far in policing the coronation, saying they got the “balance right” and she has “huge confidence” in them.

Lucy Frazer also said police should take into account the context of events in determining their response.

She told Sky News: “What they have to do is balance the right to protest, which is important in a democracy. At the same time there’s the right of all those other people to enjoy what was a fabulous day. I think, overall, they managed to get that balance right.”

Asked whether she trusted the police to use new laws to prevent disruptive protests, she said: “Yes, I do trust them to use those new powers. I have huge confidence in the police.

“I think it’s absolutely right that they have the powers that they need in order to ensure that people can go to go on their day-to-day lives at the same time as respecting people’s rights to protest.”

She added: “I think it is really important that they take into account the context of the event because this was an event that would have raised questions about national security. This was an event on the world stage.”

Prince Harry shuns British brands to wear Dior to coronation

The Duke of Sussex eschewed British fashion brands to wear a suit by French label Dior to his father’s coronation, fuelling speculation he may be about to sign an endorsement deal with the company.

Prince Harry was photographed in a suit with a waistcoat for the ceremony, at which he sat in the third row.

Harry, who left swiftly after the coronation to catch a flight from Heathrow, wore his dark morning suit and tie with his Afghanistan and Jubilee medals pinned to his suit jacket.

He also wore a Royal Victorian Order star and neck decoration.

Luxury fashion house Dior tweeted that it had dressed the duke in a custom design by celebrity favourite British-born Kim Jones, saying to do so was an “honour”.

The brand has often been a go-to choice for Harry’s wife, Meghan, who wore a Dior outfit to the Queen’s platinum jubilee celebrations last summer.

Council ‘deeply concerned’ by reports women’s safety volunteers arrested at coronation

A council has said it is “deeply concerned” by reports that volunteers who work on women’s safety were arrested in the early hours of coronation day.

The Metropolitan Police said that at around 2am on Saturday three people were stopped by officers and arrested in the Soho area of central London on suspicion of conspiracy to commit public nuisance.

Among items seized were a number of rape alarms, the force said. Those arrested were reportedly volunteers with Westminster Council’s nightlife safety team.

The Met said it “received intelligence that indicated groups and individuals seeking to disrupt today’s coronation proceedings were planning to use rape alarms to disrupt the procession”.

The three people – a 37-year-old woman, a 59-year-old woman and a 47-year-old man – were taken to a south London police station, where they were questioned.

The 47-year-old man was also further arrested on suspicion of handling stolen goods, police said.

All three have since been released on bail pending further inquiries.

**Load-Date:** May 8, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – latest: Putin reveals when nuclear weapons will be deployed to Belarus*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68F3-XN31-DY4H-K2C6-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 12741 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Jane Dalton

**Highlight:** Russian leader tells ally storage facilities will be ready within a month

**Body**

Vladimir Putin has announced Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus next month – [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ’s first move of such bombs outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

The Russian president said the weapons would be deployed after special storage facilities are ready in just under a month’s time.

It comes after he, last month, announced he wanted to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, in an apparent warning to Nato over its support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

“Everything is going according to plan,” Mr Putin told his ally and Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko.

“Preparation of the relevant facilities ends on July 7-8, and we will immediately begin activities related to the deployment of appropriate types of weapons on your territory,” he said, according to a Kremlin transcript of his remarks.

Earlier, Ukraine‘s domestic security service said it had intercepted a telephone call proving a Russian “sabotage group” blew up the [*Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-map-today-b2352155.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20war%20map%20reveals%20Europe’s%20largest%20nuclear%20power%20plant%20‘threatened’%20after%20dam%20attack). The destruction of the facility on Tuesday unleashed mass flooding, [*forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kherson-kremlin-kyiv-b2353940.html%22%20title=%22Deluge%20from%20ruptured%20Ukrainian%20dam%20is%20latest%20tragedy%20for%20Kherson%20residents%20since%20Russian%20invasion).

Key Points

Russia will soon have nuclear weapons in Belarus, says Putin Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam Western tanks, ammunition appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief says Russia reports heavy fighting in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine

Russian strike damages infrastructure at Ukrainian military airfield -governor

Russia fired missiles and attack drones at the central Ukrainian region of Poltava overnight, inflicting "some damage of infrastructure and equipment" at the Myrhorod military airfield, the regional governor said on Saturday.

The attack that used ballistic and cruise missiles also damaged eight private residential homes and several vehicles, governor Dmytro Lunin said on Telegram messenger. No casualties were reported.

Three killed in Russian drone attack on Odesa overnight -Ukraine

Three civilians were killed during a Russian drone attack on the Black Sea city of Odesa in the early hours of Saturday after drone debris fell on an apartment block starting a fire, the Ukrainian military said.

Air defences in Odesa region shot down eight "Shahed" drones and two missiles in the latest in a spate of overnight air strikes on Ukrainian cities in recent weeks, a spokesperson for the southern military command said.

"As a result of the air fight, debris from one of the drones fell onto a high-rise apartment, causing a fire," the military official, Natalia Humeniuk, said in a statement.

The emergency services said 27 people, including three children, were wounded, but that the fire had been rapidly put out and 12 people were rescued from the building.

Three people die during a Russian drone attack on Odesa oblast

Three people died and at least ten more were injured during a Russian drone attack on Odesa Oblast today, local reports said.

According to Ukraine’s southern command, Russian forces attacked the region using Iranian-made drones. Officials, however, claimed that all the drones were destroyed by Ukrainian forces.

A high-rise residential building was damaged by the falling debris. The resulting fire has since been extinguished, officials said.

The blast wave also damaged the neighbouring residential buildings.

Five dead and 13 missing due to floods after Kakhovka dam destruction, Ukrainian authorities claim

At least five people in Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts were killed, and 13 more were missing yesterday, according to Ukrainian officials.

Ukraine’s interior ministry reported that dozens of settlements on both banks of the Dnipro River are flooded.

The ministry said, four of the five victims died in southern Kherson Oblast, where 48 settlements have been flooded, including 34 on the Ukraine-controlled west bank of the Dnipro River and 14 on the Russian-occupied east bank, the Kyiv Independent reported.

Mykolaiv Oblast police chief reported on 8 June that another victim died in the neighbouring Mykolaiv Oblast, where 23 settlements have been flooded.

Over 130 explosions recorded across Sumy Oblast, Ukraine authorities claim

Russian forces attacked seven communities in Sumy Oblast yesterday, the military administration of the region stated on Telegram.

According to officials, Russian forces targeted the communities of Velyka Pysarivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Myropillia, Shalyhyne, Yunakivka, and Novoslobidske, according to Kyiv Independent.

A total of 133 explosions were recorded across the seven communities.

One local was reportedly injured in the Yunakivka community. The attacks also damaged a residential building, an outbuilding, and a garage in the same community.

Russian ambassador to the US says Washington not looking for ‘diplomatic settlement of the conflict’

Russian ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov stated yesterday that the US does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, the TASS news agency reported.

Speaking about the next US package of military assistance to the Kyiv authorities, he said: “The United States continues to pump up its wards with new batches of deadly weapons. The appropriations for these purposes of such impressive financial resources indicate one thing: Washington does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict.”

He added that Washington “did nothing to bring the regime of [Volodymyr] Zelensky to the negotiating table”.

He continued: “On the contrary, they are methodically pushing their puppets to continue sacrificing human lives in the name of the extravagant goal of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. It is impossible for Washington to retreat from this task. At stake is the reputation of the country’s leadership, which has chosen the path of war, and not diplomatic solutions.”

Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief says

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is “hugely worse” than before the Kakhovka dam collapsed, the UN’s top aid official warned yesterday.

Undersecretary-General Martin Griffiths said an “extraordinary” 700,000 people are in need of drinking water and warned that the ravages of flooding in one of the world’s most important breadbaskets will almost inevitably lead to lower grain exports, higher food prices around the world, and less to eat for millions in need.

“This is a viral problem,” he said in an interview with Associated Press. “But the truth is this is only the beginning of seeing the consequences of this act.”

US ambassador to UN ‘gravely concerned’ by growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the United Nations says she is “gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran” and called for an investigation into Iran’s transfer of attack drones to Russia.

“I am gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran which continues to enable Russia’s prosecution of its brutal war against Ukraine,” Ms Thomas-Greenfield said.

She says Russia and Iran are both violating UN Security Council Resolution.

She cited information released by the US earlier Friday which documented how Iran “has provided Russia with hundreds of one-way attack UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], as well as UAV production-related equipment.” The ambassador said Russia has been using these UAVs in recent weeks to unleash missile strikes on Kyiv and "terrorize Ukrainian civilians.”

The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.

Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.

Russia has received hundreds of Iranian drones to attack Ukraine, White House says

The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.

Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.

“Russia has been using Iranian UAVs in recent weeks to strike Kyiv and terrorise the Ukrainian population, and the Russia-Iran military partnership appears to be deepening,” White House spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

“We are also concerned that Russia is working with Iran to produce Iranian UAVs from inside Russia.”

Mr Kirby also said that the US had information that Russia was receiving materials from Iran required to build a drone manufacturing plant that could be fully operational early next year.

“We are releasing satellite imagery of the planned location of this UAV manufacturing plant in Russia’s Alabuga Special Economic Zone.”

Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractor

A grainy black-and-white gunsight video [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) released this week to bolster a claim its military blew up some of Ukraine’s most fearsome tanks actually documented the destruction of a tractor, according to a visual analysis by The Associated Press.

The Russian Embassy in [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) announced Monday on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) its forces had “annihilated” eight German-made Leopard tanks, among the most advanced and powerful weapons NATO countries have provided to Ukraine. The Russian Ministry of Defense then posted a video Tuesday on the social media network [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) with text saying it showed “footage of the destruction of foreign armoured vehicles, including Leopard tanks.”

Michael Biesecker has the full story:

[*Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-washington-telegram-twitter-b2354651.html)

‘We will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil’, says Scotland Office minister of £150m housing fund

A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.

In Scotland, more than 24,000 displaced Ukrainians have arrived through an individual sponsor or the Scottish Government’s super-sponsor scheme.

Thousands remain in temporary accommodation while waiting for a permanent home.

Scotland Office minister John Lamont said: “The UK has a long, proud history of helping those fleeing danger or persecution and we will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil when Russia illegally invaded their country.

“Today’s announcement of a further £30 million for Scotland to help rehome people from Ukraine brings a welcome boost to the great effort already made.

“I want to thank everyone who has helped support Ukraine for more than a year now, including all those who have helped ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** make new lives in Scotland.”

Petro Rewko, of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, said his organisation welcomes the funding commitment during “difficult economic times”.

He added: “Ukrainians everywhere are grateful to the government and the British people for opening their homes and hearts to Ukrainians fleeing their homes as a result of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine.”

£150m fund aims to help Ukrainians into their own homes

A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, more than 124,000 people have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The new money will go to councils to help Ukrainian families into private rented accommodation and find work.

It will also go towards continuing sponsorship arrangements, as many guests are in their second year in the UK.

The funding is being divided according to the number of Ukrainians in each nation -England will receive around £109 million, Scotland £30 million, Wales £8 million and Northern Ireland £2 million.

Those hosting Ukrainians will continue to receive a monthly £350 thank-you payment during guests’ first 12 months, rising to £500 a month during the following year.

In March, the Red Cross warned many Ukrainians are staying in “inappropriate” accommodation.

UK housing minister Felicity Buchan said: “The UK has an honourable tradition of offering shelter to those fleeing the horrors of war.

“Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of hosts in this country, over 124,000 Ukrainians have now found safety in the UK.

“Sadly, the fighting in Ukraine shows no sign of ending soon, so we are appealing for more people to become hosts while providing councils with this additional funding to support guests into long-term housing.”

White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near Moscow

[*Iran*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iran) is providing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) with materials to build a [*drone manufacturing plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-counter-offensive-today-b2354348.html) near Moscow, according to a newly-declassified [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) intelligence report released by the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Friday.

The plant in the Alabuga special economic zone several hundred miles east of the Russian capital will be used to [*counter Ukraine’s latest offensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html) and could be operational early next year, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

The White House released declassified satellite imagery from April of the industrial location where it believes the plant “will probably be built.”

Bevan Hurley reports:

[*White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iran-russia-drone-factory-ukraine-white-house-b2354711.html)

'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapse

The rescue volunteer holds out his hand, but the dog, stranded on a floating island of debris in a southern Ukrainian city inundated by flooding, is too traumatised to approach. Volodymyr Holubnichii offers the scared animal some food; the dog sniffs and relaxes.

“Don’t be scared,” Holubnichii soothingly tells the animal, which eventually accepts a leash and being carried to safety.

Holubnichii, a volunteer with Animal Rescue Kharkiv, spent days cruising the flooded streets of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) city after the Kakhovka dam collapsed on Tuesday and submerged entire towns. He is one among the organisation’s 70 volunteers determined to rescue as many animals as possible, plucking them from the rooftops and garages of flooded homes before they die of dehydration and hunger.

Vasilisa Stepanenko reports:

[*'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kherson-ngo-russia-b2354830.html)

Germany moves ahead with plans to buy Israel's Arrow-3 missile defence for 4 bln euros

Germany plans to buy Israel’s Arrow-3 missile defence system for almost 4 billion euros ($4.30 billion) in total, and will ask lawmakers to release advance payments of up to 560 million euros next week, according to documents seen by Reuters on Friday.

The Arrow-3 is designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside of the earth’s atmosphere.

It is the top layer of Israel’s missile defence array, which extends from Iron Dome that intercepts short-range rockets to Arrow-3’s long-range missiles that destroy any non-conventional warheads at a safe altitude.

Berlin aims to strike a government-to-government deal with Israel on the purchase of the Arrow-3 system at the end of the year, said the finance ministry’s procurement documents that were prepared for parliament.

Germany will lose part or all of its advance payments should the deal fail, according to the papers, as the money would be used to compensate Israel for costs incurred by then.

The German air force is supposed to take delivery of Arrow-3, that will cost about one billion euros more than originally planned, by the fourth quarter of 2025.

Russia’s war in Ukraine has laid bare a shortage of ground-based air defence systems such as Raytheon’s Patriot units or the more recently developed IRIS-T in many Western nations.

While Patriot and IRIS-T cover the medium layer of air defence, Arrow-3 -produced by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) -offers protection for the higher layer.

Putin says Ukrainian counter-offensive has begun as drones strike within Russia

Vladimir Putin says Ukrainian troops have started a long-expected counter-offensive and are suffering “significant” losses.

The Russian president’s comments, hours after a string of drone strikes inside Russian territory, formed his latest effort to shape the narrative of the invasion he ordered more than 15 months ago, sparking widespread international condemnation and reviving Cold War-style tensions.

The conflict entered a complex new phase this week with the rupture of a Dnieper River dam that sent floodwaters gushing through a large area of the front in southern Ukraine.

Tens of thousands of civilians already facing the misery of regular shelling fled for higher ground on both sides of the swollen and sprawling waterway.

Ukraine has played down talk of a counter-offensive, reasoning that the less said about its military moves the better.

Speaking after he visited flood zones on Thursday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was in touch with Ukrainian forces “in all the hottest areas” and praised an unspecified “result” from their efforts.

Mr Putin said Russian forces have the upper hand, telling reporters in Sochi: “We can clearly say the offensive has started, as indicated by the Ukrainian army’s use of strategic reserves.

“But the Ukrainian troops haven’t achieved their stated tasks in a single area of fighting.”

Kyiv has not specified whether reservists have been mobilised to the front, but western allies have poured firepower, defensive systems and other military assets and advice into Ukraine, raising the stakes for the counter-offensive.

“We are seeing that the Ukrainian regime’s troops are suffering significant losses,” Mr Putin said. “It’s known that the offensive side suffers losses of three to one -it’s sort of classic -but in this case, the losses significantly exceed that classic level.”

At least 13 people killed in flooding after dam explosion, authorities say

At least five people have been killed in flooding caused by the Kakhovka dam, Ukraine has said, as it evacuated more people from the surrounding areas.

Interior minister Ihor Klymenko said four people had died and 13 people were missing in the Kherson region, and that one person had died in the Mykolayiv region.

A Russian-appointed official said eight people had died in Russian-held territory and more than 5,800 had been evacuated from their homes.

US announces $2bn security package for Ukraine

The US Department of Defence has announced an additional $2.1bn in security assistance for Ukraine on Friday, including air defense and ammunition capabilities, amid signs that Kyiv had begun its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia.

The package includes additional munitions for Patriot air defense systems, Raytheon Hawk air defense systems and missiles, 105mm and 203mm artillery rounds, small AeroVironment drones that can be launched by hand, laser-guided rocket system munitions and support for training and maintenance, the Defence Department.

Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funds will be used to purchase the weapons, allowing Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry, rather than pull them from US stocks.

Delivery of the weapons and systems depends on their availability and production timeline.

Tanks, missiles and keeping Russia guessing: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive truly began

Our world affairs editor Kim Sengupta reports:

The build-up has been patient and methodical, progress slow and there is grim expectation of heavy losses to come. But Ukraine’s counteroffensive, one which will likely shape the final outcome of this war, is now underway.

There is combat, fierce at times, at multiple flashpoints across the length of the vast frontline from Zaporizhzhia to Donetsk to Bakhmut. There are also missile strikes in separatist-held Luhansk, and raids across the Russian border, as Ukraine continues chess moves to try and keep the enemy on the back foot.

Ukraine has been asking Western allies for advanced weaponry, tanks, missiles, artillery and warplanes in preparation for the mission and have got a substantial amount of them.

German Leopards and British Challenger tanks, as well as Storm Shadow missiles, French AMX armoured cars, American Himars and Nasam artillery have been assimilated into specialist Ukrainian brigades. Advanced warplanes, F-16s are still missing. They are due to in the autumn, and this offensive may still be going on then – as Ukraine seeks to reclaim as much territory as it can before there is any possible ceasefire.

[*Tanks, missiles and troops: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive began | Kim Sengupta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-counteroffensive-b2354783.html)

Putin claims Kyiv suffering large casualties in counteroffensive

Vladimir Putin has claimed that Ukraine’s casualties significantly exceed the classical ratio of three attackers to one defender, as he said Kyiv’s counteroffensive was certainly under way.

“All counteroffensive attempts made so far have failed. But the offensive potential of the troops of the Kyiv regime is still preserved,” the Russian president claimed.

Putin says Ukrainian offensive has begun, but without success

Russian President Vladimir Putin told a conference in Sochi on Friday that Ukraine had begun its expected counteroffensive against Russian forces, but without success.

“The offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has begun. This is evidenced by the use of strategic reserves,” he said, in footage from the forum posted on Telegram.

“Ukrainian troops did not achieve their goals in any sector -thanks to the courage of Russian soldiers, proper organisation of troops.”

Putin says tactical nuclear weapons to be deployed in Belarus in July

Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are made ready on July 7-8, President Vladimir Putin said on Friday, Moscow’s first move of such warheads outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Putin announced in March he had agreed to deploy such weapons in Belarus, pointing to U.S deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in a host of European countries over many decades.

“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, discussing the planned nuclear deployment over a meal at the Russian leader’s summer retreat in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

“Preparation of the relevant facilities ends on July 7-8, and we will immediately begin activities related to the deployment of appropriate types of weapons on your territory,” Putin said, according to a Kremlin transcript of his remarks.

Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”

Hungary receives Ukrainian POWs from Russia, Ukraine says not informed

Hungary said on Friday it had received a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war from Russia, a release that Ukraine welcomed while expressing concern that it had not been informed.

The POWs were from the western part of Ukraine that borders Hungary, according to both the Russian Orthodox Church, which said it had assisted in the release, and Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen.

“This is my human and patriotic duty”.. we have brought back from Moscow 11 prisoners of war from Transcarpathia,” a post on Semjen’s official Facebook page said.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s government has long supported the Russian Orthodox Church in Hungary, and blocked proposals from other EU members for sanctions against the Church’s overall leader Patriarch Kirill.

A statement posted on the website of the Russian Orthodox Church’s Moscow Patriarchate late on Thursday said that “at the request of the Hungarian side, a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war of Transcarpathian origin who participated in the hostilities was transferred to Hungary”.

Asked for comment early on Friday, a Hungarian government spokesman told Reuters the statement was “fake news”. Later on the spokesman was not reachable for comment.

It was not clear what had caused the apparent confusion within the Hungarian government.

Ukraine, which has secured successive prisoner exchanges with Russia with international mediation during Russia‘s more than 15-month-old invasion, said it had not been informed about the prisoners’ release. The foreign ministry said it had asked Hungary’s representative in Ukraine to grant immediate access to them.

“The release of Ukrainian prisoners of war is always good news,” foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko wrote on Facebook, adding that the ministry had “emphasized the need to coordinate cooperation on such sensitive issues”.

Nuclear weapons will be in Belarus within weeks, says Putin

Russia will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are ready on July 7-8, president Vladimir Putin has said, Moscow’s first move of such bombs outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr Putin says the United States and its Western allies are pumping arms into Ukraine as part of an expanding proxy war aimed at bringing Russia to its knees.

In March he announced he wanted to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, an apparent warning to the US-led Nato military alliance over its support for Ukraine.

Leading Nato countries say they will support Ukraine and help it defend itself for as long as it takes from what Kyiv casts as an imperial-style land grab by Russia which threatens the survival of the Ukrainian state.

“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko when discussing the planned nuclear deployment during talks at the Russian leader’s Black Sea summer retreat in Sochi.

Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”

Putin, 70, casts the war as a battle for Russia’s own survival in the face of what he says is an ever-expanding Nato. He has warned the West that Moscow will not back down.

Kazakh president to skip ‘Russian Davos’

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will not attend the annual economic forum in Russia‘s St Petersburg next week, the government said on Friday, after refusing to toe the Kremlin’s line over the Russian invasion of Ukraine at last year’s event.

The Kazakh government said only two officials will represent the Central Asian nation at this year’s forum.

Until its invasion of Ukraine, Russia regularly hosted world leaders and business titans at the forum, but Western officials and business figures now shun it, and last year Tokayev stole the limelight by rejecting the Kremlin claims on Ukraine.

Sharing the stage with Russian President Putin -who will address the forum this year as well -Tokayev said then that Kazakhstan would not recognise the independence of pro-Russian statelets in eastern Ukraine or other ex-Soviet republics.

His comments raised eyebrows because Kazakhstan, which shares the world’s longest continuous land border with Russia, has for decades been a member of Moscow-led security and trade blocs, and calls Russia its strategic partner.

Asked who would attend the conference this year, a Kazakh government spokeswoman said only Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar and Deputy Economy Minister Timur Zhaksylykov would go.

Tokayev’s office declined to comment on the reasons why he was not attending.

Russia‘s RIA news agency reported last month that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, invited by Putin, said would not be able to attend the forum. Russian media have not announced plans by any other world leaders to attend.

Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter show

The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.

The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.

Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.

“The Kakhovka dam was effectively Russian. It was built by the Russian government. It currently sits in Russian-controlled territory. The dam’s reservoir supplies water to Crimea, which has been for the last 240 years home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet,” [*said Carlson.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-twitter-video-ukraine-dam-b2352930.html)

[*Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html)

'Our house was carried away' -flood survivors in Russian-held Ukraine speak of their escape

Pensioner Maria Mikhailovna says she was woken by her husband in the middle of the night to find their belongings underwater after the collapse of Ukraine‘s giant Nova Kakhovka Dam.

“The water in the house was at waist level. At midnight everything had been dry -both inside and outside,” said the 73-year-old, who walks slowly with the help of a stick.

“We can hardly walk. We went outside and were lucky that there were passers-by. They helped us to get to the ‘Vostok’ shop. Then we limped on to our friends,” she told Reuters.

With water snapping at their heels, she and her husband then moved on from place to place, she said in the town of Hola Prystan in Ukraine‘s southern Kherson region, adding that she was grateful to her rescuers.

They were brought to safety with other pensioners on Thursday in a rubber boat crewed by rescuers from Russia‘s Emergency Situations Ministry.

Russian forces took control of Hola Prystan, a town where around 13,000 people once lived, last year as part of what Moscow calls its “special military operation”.

After the vast Soviet-era Kakhovka Dam crumbled on Tuesday -a human and ecological disaster which Russia and Ukraine have blamed on each other -rubber dinghies have replaced cars in the town’s streets.

Animals and people sheltered on roofs on Thursday: in one surreal scene a small group of goats and hens stood on what looked like part of a roof surrounded by floodwater as rescuers in dinghies passed by.

The first one or two storeys of houses and people’s yards were underwater and an emerald green church was semi-submerged, with the tops of trees poking out from the water in places.

Rescuers in boats scoured the town for survivors, shouting out the addresses they had checked to one another.

Many of those rescued appeared elderly but small children and their mothers were also among those helped to safety.

One woman had her pet cat in their bag and one elderly lady clutched a birdcage as she was ferried to dry land.

A woman who gave her name as Oksana held back tears as she and her daughter were evacuated in a boat with their two pet dogs.

“We ended up at the kindergarten because our house was carried away by a torrent of water,” said Oksana, as her daughter turned her head away to sob.

Ukraine reports heavy fighting in east

Ukraine reported heavy fighting in the eastern region of Donetsk on Friday and a military spokesperson said Ukrainian forces had gained more ground near the devastated city of Bakhmut.

“The situation is tense on all areas of the front,” Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on the Telegram messaging app.

Naming eastern areas where fighting has been fierce for months, she said: “The enemy continues to focus its main efforts on the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivsky and Mariinka directions, heavy fighting continues.”

She said Ukrainian troops were repelling the Russian attacks.

Reuters was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield.

Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesperson for Ukraine‘s East military command said Ukrainian forces had advanced 1.2 km (0.75 mile) near Bakhmut over the past 24 hours.

“We took advantage of the enemy’s rotation measures and the fact that units which entered do not know the area fully, and failed to conduct appropriate reconnaissance and coordination. We struck,” he told Ukrainian television. “We have been carrying out assaults for several days.”

Over the past several days, Ukrainian forces have made their most rapid gains around the edges of Bakhmut, aiming to encircle the ruined eastern city which Russian forces seized control of last month.

Russia‘s Defence Ministry said it was continuing to repel Ukrainian attacks in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia, Russian news agencies reported.

Ukrainian officials made little mention of the situation in Zaporizhzhia but the head of the president’s office said a junior nurse and a plumber had been killed by Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft server

For most teenagers [*Minecraft*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minecraft) remains just a hobby, but one Ukrainian schoolboy’s love for the game has meant he can now afford to buy his homeless mother a house.

Lomond School pupil Maksym Gavrylenko has made a “substantial” sum after selling the server he ran from his bedroom, which allows gamers from all over the world to connect to and play together on, with friends.

The 17-year-old boarding school pupil said: “I am very proud that I was able to turn my passion into a profitable business and I plan on treating my mother.

“As a result of the war, she was forced to flee her home, leaving her homeless, so to buy her a property will make all the hours spent on this project worthwhile.”

Read more here:

[*Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft server*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/ukraine-boy-home-minecraft-server-b2354415.html)

Latest British Defence Intelligence update for Ukraine

Here is the latest update from the UK Ministry of Defence:

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -9 June 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf*](https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/1iCNxfO6qK*](https://t.co/1iCNxfO6qK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*June 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1667048494677336064?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russian shelling kills two civilians in Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia

A junior nurse and a plumber were killed in Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in Ukraine‘s Zaporizhzhia region, a senior Ukrainian official said on Friday.

Andriy Yermak, the head of the president’s office, said on the Telegram messaging app under a photo of a devastated building that two others were wounded in Huliai Pole, a small town close to front line in southern Ukraine.

Reuters was unable to verify the situation in the town.

Stay tuned for updates as we have them.

Top Dutch court upholds decision awarding Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine

The Dutch Supreme Court on Thursday upheld lower court decisions ordering the return of ancient Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine, marking the end of a long legal process.

The artefacts had been on display at the Allard Pierson Museum in the Netherlands when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and Ukraine and museums in Crimea had demanded their return.

“This decision ends this dispute. The Allard Pierson Museum must return these artistic treasures to the State of Ukraine and not to the museums in Crimea,” the ruling said.

The pieces, including a solid gold Scythian helmet and a golden neck ornament each weighing more than 1 kg (35 oz), were on loan at the museum in Amsterdam.

The U.N., the European Union and the Netherlands recognise the “territorial integrity” of Ukraine in its pre-2014 borders.

Lower courts in the Netherlands found in 2016 and 2021 that the pieces should be returned to Ukraine.

The appeals court decision in 2021 noted that under Ukrainian law the artefacts will be held at the National Historical Museum in Kyiv “until the situation in Crimea has stabilized.”

The 2021 decision “struck a fair balance between infringing on the rights of the museums and the interests of the State of Ukraine in protecting its cultural heritage,” the Dutch Supreme Court said on Friday.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

“And I believe that that support will be real, even though you hear some voices today on Capitol Hill about whether or not we should continue to support Ukraine and for how long we should support them.”

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-rishi-sunak-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-kyiv-b2354193.html)

Russia accuses ex-defence industry worker of spying for Germany

Russia has detained a former defence industry worker on suspicion of spying for Germany and charged him with high treason, Moscow’s FSB security service said on Friday.

According to the FSB, the suspect had worked for a military contractor in the Siberian region of Omsk and had offered to hand over information in exchange for German citizenship.

It said the man had initiated contact with a German official and had gathered information about “important military facilities”. It gave no further details.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the FSB’s account.

The FSB distributed a video to Russian news agencies showing what appeared to be an FSB officer in camouflage jumping out of a vehicle and pinning a man to the ground.

On Wednesday, the FSB said it had arrested a resident of the far eastern Primorsky Krai region on suspicion of spying for Ukraine.

Thunberg criticises Russia over Ukraine dam 'ecocide'

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has accused Russia of causing the collapse of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine, calling it an act of “ecocide”.

The burst of the huge dam, under Russian control in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region, unleashed large floods, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc. Russia and Ukraine have blamed each other for its destruction.

“This ecocide as a continuation of Russia‘s unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine is yet another atrocity which leaves the world lost for words. Our eyes are once again on Russia who must be held accountable for their crimes,” Thunberg, 20, said on Twitter on Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy replied on Twitter: “Thank you for your position and for upholding the truth @GretaThunberg! (Russia) must be held accountable for all its evil against people, life and nature!”.

Thunberg on Friday told Reuters during a weekly climate protest by the Swedish parliament that the aftermath of the dam burst was “absolutely horrifying and awful”.

“Russia needs to be held accountable for their action and for their crimes. The eyes of the world are on them now,” Thunberg, who graduates from high school on Friday, said.

The United States said on Tuesday it could not say conclusively what caused the dam’s destruction but it was assessing reports that Russia, which has been occupying the dam since last year, was behind the blast.

Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city

Three people were lightly wounded after a drone crashed into a residential building in central Voronezh, a city in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine, regional governor Alexander Gusev reported on Friday morning.

Gusev spoke to Russian state media, which also published photos showing a high-rise apartment block with some of its windows blown out and damage to parts of its facade.

State media reports also cited the building’s administrators as saying that “several apartments were damaged” in the explosion. There was no immediate comment on who may have been behind the drone strike.

[*Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kyiv-ap-ukraine-b2354482.html)

Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that points towards its counteroffensive shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has already been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed to have repelled Ukrainian attacks – that it calls the counteroffensive – across various points of the war’s frontlines for a number of days, but Russian military bloggers noted an increase in clashes overnight Wednesday and into Thursday. One said: “Wave after wave of the enemy is trying to break through our defence.”

[*Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zaporizhzhia-power-plant-ukraine-counteroffensive-b2354423.html)

Russian intelligence investigating drone strike on city of Voronezh -Kremlin

The Kremlin said on Friday that Russia‘s intelligence services were investigating a drone attack on the Russian city of Voronezh, which it blamed on Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the security services were working to clarify details of the incident.

The regional governor said earlier on Friday that three people had been lightly wounded when a drone struck an apartment building in the city, about 180 km (110 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

There was no immediate comment on the episode from Ukraine.#

Russia and China to continue expanding military cooperation -TASS

Russia and China will continue to expand their military cooperation, rUSSIAN Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov was quoted as saying on Friday by the TASS news agency.

Gerasimov has invited his Chinese counterpart to visit Russia, news agencies reported.

“The practice of joint operational and combat training of the Russian and Chinese Armed Forces should remain an important area of further activities,” Gerasimov was quoted as saying.

Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving a Russian “sabotage group” blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine.

The destruction of the facility on Tuesday unleashed mass flooding, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc.

Russia and its proxy officials in Ukraine have blamed Kyiv for destroying the dam but have offered varying explanations.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip on its Telegram channel of the alleged conversation, which featured two men who appeared to be discussing the fallout from the disaster in Russian.

“They (the Ukrainians) didn’t strike it. That was our sabotage group,” said one of the men, who the SBU described as a Russian soldier. “They wanted to, like, scare (people) with that dam.”

“It didn’t go according to plan, and (they did) more than what they planned for.”

The SBU did not offer further details of the conversation or its participants. It said it had opened a criminal investigation into war crimes and “ecocide”.

“The invaders wanted to blackmail Ukraine by blowing up the dam and staged a man-made disaster in the south of our country,” the SBU said in a statement.

Ukraine security service says it intercepted call proving Russia destroyed Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving Russian forces blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region.

The Security Service of Ukraine posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip of the alleged conversation on its Telegram channel.

In pictures: Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline in Luhansk region

Pictures show Ukrainian soldiers working during a combat operation on the frontline near Kreminna, Luhansk region.

One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says

Russia unleashed a new air strike on Ukraine overnight, killing at least one person in a combined assault of cruise missiles and attack drones, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Ukrainian military reported shooting down four out of six missiles launched during the attack, which the air force said lasted around six hours, and 10 out of 16 drones.

The interior ministry said one person had been killed, three were wounded, and four buildings were destroyed from falling debris.

It posted images on the Telegram messaging app of firefighters attending to the smouldering wreckage of what appeared to be residential homes.

The air force also said two cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in the central Ukrainian region of Cherkasy during an earlier attack on Thursday evening.

Regional governor Ihor Taburets said at least eight people had been wounded in that strike, which he said hit a carwash and an industrial object.

Moscow in recent weeks has stepped up regular air strikes against Ukraine as Kyiv prepared for a counteroffensive to try to take back Russian-occupied territory.

Russia reports heavy fighting in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine

Russia‘s army on Friday reported heavy fighting in the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, saying over 21 Ukrainian tanks had been destroyed in battles across key sections of the front line.

A spokesman for Russia‘s Vostok group of forces said 13 Ukrainian tanks were destroyed in battles in the Zaporizhzhia region and eight in the Donetsk region. It reported artillery, drone and infantry battles.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield claims.

Russian military bloggers said there were intense battles on the Zaporizhzhia front near the city of Orikhiv as Ukraine sought to pierce Russian defences and drive a wedge through Russian forces.

Russia said Ukraine began a major offensive on Sunday morning, first in southern Donetsk, but Moscow said its forces repelled the attacks. Ukraine accused Moscow of spreading lies.

Damaged reservoir can still help Ukrainian nuclear plant, says UN body

The UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed water is still being pumping to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant from the reservoir of the breached Ukrainian Nova Kakhovka dam.

The water is sufficient to cool the reactors and pumps are still operating at water levels earlier thought to make this impossible, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

The plant, occupied by Russia since the early days of its invasion last year, also has other water sources to fall back on if the reservoir’s water is no longer available, the IAEA said.

It added that these include a large cooling pond above the reservoir with several months’ worth of water.

“In these difficult and challenging circumstances, this is providing some more time before possibly switching to alternative water supplies including the large cooling pond next to the plant,” IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said in a statement.

Four cruise missiles, 10 attack drones downed overnight, says Ukraine

Ukraine’s military has shot down four cruise missiles and 10 attack drones during a Russian air strike overnight, the air force said in a statement this morning.

It said Russian forces had launched 16 drones and six cruise missiles during the attack, and that two other cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in central Ukraine during an earlier attack last evening.

The overnight barrage of Russian missile attack comes after a brief lull of a week. Russian forces had amped up the overnight missile attacks in May to overwhelm and exhaust Ukraine’s air defences in more than 17 separate volleys.

Western tanks appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts

Powerful Western tanks and ammunition sent to Ukraine by its allies have finally emerged on the battlefield as Russian forces report a surge in attacks that suggest Kyiv’s counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Russian military bloggers confirmed the presence of at least two Leopard 2 tanks sent by Germany, in a first such use of its war vehicle as they shared visuals from fortified positions along the frontline in the continuing full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The Leopard II main battle tanks were also seen in the Zaporizhzhia region where a significant Ukrainian force scaled up their assault on Russian lines in the southern region in the past 24 hours.

Russian Colonel General Alexander Romanchuk claimed, without providing evidence, that Moscow’s forces had destroyed three Leopard tanks. The officer also said that the general in charge of Russia’s troops in Ukraine, chief of the general staff Valery Gerasimov, briefed President Vladimir Putin on the battles in Zaporizhzhia.

At least two US-produced M113 armoured personnel carriers, or APCs, were also seen in a video shared by Russian military bloggers, reported FT.com.

Russia continues to shell Kherson evacuation points to inflict more damage, says Zelensky

Russian forces continue to shell the Kherson region despite it reeling in the aftermath of the Nova Kakhovka dam’s destruction, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.

“Russian terrorists are trying to further aggravate the situation they have caused with their ecocide. This is absolutely deliberate. They continue to shell Kherson and the communities of the region, which have already been flooded by terrorists,” Mr Zelensky said.

He added that the Russian forces are also shelling evacuation points “which is a manifestation of evil that perhaps no terrorists in the world, except for Russian ones, have ever done”.

He added that the Russian forces in the region “have completely abandoned people on the left bank of Kherson region to their fate”.

“The catastrophe has been expanding there for two days now. And this is also an absolutely conscious choice of the Russian leadership. There is no one left in the world today who does not see that Russia is ruled by savages. Savages who themselves are the biggest disaster on the planet today,” Mr Zelensky said.

Pentagon readies new $2bn air defence package for Ukraine – report

The US is set to announce a new arms package for Ukraine valued at more than $2bn (£1.5bn) as soon as today, officials from the Biden administration have said, reported Bloomberg.

The funds under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative will be heavy on air defence munitions and will help Ukraine purchase Hawk missile launchers and two types of advanced Patriot air defence missiles, the report said.

Zelensky cheers ‘results’ in Bakhmut in Ukraine’s counteroffensive battle

Volodymyr Zelensky has hailed what he described as “results” in heavy fighting in Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine, one of the pockets where Ukrainian counteroffensive is underway.

“There is very heavy fighting in Donetsk region,” Mr Zelensky said in his daily video message, speaking from inside a train after visiting areas affected by the breach of the Kakhovka power dam.

“But there are results and I am grateful to those who achieved these results. Well done in Bakhmut. Step by step,” he said.

The war-time president referred to other areas where fighting is going on, but said he would provide no details.

Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse

Before-and-after images of the area downstream from a dam that collapsed Tuesday vividly show the extent of the devastation of a large, flooded swathe of southern Ukraine.

Before the Kakhovka dam on the Dnieper River broke, farm fields appear green and crossed by peaceful streets and farm roads and dotted with trees. Afterward, only metal roofs and treetops poke above the murky water. Greenhouses and homes are almost entirely submerged.

The pre-collapse satellite photos were taken in May and early June. Photos of the same area taken after the dam collapsed clearly show how much of it has become unlivable. Brown water as high as people covers much of the territory captured in the images.

Read more:

[*Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kherson-experts-b2354106.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has visited the [*flood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/flood) -hit areas of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) to evaluate the response to damage caused by the Kakhovka dam attack.

More than 40,000 people in areas downstream from the Kakhovka hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) are at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods after the breach unleashed torrents of flood water from the Dnipro river.

“In Kherson, I visited a crossing point where people are being evacuated from flooded areas,” the president of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) wrote, sharing footage of his visit.

“Our task is to protect lives and help people as much as possible. I thank the rescuers and volunteers.”

[*Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-zelensky-kherson-flooding-b2353967.html)

Kremlin says ammonia pipeline blast is negative for Black Sea grain deal

The Kremlin said on Thursday that there would be a “negative impact” on the fate of a Black Sea grain deal from a blast which damaged a pipeline used to export Russian ammonia via Ukraine that Moscow wants restarted.

The Togliatti-Odesa pipeline, which once pumped up to 2.5 million tonnes of ammonia annually for global export to Ukraine‘s Pivdennyi port on the Black Sea from Togliatti in western Russia, has lain idle since the start of the war in February last year.

Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of blowing up a part of the pipeline, the world’s longest carrying ammonia, in Ukraine‘s Kharkiv region on Monday. The regional Ukrainian governor said Russia had shelled the pipeline on Tuesday. Neither side provided evidence to back their allegations.

Asked by reporters about how the damaged pipeline could affect the fate of the Black Sea grain deal, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: “It can only have a negative impact.”

He described it as “yet another complication in terms of extending the deal,” adding that Russia did not know “what kind of destruction” there had been to the ammonia pipeline.

Russia has threatened to walk away from the Black Sea grain deal on 17 July if demands to improve its own food and fertiliser exports are not met. The deal, struck in July last year, facilitates the “safe navigation” of grain, foodstuffs and fertilisers -including ammonia -for export to global markets.

Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for ‘discrediting' Russian military

The co-chair of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial, Oleg Orlov, went on trial in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) Thursday, charged with “discrediting” the Russian military in his criticism of Russia’s campaign in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

If convicted, he could face up to five years in prison.

Orlov has been fined twice for anti-war pickets, with the new charges based on an article he wrote denouncing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Discrediting the Russian military is a criminal offence under a law adopted after Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The law is regularly used against Kremlin critics.

Memorial and its supporters have called the trial politically motivated.

Read more:

[*Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for “discrediting” Russian military*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-moscow-nobel-peace-prize-novaya-gazeta-b2354161.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) will not attend the main [*G20*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g20) conference as invites for the summit this year were sent out only to the members of the Group of 20, host country [*India*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/india) has confirmed.

The confirmation by Delhi has put an end to speculation and expectations that Mr Zelensky would participate in the event that will bring together world leaders of major economies in [*Delhi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/delhi).

Mr Zelensky had recently met Indian [*prime minister Narendra Modi in Hiroshima, Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/modi-zelensky-ukraine-g7-russia-putin-war-b2342884.html) on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

Speaking during a special press conference marking nine years of the [*foreign policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-policy) of the [*Narendra Modi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/narendra-modi) government, foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said invitations were being sent out to G20 members only.

Shweta Sharma has the full story:

[*Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/zelensky-invitation-g20-summit-india-jaishankar-b2353761.html)

Eight injured in two missile strikes in central Ukraine -governor

Two missiles hit sites near the city of Uman in central Ukraine on Thursday, injuring eight people, the regional governor said.

Ihor Taburets, governor of Cherkasy region, wrote on the Telegram messaging app that the missiles hit an industrial site and a car wash in the evening. He said two of the injured were seriously hurt, according to preliminary information.

Pictures posted on his Telegram channel showed emergency teams combing through sites largely reduced to rubble, with smoke rising in the background.

The strikes occurred during air raid alerts announced throughout Ukraine for about an hour in mid-evening.

Reuters could not independently verify the accounts.

A missile attack in April on an apartment building in Uman killed 23 residents, in the first such strike in several weeks.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

Sophie Wingate reports:

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-ukraine-rishi-sunak-white-house-volodymyr-zelensky-b2354193.html)

Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that pointed towards its counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub, is said to involve western-supplied tanks and armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-counteroffensive-zaporizhzhia-b2354196.html)

Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter show

The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.

The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.

Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.

[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html)

'Graveyard' of dead fish forms in southern Ukraine after Kakhovka dam destruction

A [*graveyard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/graveyard) of dead [*fish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fish) has formed in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after the Nova Kakhovka [*dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dam) was breached.

Footage from the area close to the destroyed dam shows thousands of fish washed up in an area of â€‹â€‹the reservoir, which has seen a rapid shallowing of the [*water*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/water).

“By blowing up the Kakhovskaya HPP, the aggressor caused an unheard-of act of ecocide, the victims of which were not only people, but also thousands of innocent animals,” the State Agency of Land Reclamation and Fisheries of Ukraine wrote, sharing the footage.

Trapped villagers saved from roofs in flooded south Ukraine as more await help

Rescuers in boats have saved hundreds of people from the roofs of flooded houses after the massive dam breach in southern Ukraine, volunteers and officials said on Thursday, but others were getting more desperate as they waited for help.

Friends and family posted frantic appeals in online chatrooms with names, photos and GPS locations of residents, including some children and many elderly people, who were still waiting to be picked up.

The coordinator of a volunteer group on the Telegram messaging app said the appeals were arriving continuously and getting more urgent than the day before because people were running out of food and drinking water.

Ukraine and Russia have both accused each other of blowing up the giant Kakhovka dam on the Dnipro River, which burst in the early hours of Tuesday. On the Russian-controlled left bank of the river, Moscow-installed officials have ordered residents of several districts to evacuate.

Vladimir Saldo, the top Russian-installed official in the Kherson region, said midday Thursday that approximately 4,300 people had been evacuated, including 171 children and 42 people with disabilities. More than 14,000 homes have been flooded, emergency services said.

Another official, Andrei Alekseyenko, said the level of the Dnipro had risen to 12 metres in the worst-hit areas, Oleshky and Hola Prystan. He said 344 people had been saved by boat from roofs and upper floors.

In Telegram channels, some people sent grateful messages for successful rescues.

Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack

Satellite images have revealed the damage from the massive collapse of a major dam and hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The critical soviet-era [*Nova Kakhovka dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nova-kakhovka-dam) , which lies along the Dnipro river in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) -held Kherson, was blown up on Tuesday and collapsed soon after, sending water gushing into nearby villages and towns in the region with a 42,000-strong population.

The [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) said the collapse will have [*“catastrophic” and “far-reaching consequences”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dam-dnipro-b2352617.html) for thousands of people with the loss of homes, food, safe water and livelihoods even as Russia and Ukraine traded accusations over the incident.

The latest satellite images provided by Maxar Technologies to The Independent on Tuesday showed the “largely destroyed” Nova Kakhovka dam and the hydroelectric plant as well as wide swathes of heavily flooded towns and villages.

[*Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kakhovka-dam-before-and-after-b2353652.html)

Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse

A cat was rescued from flooding in [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) after the destruction of a huge hydroelectric dam on front lines between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

The Kakhovka dam, under Russian control, was blown up on Tuesday, 6 June, collapsing shortly after.

Water has surged into nearby villages, causing widespread flooding in region with a 42,000-strong population.

The incident constitutes a “war crime,” Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

It is the “largest man-made environmental disaster in Europe in decades,” the Ukrainian president added.

[*Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-dam-russia-war-kherson-flood-b2353832.html)

Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot we can’t screw it up’

The blowing up of the Nova Kakhovka dam will delay an expected armoured thrust in the area by Ukrainian forces, but military action in the preliminary stages of Kyiv’s counteroffensive continues across the frontline, writes Kim Sengupta.

The route along the dam near [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) was one the Ukrainians would have taken to move armour – like tanks – and heavy equipment. There were also plans for landings on islands downstream, where fierce clashes have been taking place for some time. The submerging of these pathways means that tactics are redrawn and troops and weapons repositioned.

[*Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html)

WHO rushes supplies to Ukraine, readies to tackle disease in flood areas

The World Health Organisation has rushed emergency supplies to flood-hit parts of Ukraine and are preparing to respond to an array of health risks including trauma, drowning and waterborne diseases like cholera, officials said on Thursday.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the bursting of the Soviet-era Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which sent waters cascading across the war zone of southern Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday, forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes.

“The impact of the region’s water supply sanitation systems and public health services cannot be underestimated,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing.

“The WHO has rushed in to support the authorities and health care workers in preventive measures against waterborne diseases and to improve disease surveillance.”

Watch: Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach

Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky visited Kherson following widespread flooding caused by the collapse of nearby [*Kakhovka dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kherson-kremlin-kyiv-b2353940.html).

Ukraine fears losing millions of tons of crops after dam collapse

Ukraine could lose several million tons of crops because of flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in the south of the country, the Ukrainian agriculture ministry said on Thursday.

“Without a source of water supply, it is impossible to grow vegetables. Grain and oilseeds will be grown using an extensive model with low yields,” the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the dam’s destruction would flood tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land in southern Ukraine and could turn at least 500,000 hectares of land left without irrigation into “deserts”.

The ministry said the flooded land would require a full agro-ecological assessment of the soil condition and in most cases special soil restoration methods would need to be applied.

It said vegetables, melons, grains and oilseeds were the main products which were grown on the affected land.

Ukraine is a major global grain and oilseeds grower and exporter.

The destruction of the dam on Tuesday, which Ukraine and Russia blame on each other, has also made it impossible to navigate parts of the Dnipro River and deprived Kyiv of an important agricultural export route, shipping authorities said.

Agriculture Minister Mykola Solsky also said the farm sector’s losses could be much higher than previously expected because the disaster inflicted “years” of damage on irrigation.

One killed in Russian 'targeted strikes' on Kherson during evacuation -Kyiv

At least one person was killed after Russian forces shelled the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson in “targeted strikes” during evacuation efforts amid massive flooding, Ukraine’s prosecutor general said on Thursday.

“Due to targeted strikes by the occupiers during evacuation measures in the city, a civilian died,” it said in a statement on Telegram. “Two more people were injured. The data is being verified.”

Mapped: The damage caused by Ukraine’s devastated dam

War-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is reeling from the collapse of the Nova Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which saw its reservoir burst causing chaos for miles around.

The catastrophe on Tuesday forced [*thousands of residents of nearby towns and villages to evacuate their homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dam-dnipro-b2352617.html) as the floodwater barrelled towards them and left some climbing onto rooftops or into trees to escape the raging torrents.

Hundreds of thousands more have been left without access to clean drinking water in the region as a result of the eco-disaster on the Dnipro River, prompting relief workers to rush fresh supplies to the area as they struggle with the problems of mass resettlement.

[*Mapped: The damage caused by Ukraine’s devastated dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-nova-kakhovka-dam-flooding-b2353196.html)

Russian forces shell Kherson during flood evacuation

At least three people were wounded in Russian shelling of the Ukrainian city of Kherson on Thursday as people were being evacuated because of flooding caused by the collapse of the nearby Kakhovka dam, police said.

“The shelling began precisely during the evacuation of citizens whose homes were flooded,” Ukraine‘s Interior Ministry said in a statement.

It reiterated accusations that Russia has abandoned people in territory it has occupied in the Kherson region, adding: “And it continues to prevent Ukraine from saving the most valuable -human lives.”

A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire but was unable immediately to provide any details of the circumstances.

Kherson lies on the Dnipro, about 60 km (37 miles) downstream from the Kakhovka dam.

Kherson governor Oleksandr Prokudin said earlier on Thursday that 68% of the flooded territory in the Kherson region was on the Russian-occupied left bank of the Dnipro River.

Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of shelling rescue workers in Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region, and each side blames the other for the destruction of the Kahkovka Hydroelectric Station and dam on Tuesday.

Sunak condemns ‘appalling act’ of destruction of Kakhovka dam

The destruction of of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine was an “appalling act,” Rishi Sunak has said.

Speaking to broadcasters on his trip to the US, the Prime Minister said: “We’re still establishing definitively the cause of the attack on the dam in Ukraine, but I want people to know we’re playing our part to support the Ukrainians in their response.”

He added: “This is an appalling act and hundreds of thousands of people are being affected by it.”

Mr Sunak also condemned Russia‘s “illegal, unprovoked act of aggression” in invading Ukraine.

Kherson governor says Russian forces shelling city

Russian forces shelled the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson and nearby coastal areas on Thursday, the regional governor said on Thursday.

Governor Oleksandr Prokudin made the remark on the Telegram messaging app as emergency workers tried to evacuate people following flooding caused by the destruction of the nearby Kakhovka dam on Tuesday.

A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire but was unable immediately to provide any details of the circumstances. Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of shelling rescue workers in Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region.

Kremlin accuses Ukraine of shelling Russian rescuers in dam flood zone

The Kremlin on Thursday accused Ukraine of shelling Russian rescue workers in the area flooded after the huge Kakhovka dam in Ukraine‘s Kherson region was breached earlier this week

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian rescue workers in the area were working hard, but said the Ukrainian military was making their work more dangerous.

“The difficulty is that in a lot of places they (the rescuers) are forced to work in conditions of ongoing shelling from Ukraine, and this complicates their work,” Peskov told reporters.

He did not provide any immediate evidence for his assertion.

Ukrainian officials on Wednesday accused Russian forces of shelling rescue workers on the Kyiv-held right (west) bank of the Dnipro river. Moscow controls the left (east) bank.

The breach of the Kakhovka dam on Tuesday has led to massive flooding of the Dnipro river estuary downstream, with thousands evacuated and settlements on both side of the river inundated by water.

Peskov said that President Vladimir Putin was monitoring the situation in the region, but did not currently have any plans to visit the disaster area.

Thursday 8 June 2023 11:38 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The water level at a reservoir in southern Ukraine is approaching a dangerous low after the destruction of the dam at the nearby Kakhovka Hydroelectric Station, the state company overseeing the facility said on Thursday.

Moscow and Kyiv blamed each other for the collapse of the dam on Tuesday, which unleashed flood water from the Dnipro River on a wide area of southern Ukraine.

Ihor Syrota, general director of Ukrhydroenergo, told Ukrainian television that a drop below the current water level at the Kakhovka Reservoir could affect the nearby Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station and water supply to other regions.

“We are reaching this dead zone, which is 12.70 (meters), after which there will be not be any water intake either for the cooling ponds at the Zaporizhzhia station...or...for all regions.”

The U.N. atomic watchdog said on Tuesday the plant, Europe’s largest, has enough water to cool its reactors for “several months” from a pond located above the reservoir.

Ukraine‘s nuclear energy company said on Thursday the situation was “stable and under control” at the Zaporizhzhia plant on Thursday morning.

Syrota added that Ukrhydroenergo was ready to work on an overlay across the damaged hydroelectric station and dam as soon as Russian forces left the eastern side of the Dnipro, and that it would take about two months to complete.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – latest: Putin reveals when nuclear weapons will be deployed to Belarus*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68DW-90S1-JBNF-W4MG-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:25

**Length:** 12161 words

**Byline:** Arpan Rai,Maryam Zakir-Hussain and Jane Dalton

**Highlight:** Russian leader tells ally storage facilities will be ready within a month

**Body**

Vladimir Putin has announced Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus next month – [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ’s first move of such bombs outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

The Russian president said the weapons would be deployed after special storage facilities are ready in just under a month’s time.

It comes after he, last month, announced he wanted to deploy tactical nuclear weapons to Belarus, in an apparent warning to Nato over its support for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

“Everything is going according to plan,” Mr Putin told his ally and Belarusian president Alexander Lukashenko.

“Preparation of the relevant facilities ends on July 7-8, and we will immediately begin activities related to the deployment of appropriate types of weapons on your territory,” he said, according to a Kremlin transcript of his remarks.

Earlier, Ukraine‘s domestic security service said it had intercepted a telephone call proving a Russian “sabotage group” blew up the [*Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-map-today-b2352155.html%22%20title=%22Ukraine%20war%20map%20reveals%20Europe’s%20largest%20nuclear%20power%20plant%20‘threatened’%20after%20dam%20attack). The destruction of the facility on Tuesday unleashed mass flooding, [*forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kherson-kremlin-kyiv-b2353940.html%22%20title=%22Deluge%20from%20ruptured%20Ukrainian%20dam%20is%20latest%20tragedy%20for%20Kherson%20residents%20since%20Russian%20invasion).

Key Points

Russia will soon have nuclear weapons in Belarus, says Putin Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam Western tanks, ammunition appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief says Russia reports heavy fighting in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine

Russian ambassador to the US says Washington not looking for ‘diplomatic settlement of the conflict’

Russian ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov stated yesterday that the US does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, the TASS news agency reported.

Speaking about the next US package of military assistance to the Kyiv authorities, he said: “The United States continues to pump up its wards with new batches of deadly weapons. The appropriations for these purposes of such impressive financial resources indicate one thing: Washington does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict.”

He added that Washington “did nothing to bring the regime of [Volodymyr] Zelensky to the negotiating table”.

He continued: “On the contrary, they are methodically pushing their puppets to continue sacrificing human lives in the name of the extravagant goal of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. It is impossible for Washington to retreat from this task. At stake is the reputation of the country’s leadership, which has chosen the path of war, and not diplomatic solutions.”

Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief says

The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is “hugely worse” than before the Kakhovka dam collapsed, the UN’s top aid official warned yesterday.

Undersecretary-General Martin Griffiths said an “extraordinary” 700,000 people are in need of drinking water and warned that the ravages of flooding in one of the world’s most important breadbaskets will almost inevitably lead to lower grain exports, higher food prices around the world, and less to eat for millions in need.

“This is a viral problem,” he said in an interview with Associated Press. “But the truth is this is only the beginning of seeing the consequences of this act.”

US ambassador to UN ‘gravely concerned’ by growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran

Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the United Nations says she is “gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran” and called for an investigation into Iran’s transfer of attack drones to Russia.

“I am gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran which continues to enable Russia’s prosecution of its brutal war against Ukraine,” Ms Thomas-Greenfield said.

She says Russia and Iran are both violating UN Security Council Resolution.

She cited information released by the US earlier Friday which documented how Iran “has provided Russia with hundreds of one-way attack UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], as well as UAV production-related equipment.” The ambassador said Russia has been using these UAVs in recent weeks to unleash missile strikes on Kyiv and "terrorize Ukrainian civilians.”

The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.

Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.

Russia has received hundreds of Iranian drones to attack Ukraine, White House says

The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.

Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.

“Russia has been using Iranian UAVs in recent weeks to strike Kyiv and terrorise the Ukrainian population, and the Russia-Iran military partnership appears to be deepening,” White House spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.

“We are also concerned that Russia is working with Iran to produce Iranian UAVs from inside Russia.”

Mr Kirby also said that the US had information that Russia was receiving materials from Iran required to build a drone manufacturing plant that could be fully operational early next year.

“We are releasing satellite imagery of the planned location of this UAV manufacturing plant in Russia’s Alabuga Special Economic Zone.”

Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractor

A grainy black-and-white gunsight video [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) released this week to bolster a claim its military blew up some of Ukraine’s most fearsome tanks actually documented the destruction of a tractor, according to a visual analysis by The Associated Press.

The Russian Embassy in [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) announced Monday on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) its forces had “annihilated” eight German-made Leopard tanks, among the most advanced and powerful weapons NATO countries have provided to Ukraine. The Russian Ministry of Defense then posted a video Tuesday on the social media network [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) with text saying it showed “footage of the destruction of foreign armoured vehicles, including Leopard tanks.”

Michael Biesecker has the full story:

[*Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-washington-telegram-twitter-b2354651.html)

‘We will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil’, says Scotland Office minister of £150m housing fund

A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.

In Scotland, more than 24,000 displaced Ukrainians have arrived through an individual sponsor or the Scottish Government’s super-sponsor scheme.

Thousands remain in temporary accommodation while waiting for a permanent home.

Scotland Office minister John Lamont said: “The UK has a long, proud history of helping those fleeing danger or persecution and we will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil when Russia illegally invaded their country.

“Today’s announcement of a further £30 million for Scotland to help rehome people from Ukraine brings a welcome boost to the great effort already made.

“I want to thank everyone who has helped support Ukraine for more than a year now, including all those who have helped ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** make new lives in Scotland.”

Petro Rewko, of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, said his organisation welcomes the funding commitment during “difficult economic times”.

He added: “Ukrainians everywhere are grateful to the government and the British people for opening their homes and hearts to Ukrainians fleeing their homes as a result of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine.”

£150m fund aims to help Ukrainians into their own homes

A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, more than 124,000 people have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

The new money will go to councils to help Ukrainian families into private rented accommodation and find work.

It will also go towards continuing sponsorship arrangements, as many guests are in their second year in the UK.

The funding is being divided according to the number of Ukrainians in each nation -England will receive around £109 million, Scotland £30 million, Wales £8 million and Northern Ireland £2 million.

Those hosting Ukrainians will continue to receive a monthly £350 thank-you payment during guests’ first 12 months, rising to £500 a month during the following year.

In March, the Red Cross warned many Ukrainians are staying in “inappropriate” accommodation.

UK housing minister Felicity Buchan said: “The UK has an honourable tradition of offering shelter to those fleeing the horrors of war.

“Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of hosts in this country, over 124,000 Ukrainians have now found safety in the UK.

“Sadly, the fighting in Ukraine shows no sign of ending soon, so we are appealing for more people to become hosts while providing councils with this additional funding to support guests into long-term housing.”

White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near Moscow

[*Iran*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iran) is providing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) with materials to build a [*drone manufacturing plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-counter-offensive-today-b2354348.html) near Moscow, according to a newly-declassified [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) intelligence report released by the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Friday.

The plant in the Alabuga special economic zone several hundred miles east of the Russian capital will be used to [*counter Ukraine’s latest offensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html) and could be operational early next year, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.

The White House released declassified satellite imagery from April of the industrial location where it believes the plant “will probably be built.”

Bevan Hurley reports:

[*White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iran-russia-drone-factory-ukraine-white-house-b2354711.html)

'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapse

The rescue volunteer holds out his hand, but the dog, stranded on a floating island of debris in a southern Ukrainian city inundated by flooding, is too traumatised to approach. Volodymyr Holubnichii offers the scared animal some food; the dog sniffs and relaxes.

“Don’t be scared,” Holubnichii soothingly tells the animal, which eventually accepts a leash and being carried to safety.

Holubnichii, a volunteer with Animal Rescue Kharkiv, spent days cruising the flooded streets of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) city after the Kakhovka dam collapsed on Tuesday and submerged entire towns. He is one among the organisation’s 70 volunteers determined to rescue as many animals as possible, plucking them from the rooftops and garages of flooded homes before they die of dehydration and hunger.

Vasilisa Stepanenko reports:

[*'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kherson-ngo-russia-b2354830.html)

Germany moves ahead with plans to buy Israel's Arrow-3 missile defence for 4 bln euros

Germany plans to buy Israel’s Arrow-3 missile defence system for almost 4 billion euros ($4.30 billion) in total, and will ask lawmakers to release advance payments of up to 560 million euros next week, according to documents seen by Reuters on Friday.

The Arrow-3 is designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside of the earth’s atmosphere.

It is the top layer of Israel’s missile defence array, which extends from Iron Dome that intercepts short-range rockets to Arrow-3’s long-range missiles that destroy any non-conventional warheads at a safe altitude.

Berlin aims to strike a government-to-government deal with Israel on the purchase of the Arrow-3 system at the end of the year, said the finance ministry’s procurement documents that were prepared for parliament.

Germany will lose part or all of its advance payments should the deal fail, according to the papers, as the money would be used to compensate Israel for costs incurred by then.

The German air force is supposed to take delivery of Arrow-3, that will cost about one billion euros more than originally planned, by the fourth quarter of 2025.

Russia’s war in Ukraine has laid bare a shortage of ground-based air defence systems such as Raytheon’s Patriot units or the more recently developed IRIS-T in many Western nations.

While Patriot and IRIS-T cover the medium layer of air defence, Arrow-3 -produced by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) -offers protection for the higher layer.

Putin says Ukrainian counter-offensive has begun as drones strike within Russia

Vladimir Putin says Ukrainian troops have started a long-expected counter-offensive and are suffering “significant” losses.

The Russian president’s comments, hours after a string of drone strikes inside Russian territory, formed his latest effort to shape the narrative of the invasion he ordered more than 15 months ago, sparking widespread international condemnation and reviving Cold War-style tensions.

The conflict entered a complex new phase this week with the rupture of a Dnieper River dam that sent floodwaters gushing through a large area of the front in southern Ukraine.

Tens of thousands of civilians already facing the misery of regular shelling fled for higher ground on both sides of the swollen and sprawling waterway.

Ukraine has played down talk of a counter-offensive, reasoning that the less said about its military moves the better.

Speaking after he visited flood zones on Thursday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was in touch with Ukrainian forces “in all the hottest areas” and praised an unspecified “result” from their efforts.

Mr Putin said Russian forces have the upper hand, telling reporters in Sochi: “We can clearly say the offensive has started, as indicated by the Ukrainian army’s use of strategic reserves.

“But the Ukrainian troops haven’t achieved their stated tasks in a single area of fighting.”

Kyiv has not specified whether reservists have been mobilised to the front, but western allies have poured firepower, defensive systems and other military assets and advice into Ukraine, raising the stakes for the counter-offensive.

“We are seeing that the Ukrainian regime’s troops are suffering significant losses,” Mr Putin said. “It’s known that the offensive side suffers losses of three to one -it’s sort of classic -but in this case, the losses significantly exceed that classic level.”

At least 13 people killed in flooding after dam explosion, authorities say

At least five people have been killed in flooding caused by the Kakhovka dam, Ukraine has said, as it evacuated more people from the surrounding areas.

Interior minister Ihor Klymenko said four people had died and 13 people were missing in the Kherson region, and that one person had died in the Mykolayiv region.

A Russian-appointed official said eight people had died in Russian-held territory and more than 5,800 had been evacuated from their homes.

US announces $2bn security package for Ukraine

The US Department of Defence has announced an additional $2.1bn in security assistance for Ukraine on Friday, including air defense and ammunition capabilities, amid signs that Kyiv had begun its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia.

The package includes additional munitions for Patriot air defense systems, Raytheon Hawk air defense systems and missiles, 105mm and 203mm artillery rounds, small AeroVironment drones that can be launched by hand, laser-guided rocket system munitions and support for training and maintenance, the Defence Department.

Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funds will be used to purchase the weapons, allowing Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry, rather than pull them from US stocks.

Delivery of the weapons and systems depends on their availability and production timeline.

Tanks, missiles and keeping Russia guessing: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive truly began

Our world affairs editor Kim Sengupta reports:

The build-up has been patient and methodical, progress slow and there is grim expectation of heavy losses to come. But Ukraine’s counteroffensive, one which will likely shape the final outcome of this war, is now underway.

There is combat, fierce at times, at multiple flashpoints across the length of the vast frontline from Zaporizhzhia to Donetsk to Bakhmut. There are also missile strikes in separatist-held Luhansk, and raids across the Russian border, as Ukraine continues chess moves to try and keep the enemy on the back foot.

Ukraine has been asking Western allies for advanced weaponry, tanks, missiles, artillery and warplanes in preparation for the mission and have got a substantial amount of them.

German Leopards and British Challenger tanks, as well as Storm Shadow missiles, French AMX armoured cars, American Himars and Nasam artillery have been assimilated into specialist Ukrainian brigades. Advanced warplanes, F-16s are still missing. They are due to in the autumn, and this offensive may still be going on then – as Ukraine seeks to reclaim as much territory as it can before there is any possible ceasefire.

[*Tanks, missiles and troops: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive began | Kim Sengupta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-counteroffensive-b2354783.html)

Putin claims Kyiv suffering large casualties in counteroffensive

Vladimir Putin has claimed that Ukraine’s casualties significantly exceed the classical ratio of three attackers to one defender, as he said Kyiv’s counteroffensive was certainly under way.

“All counteroffensive attempts made so far have failed. But the offensive potential of the troops of the Kyiv regime is still preserved,” the Russian president claimed.

Putin says Ukrainian offensive has begun, but without success

Russian President Vladimir Putin told a conference in Sochi on Friday that Ukraine had begun its expected counteroffensive against Russian forces, but without success.

“The offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has begun. This is evidenced by the use of strategic reserves,” he said, in footage from the forum posted on Telegram.

“Ukrainian troops did not achieve their goals in any sector -thanks to the courage of Russian soldiers, proper organisation of troops.”

Putin says tactical nuclear weapons to be deployed in Belarus in July

Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are made ready on July 7-8, President Vladimir Putin said on Friday, Moscow’s first move of such warheads outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Putin announced in March he had agreed to deploy such weapons in Belarus, pointing to U.S deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in a host of European countries over many decades.

“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, discussing the planned nuclear deployment over a meal at the Russian leader’s summer retreat in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.

“Preparation of the relevant facilities ends on July 7-8, and we will immediately begin activities related to the deployment of appropriate types of weapons on your territory,” Putin said, according to a Kremlin transcript of his remarks.

Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”

Hungary receives Ukrainian POWs from Russia, Ukraine says not informed

Hungary said on Friday it had received a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war from Russia, a release that Ukraine welcomed while expressing concern that it had not been informed.

The POWs were from the western part of Ukraine that borders Hungary, according to both the Russian Orthodox Church, which said it had assisted in the release, and Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen.

“This is my human and patriotic duty”.. we have brought back from Moscow 11 prisoners of war from Transcarpathia,” a post on Semjen’s official Facebook page said.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s government has long supported the Russian Orthodox Church in Hungary, and blocked proposals from other EU members for sanctions against the Church’s overall leader Patriarch Kirill.

A statement posted on the website of the Russian Orthodox Church’s Moscow Patriarchate late on Thursday said that “at the request of the Hungarian side, a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war of Transcarpathian origin who participated in the hostilities was transferred to Hungary”.

Asked for comment early on Friday, a Hungarian government spokesman told Reuters the statement was “fake news”. Later on the spokesman was not reachable for comment.

It was not clear what had caused the apparent confusion within the Hungarian government.

Ukraine, which has secured successive prisoner exchanges with Russia with international mediation during Russia‘s more than 15-month-old invasion, said it had not been informed about the prisoners’ release. The foreign ministry said it had asked Hungary’s representative in Ukraine to grant immediate access to them.

“The release of Ukrainian prisoners of war is always good news,” foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko wrote on Facebook, adding that the ministry had “emphasized the need to coordinate cooperation on such sensitive issues”.

Nuclear weapons will be in Belarus within weeks, says Putin

Russia will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are ready on July 7-8, president Vladimir Putin has said, Moscow’s first move of such bombs outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.

Mr Putin says the United States and its Western allies are pumping arms into Ukraine as part of an expanding proxy war aimed at bringing Russia to its knees.

In March he announced he wanted to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, an apparent warning to the US-led Nato military alliance over its support for Ukraine.

Leading Nato countries say they will support Ukraine and help it defend itself for as long as it takes from what Kyiv casts as an imperial-style land grab by Russia which threatens the survival of the Ukrainian state.

“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko when discussing the planned nuclear deployment during talks at the Russian leader’s Black Sea summer retreat in Sochi.

Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”

Putin, 70, casts the war as a battle for Russia’s own survival in the face of what he says is an ever-expanding Nato. He has warned the West that Moscow will not back down.

Kazakh president to skip ‘Russian Davos’

Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will not attend the annual economic forum in Russia‘s St Petersburg next week, the government said on Friday, after refusing to toe the Kremlin’s line over the Russian invasion of Ukraine at last year’s event.

The Kazakh government said only two officials will represent the Central Asian nation at this year’s forum.

Until its invasion of Ukraine, Russia regularly hosted world leaders and business titans at the forum, but Western officials and business figures now shun it, and last year Tokayev stole the limelight by rejecting the Kremlin claims on Ukraine.

Sharing the stage with Russian President Putin -who will address the forum this year as well -Tokayev said then that Kazakhstan would not recognise the independence of pro-Russian statelets in eastern Ukraine or other ex-Soviet republics.

His comments raised eyebrows because Kazakhstan, which shares the world’s longest continuous land border with Russia, has for decades been a member of Moscow-led security and trade blocs, and calls Russia its strategic partner.

Asked who would attend the conference this year, a Kazakh government spokeswoman said only Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar and Deputy Economy Minister Timur Zhaksylykov would go.

Tokayev’s office declined to comment on the reasons why he was not attending.

Russia‘s RIA news agency reported last month that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, invited by Putin, said would not be able to attend the forum. Russian media have not announced plans by any other world leaders to attend.

Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter show

The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.

The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.

Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.

“The Kakhovka dam was effectively Russian. It was built by the Russian government. It currently sits in Russian-controlled territory. The dam’s reservoir supplies water to Crimea, which has been for the last 240 years home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet,” [*said Carlson.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-twitter-video-ukraine-dam-b2352930.html)

[*Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html)

'Our house was carried away' -flood survivors in Russian-held Ukraine speak of their escape

Pensioner Maria Mikhailovna says she was woken by her husband in the middle of the night to find their belongings underwater after the collapse of Ukraine‘s giant Nova Kakhovka Dam.

“The water in the house was at waist level. At midnight everything had been dry -both inside and outside,” said the 73-year-old, who walks slowly with the help of a stick.

“We can hardly walk. We went outside and were lucky that there were passers-by. They helped us to get to the ‘Vostok’ shop. Then we limped on to our friends,” she told Reuters.

With water snapping at their heels, she and her husband then moved on from place to place, she said in the town of Hola Prystan in Ukraine‘s southern Kherson region, adding that she was grateful to her rescuers.

They were brought to safety with other pensioners on Thursday in a rubber boat crewed by rescuers from Russia‘s Emergency Situations Ministry.

Russian forces took control of Hola Prystan, a town where around 13,000 people once lived, last year as part of what Moscow calls its “special military operation”.

After the vast Soviet-era Kakhovka Dam crumbled on Tuesday -a human and ecological disaster which Russia and Ukraine have blamed on each other -rubber dinghies have replaced cars in the town’s streets.

Animals and people sheltered on roofs on Thursday: in one surreal scene a small group of goats and hens stood on what looked like part of a roof surrounded by floodwater as rescuers in dinghies passed by.

The first one or two storeys of houses and people’s yards were underwater and an emerald green church was semi-submerged, with the tops of trees poking out from the water in places.

Rescuers in boats scoured the town for survivors, shouting out the addresses they had checked to one another.

Many of those rescued appeared elderly but small children and their mothers were also among those helped to safety.

One woman had her pet cat in their bag and one elderly lady clutched a birdcage as she was ferried to dry land.

A woman who gave her name as Oksana held back tears as she and her daughter were evacuated in a boat with their two pet dogs.

“We ended up at the kindergarten because our house was carried away by a torrent of water,” said Oksana, as her daughter turned her head away to sob.

Ukraine reports heavy fighting in east

Ukraine reported heavy fighting in the eastern region of Donetsk on Friday and a military spokesperson said Ukrainian forces had gained more ground near the devastated city of Bakhmut.

“The situation is tense on all areas of the front,” Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on the Telegram messaging app.

Naming eastern areas where fighting has been fierce for months, she said: “The enemy continues to focus its main efforts on the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivsky and Mariinka directions, heavy fighting continues.”

She said Ukrainian troops were repelling the Russian attacks.

Reuters was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield.

Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesperson for Ukraine‘s East military command said Ukrainian forces had advanced 1.2 km (0.75 mile) near Bakhmut over the past 24 hours.

“We took advantage of the enemy’s rotation measures and the fact that units which entered do not know the area fully, and failed to conduct appropriate reconnaissance and coordination. We struck,” he told Ukrainian television. “We have been carrying out assaults for several days.”

Over the past several days, Ukrainian forces have made their most rapid gains around the edges of Bakhmut, aiming to encircle the ruined eastern city which Russian forces seized control of last month.

Russia‘s Defence Ministry said it was continuing to repel Ukrainian attacks in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia, Russian news agencies reported.

Ukrainian officials made little mention of the situation in Zaporizhzhia but the head of the president’s office said a junior nurse and a plumber had been killed by Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in the Zaporizhzhia region.

Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft server

For most teenagers [*Minecraft*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minecraft) remains just a hobby, but one Ukrainian schoolboy’s love for the game has meant he can now afford to buy his homeless mother a house.

Lomond School pupil Maksym Gavrylenko has made a “substantial” sum after selling the server he ran from his bedroom, which allows gamers from all over the world to connect to and play together on, with friends.

The 17-year-old boarding school pupil said: “I am very proud that I was able to turn my passion into a profitable business and I plan on treating my mother.

“As a result of the war, she was forced to flee her home, leaving her homeless, so to buy her a property will make all the hours spent on this project worthwhile.”

Read more here:

[*Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft server*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/ukraine-boy-home-minecraft-server-b2354415.html)

Latest British Defence Intelligence update for Ukraine

Here is the latest update from the UK Ministry of Defence:

Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -9 June 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf*](https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/1iCNxfO6qK*](https://t.co/1iCNxfO6qK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*June 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1667048494677336064?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russian shelling kills two civilians in Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia

A junior nurse and a plumber were killed in Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in Ukraine‘s Zaporizhzhia region, a senior Ukrainian official said on Friday.

Andriy Yermak, the head of the president’s office, said on the Telegram messaging app under a photo of a devastated building that two others were wounded in Huliai Pole, a small town close to front line in southern Ukraine.

Reuters was unable to verify the situation in the town.

Stay tuned for updates as we have them.

Top Dutch court upholds decision awarding Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine

The Dutch Supreme Court on Thursday upheld lower court decisions ordering the return of ancient Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine, marking the end of a long legal process.

The artefacts had been on display at the Allard Pierson Museum in the Netherlands when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and Ukraine and museums in Crimea had demanded their return.

“This decision ends this dispute. The Allard Pierson Museum must return these artistic treasures to the State of Ukraine and not to the museums in Crimea,” the ruling said.

The pieces, including a solid gold Scythian helmet and a golden neck ornament each weighing more than 1 kg (35 oz), were on loan at the museum in Amsterdam.

The U.N., the European Union and the Netherlands recognise the “territorial integrity” of Ukraine in its pre-2014 borders.

Lower courts in the Netherlands found in 2016 and 2021 that the pieces should be returned to Ukraine.

The appeals court decision in 2021 noted that under Ukrainian law the artefacts will be held at the National Historical Museum in Kyiv “until the situation in Crimea has stabilized.”

The 2021 decision “struck a fair balance between infringing on the rights of the museums and the interests of the State of Ukraine in protecting its cultural heritage,” the Dutch Supreme Court said on Friday.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

“And I believe that that support will be real, even though you hear some voices today on Capitol Hill about whether or not we should continue to support Ukraine and for how long we should support them.”

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-rishi-sunak-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-kyiv-b2354193.html)

Russia accuses ex-defence industry worker of spying for Germany

Russia has detained a former defence industry worker on suspicion of spying for Germany and charged him with high treason, Moscow’s FSB security service said on Friday.

According to the FSB, the suspect had worked for a military contractor in the Siberian region of Omsk and had offered to hand over information in exchange for German citizenship.

It said the man had initiated contact with a German official and had gathered information about “important military facilities”. It gave no further details.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the FSB’s account.

The FSB distributed a video to Russian news agencies showing what appeared to be an FSB officer in camouflage jumping out of a vehicle and pinning a man to the ground.

On Wednesday, the FSB said it had arrested a resident of the far eastern Primorsky Krai region on suspicion of spying for Ukraine.

Thunberg criticises Russia over Ukraine dam 'ecocide'

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has accused Russia of causing the collapse of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine, calling it an act of “ecocide”.

The burst of the huge dam, under Russian control in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region, unleashed large floods, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc. Russia and Ukraine have blamed each other for its destruction.

“This ecocide as a continuation of Russia‘s unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine is yet another atrocity which leaves the world lost for words. Our eyes are once again on Russia who must be held accountable for their crimes,” Thunberg, 20, said on Twitter on Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy replied on Twitter: “Thank you for your position and for upholding the truth @GretaThunberg! (Russia) must be held accountable for all its evil against people, life and nature!”.

Thunberg on Friday told Reuters during a weekly climate protest by the Swedish parliament that the aftermath of the dam burst was “absolutely horrifying and awful”.

“Russia needs to be held accountable for their action and for their crimes. The eyes of the world are on them now,” Thunberg, who graduates from high school on Friday, said.

The United States said on Tuesday it could not say conclusively what caused the dam’s destruction but it was assessing reports that Russia, which has been occupying the dam since last year, was behind the blast.

Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city

Three people were lightly wounded after a drone crashed into a residential building in central Voronezh, a city in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine, regional governor Alexander Gusev reported on Friday morning.

Gusev spoke to Russian state media, which also published photos showing a high-rise apartment block with some of its windows blown out and damage to parts of its facade.

State media reports also cited the building’s administrators as saying that “several apartments were damaged” in the explosion. There was no immediate comment on who may have been behind the drone strike.

[*Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kyiv-ap-ukraine-b2354482.html)

Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that points towards its counteroffensive shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has already been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed to have repelled Ukrainian attacks – that it calls the counteroffensive – across various points of the war’s frontlines for a number of days, but Russian military bloggers noted an increase in clashes overnight Wednesday and into Thursday. One said: “Wave after wave of the enemy is trying to break through our defence.”

[*Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zaporizhzhia-power-plant-ukraine-counteroffensive-b2354423.html)

Russian intelligence investigating drone strike on city of Voronezh -Kremlin

The Kremlin said on Friday that Russia‘s intelligence services were investigating a drone attack on the Russian city of Voronezh, which it blamed on Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the security services were working to clarify details of the incident.

The regional governor said earlier on Friday that three people had been lightly wounded when a drone struck an apartment building in the city, about 180 km (110 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

There was no immediate comment on the episode from Ukraine.#

Russia and China to continue expanding military cooperation -TASS

Russia and China will continue to expand their military cooperation, rUSSIAN Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov was quoted as saying on Friday by the TASS news agency.

Gerasimov has invited his Chinese counterpart to visit Russia, news agencies reported.

“The practice of joint operational and combat training of the Russian and Chinese Armed Forces should remain an important area of further activities,” Gerasimov was quoted as saying.

Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving a Russian “sabotage group” blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine.

The destruction of the facility on Tuesday unleashed mass flooding, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc.

Russia and its proxy officials in Ukraine have blamed Kyiv for destroying the dam but have offered varying explanations.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip on its Telegram channel of the alleged conversation, which featured two men who appeared to be discussing the fallout from the disaster in Russian.

“They (the Ukrainians) didn’t strike it. That was our sabotage group,” said one of the men, who the SBU described as a Russian soldier. “They wanted to, like, scare (people) with that dam.”

“It didn’t go according to plan, and (they did) more than what they planned for.”

The SBU did not offer further details of the conversation or its participants. It said it had opened a criminal investigation into war crimes and “ecocide”.

“The invaders wanted to blackmail Ukraine by blowing up the dam and staged a man-made disaster in the south of our country,” the SBU said in a statement.

Ukraine security service says it intercepted call proving Russia destroyed Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving Russian forces blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region.

The Security Service of Ukraine posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip of the alleged conversation on its Telegram channel.

In pictures: Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline in Luhansk region

Pictures show Ukrainian soldiers working during a combat operation on the frontline near Kreminna, Luhansk region.

One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says

Russia unleashed a new air strike on Ukraine overnight, killing at least one person in a combined assault of cruise missiles and attack drones, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Ukrainian military reported shooting down four out of six missiles launched during the attack, which the air force said lasted around six hours, and 10 out of 16 drones.

The interior ministry said one person had been killed, three were wounded, and four buildings were destroyed from falling debris.

It posted images on the Telegram messaging app of firefighters attending to the smouldering wreckage of what appeared to be residential homes.

The air force also said two cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in the central Ukrainian region of Cherkasy during an earlier attack on Thursday evening.

Regional governor Ihor Taburets said at least eight people had been wounded in that strike, which he said hit a carwash and an industrial object.

Moscow in recent weeks has stepped up regular air strikes against Ukraine as Kyiv prepared for a counteroffensive to try to take back Russian-occupied territory.

Russia reports heavy fighting in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine

Russia‘s army on Friday reported heavy fighting in the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, saying over 21 Ukrainian tanks had been destroyed in battles across key sections of the front line.

A spokesman for Russia‘s Vostok group of forces said 13 Ukrainian tanks were destroyed in battles in the Zaporizhzhia region and eight in the Donetsk region. It reported artillery, drone and infantry battles.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield claims.

Russian military bloggers said there were intense battles on the Zaporizhzhia front near the city of Orikhiv as Ukraine sought to pierce Russian defences and drive a wedge through Russian forces.

Russia said Ukraine began a major offensive on Sunday morning, first in southern Donetsk, but Moscow said its forces repelled the attacks. Ukraine accused Moscow of spreading lies.

Damaged reservoir can still help Ukrainian nuclear plant, says UN body

The UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed water is still being pumping to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant from the reservoir of the breached Ukrainian Nova Kakhovka dam.

The water is sufficient to cool the reactors and pumps are still operating at water levels earlier thought to make this impossible, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

The plant, occupied by Russia since the early days of its invasion last year, also has other water sources to fall back on if the reservoir’s water is no longer available, the IAEA said.

It added that these include a large cooling pond above the reservoir with several months’ worth of water.

“In these difficult and challenging circumstances, this is providing some more time before possibly switching to alternative water supplies including the large cooling pond next to the plant,” IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said in a statement.

Four cruise missiles, 10 attack drones downed overnight, says Ukraine

Ukraine’s military has shot down four cruise missiles and 10 attack drones during a Russian air strike overnight, the air force said in a statement this morning.

It said Russian forces had launched 16 drones and six cruise missiles during the attack, and that two other cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in central Ukraine during an earlier attack last evening.

The overnight barrage of Russian missile attack comes after a brief lull of a week. Russian forces had amped up the overnight missile attacks in May to overwhelm and exhaust Ukraine’s air defences in more than 17 separate volleys.

Western tanks appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts

Powerful Western tanks and ammunition sent to Ukraine by its allies have finally emerged on the battlefield as Russian forces report a surge in attacks that suggest Kyiv’s counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Russian military bloggers confirmed the presence of at least two Leopard 2 tanks sent by Germany, in a first such use of its war vehicle as they shared visuals from fortified positions along the frontline in the continuing full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The Leopard II main battle tanks were also seen in the Zaporizhzhia region where a significant Ukrainian force scaled up their assault on Russian lines in the southern region in the past 24 hours.

Russian Colonel General Alexander Romanchuk claimed, without providing evidence, that Moscow’s forces had destroyed three Leopard tanks. The officer also said that the general in charge of Russia’s troops in Ukraine, chief of the general staff Valery Gerasimov, briefed President Vladimir Putin on the battles in Zaporizhzhia.

At least two US-produced M113 armoured personnel carriers, or APCs, were also seen in a video shared by Russian military bloggers, reported FT.com.

Russia continues to shell Kherson evacuation points to inflict more damage, says Zelensky

Russian forces continue to shell the Kherson region despite it reeling in the aftermath of the Nova Kakhovka dam’s destruction, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.

“Russian terrorists are trying to further aggravate the situation they have caused with their ecocide. This is absolutely deliberate. They continue to shell Kherson and the communities of the region, which have already been flooded by terrorists,” Mr Zelensky said.

He added that the Russian forces are also shelling evacuation points “which is a manifestation of evil that perhaps no terrorists in the world, except for Russian ones, have ever done”.

He added that the Russian forces in the region “have completely abandoned people on the left bank of Kherson region to their fate”.

“The catastrophe has been expanding there for two days now. And this is also an absolutely conscious choice of the Russian leadership. There is no one left in the world today who does not see that Russia is ruled by savages. Savages who themselves are the biggest disaster on the planet today,” Mr Zelensky said.

Pentagon readies new $2bn air defence package for Ukraine – report

The US is set to announce a new arms package for Ukraine valued at more than $2bn (£1.5bn) as soon as today, officials from the Biden administration have said, reported Bloomberg.

The funds under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative will be heavy on air defence munitions and will help Ukraine purchase Hawk missile launchers and two types of advanced Patriot air defence missiles, the report said.

Zelensky cheers ‘results’ in Bakhmut in Ukraine’s counteroffensive battle

Volodymyr Zelensky has hailed what he described as “results” in heavy fighting in Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine, one of the pockets where Ukrainian counteroffensive is underway.

“There is very heavy fighting in Donetsk region,” Mr Zelensky said in his daily video message, speaking from inside a train after visiting areas affected by the breach of the Kakhovka power dam.

“But there are results and I am grateful to those who achieved these results. Well done in Bakhmut. Step by step,” he said.

The war-time president referred to other areas where fighting is going on, but said he would provide no details.

Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse

Before-and-after images of the area downstream from a dam that collapsed Tuesday vividly show the extent of the devastation of a large, flooded swathe of southern Ukraine.

Before the Kakhovka dam on the Dnieper River broke, farm fields appear green and crossed by peaceful streets and farm roads and dotted with trees. Afterward, only metal roofs and treetops poke above the murky water. Greenhouses and homes are almost entirely submerged.

The pre-collapse satellite photos were taken in May and early June. Photos of the same area taken after the dam collapsed clearly show how much of it has become unlivable. Brown water as high as people covers much of the territory captured in the images.

Read more:

[*Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kherson-experts-b2354106.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has visited the [*flood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/flood) -hit areas of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) to evaluate the response to damage caused by the Kakhovka dam attack.

More than 40,000 people in areas downstream from the Kakhovka hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) are at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods after the breach unleashed torrents of flood water from the Dnipro river.

“In Kherson, I visited a crossing point where people are being evacuated from flooded areas,” the president of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) wrote, sharing footage of his visit.

“Our task is to protect lives and help people as much as possible. I thank the rescuers and volunteers.”

[*Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-zelensky-kherson-flooding-b2353967.html)

Kremlin says ammonia pipeline blast is negative for Black Sea grain deal

The Kremlin said on Thursday that there would be a “negative impact” on the fate of a Black Sea grain deal from a blast which damaged a pipeline used to export Russian ammonia via Ukraine that Moscow wants restarted.

The Togliatti-Odesa pipeline, which once pumped up to 2.5 million tonnes of ammonia annually for global export to Ukraine‘s Pivdennyi port on the Black Sea from Togliatti in western Russia, has lain idle since the start of the war in February last year.

Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of blowing up a part of the pipeline, the world’s longest carrying ammonia, in Ukraine‘s Kharkiv region on Monday. The regional Ukrainian governor said Russia had shelled the pipeline on Tuesday. Neither side provided evidence to back their allegations.

Asked by reporters about how the damaged pipeline could affect the fate of the Black Sea grain deal, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: “It can only have a negative impact.”

He described it as “yet another complication in terms of extending the deal,” adding that Russia did not know “what kind of destruction” there had been to the ammonia pipeline.

Russia has threatened to walk away from the Black Sea grain deal on 17 July if demands to improve its own food and fertiliser exports are not met. The deal, struck in July last year, facilitates the “safe navigation” of grain, foodstuffs and fertilisers -including ammonia -for export to global markets.

Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for ‘discrediting' Russian military

The co-chair of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial, Oleg Orlov, went on trial in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) Thursday, charged with “discrediting” the Russian military in his criticism of Russia’s campaign in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

If convicted, he could face up to five years in prison.

Orlov has been fined twice for anti-war pickets, with the new charges based on an article he wrote denouncing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Discrediting the Russian military is a criminal offence under a law adopted after Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The law is regularly used against Kremlin critics.

Memorial and its supporters have called the trial politically motivated.

Read more:

[*Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for “discrediting” Russian military*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-moscow-nobel-peace-prize-novaya-gazeta-b2354161.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) will not attend the main [*G20*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g20) conference as invites for the summit this year were sent out only to the members of the Group of 20, host country [*India*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/india) has confirmed.

The confirmation by Delhi has put an end to speculation and expectations that Mr Zelensky would participate in the event that will bring together world leaders of major economies in [*Delhi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/delhi).

Mr Zelensky had recently met Indian [*prime minister Narendra Modi in Hiroshima, Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/modi-zelensky-ukraine-g7-russia-putin-war-b2342884.html) on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

Speaking during a special press conference marking nine years of the [*foreign policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-policy) of the [*Narendra Modi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/narendra-modi) government, foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said invitations were being sent out to G20 members only.

Shweta Sharma has the full story:

[*Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/zelensky-invitation-g20-summit-india-jaishankar-b2353761.html)

Eight injured in two missile strikes in central Ukraine -governor

Two missiles hit sites near the city of Uman in central Ukraine on Thursday, injuring eight people, the regional governor said.

Ihor Taburets, governor of Cherkasy region, wrote on the Telegram messaging app that the missiles hit an industrial site and a car wash in the evening. He said two of the injured were seriously hurt, according to preliminary information.

Pictures posted on his Telegram channel showed emergency teams combing through sites largely reduced to rubble, with smoke rising in the background.

The strikes occurred during air raid alerts announced throughout Ukraine for about an hour in mid-evening.

Reuters could not independently verify the accounts.

A missile attack in April on an apartment building in Uman killed 23 residents, in the first such strike in several weeks.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

Sophie Wingate reports:

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-ukraine-rishi-sunak-white-house-volodymyr-zelensky-b2354193.html)

Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that pointed towards its counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub, is said to involve western-supplied tanks and armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-counteroffensive-zaporizhzhia-b2354196.html)

Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter show

The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.

The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.

Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.

[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html)

'Graveyard' of dead fish forms in southern Ukraine after Kakhovka dam destruction

A [*graveyard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/graveyard) of dead [*fish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fish) has formed in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after the Nova Kakhovka [*dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dam) was breached.

Footage from the area close to the destroyed dam shows thousands of fish washed up in an area of â€‹â€‹the reservoir, which has seen a rapid shallowing of the [*water*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/water).

“By blowing up the Kakhovskaya HPP, the aggressor caused an unheard-of act of ecocide, the victims of which were not only people, but also thousands of innocent animals,” the State Agency of Land Reclamation and Fisheries of Ukraine wrote, sharing the footage.

Trapped villagers saved from roofs in flooded south Ukraine as more await help

Rescuers in boats have saved hundreds of people from the roofs of flooded houses after the massive dam breach in southern Ukraine, volunteers and officials said on Thursday, but others were getting more desperate as they waited for help.

Friends and family posted frantic appeals in online chatrooms with names, photos and GPS locations of residents, including some children and many elderly people, who were still waiting to be picked up.

The coordinator of a volunteer group on the Telegram messaging app said the appeals were arriving continuously and getting more urgent than the day before because people were running out of food and drinking water.

Ukraine and Russia have both accused each other of blowing up the giant Kakhovka dam on the Dnipro River, which burst in the early hours of Tuesday. On the Russian-controlled left bank of the river, Moscow-installed officials have ordered residents of several districts to evacuate.

Vladimir Saldo, the top Russian-installed official in the Kherson region, said midday Thursday that approximately 4,300 people had been evacuated, including 171 children and 42 people with disabilities. More than 14,000 homes have been flooded, emergency services said.

Another official, Andrei Alekseyenko, said the level of the Dnipro had risen to 12 metres in the worst-hit areas, Oleshky and Hola Prystan. He said 344 people had been saved by boat from roofs and upper floors.

In Telegram channels, some people sent grateful messages for successful rescues.

Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack

Satellite images have revealed the damage from the massive collapse of a major dam and hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The critical soviet-era [*Nova Kakhovka dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nova-kakhovka-dam) , which lies along the Dnipro river in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) -held Kherson, was blown up on Tuesday and collapsed soon after, sending water gushing into nearby villages and towns in the region with a 42,000-strong population.

The [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) said the collapse will have [*“catastrophic” and “far-reaching consequences”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dam-dnipro-b2352617.html) for thousands of people with the loss of homes, food, safe water and livelihoods even as Russia and Ukraine traded accusations over the incident.

The latest satellite images provided by Maxar Technologies to The Independent on Tuesday showed the “largely destroyed” Nova Kakhovka dam and the hydroelectric plant as well as wide swathes of heavily flooded towns and villages.

[*Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kakhovka-dam-before-and-after-b2353652.html)

Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse

A cat was rescued from flooding in [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) after the destruction of a huge hydroelectric dam on front lines between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

The Kakhovka dam, under Russian control, was blown up on Tuesday, 6 June, collapsing shortly after.

Water has surged into nearby villages, causing widespread flooding in region with a 42,000-strong population.

The incident constitutes a “war crime,” Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

It is the “largest man-made environmental disaster in Europe in decades,” the Ukrainian president added.

[*Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-dam-russia-war-kherson-flood-b2353832.html)

Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot we can’t screw it up’

The blowing up of the Nova Kakhovka dam will delay an expected armoured thrust in the area by Ukrainian forces, but military action in the preliminary stages of Kyiv’s counteroffensive continues across the frontline, writes Kim Sengupta.

The route along the dam near [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) was one the Ukrainians would have taken to move armour – like tanks – and heavy equipment. There were also plans for landings on islands downstream, where fierce clashes have been taking place for some time. The submerging of these pathways means that tactics are redrawn and troops and weapons repositioned.

[*Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html)

WHO rushes supplies to Ukraine, readies to tackle disease in flood areas

The World Health Organisation has rushed emergency supplies to flood-hit parts of Ukraine and are preparing to respond to an array of health risks including trauma, drowning and waterborne diseases like cholera, officials said on Thursday.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the bursting of the Soviet-era Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which sent waters cascading across the war zone of southern Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday, forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes.

“The impact of the region’s water supply sanitation systems and public health services cannot be underestimated,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing.

“The WHO has rushed in to support the authorities and health care workers in preventive measures against waterborne diseases and to improve disease surveillance.”

Watch: Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach

Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelensky visited Kherson following widespread flooding caused by the collapse of nearby [*Kakhovka dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-kherson-kremlin-kyiv-b2353940.html).

Ukraine fears losing millions of tons of crops after dam collapse

Ukraine could lose several million tons of crops because of flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam in the south of the country, the Ukrainian agriculture ministry said on Thursday.

“Without a source of water supply, it is impossible to grow vegetables. Grain and oilseeds will be grown using an extensive model with low yields,” the ministry said in a statement.

The ministry said the dam’s destruction would flood tens of thousands of hectares of agricultural land in southern Ukraine and could turn at least 500,000 hectares of land left without irrigation into “deserts”.

The ministry said the flooded land would require a full agro-ecological assessment of the soil condition and in most cases special soil restoration methods would need to be applied.

It said vegetables, melons, grains and oilseeds were the main products which were grown on the affected land.

Ukraine is a major global grain and oilseeds grower and exporter.

The destruction of the dam on Tuesday, which Ukraine and Russia blame on each other, has also made it impossible to navigate parts of the Dnipro River and deprived Kyiv of an important agricultural export route, shipping authorities said.

Agriculture Minister Mykola Solsky also said the farm sector’s losses could be much higher than previously expected because the disaster inflicted “years” of damage on irrigation.

One killed in Russian 'targeted strikes' on Kherson during evacuation -Kyiv

At least one person was killed after Russian forces shelled the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson in “targeted strikes” during evacuation efforts amid massive flooding, Ukraine’s prosecutor general said on Thursday.

“Due to targeted strikes by the occupiers during evacuation measures in the city, a civilian died,” it said in a statement on Telegram. “Two more people were injured. The data is being verified.”

Mapped: The damage caused by Ukraine’s devastated dam

War-torn [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) is reeling from the collapse of the Nova Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which saw its reservoir burst causing chaos for miles around.

The catastrophe on Tuesday forced [*thousands of residents of nearby towns and villages to evacuate their homes*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dam-dnipro-b2352617.html) as the floodwater barrelled towards them and left some climbing onto rooftops or into trees to escape the raging torrents.

Hundreds of thousands more have been left without access to clean drinking water in the region as a result of the eco-disaster on the Dnipro River, prompting relief workers to rush fresh supplies to the area as they struggle with the problems of mass resettlement.

[*Mapped: The damage caused by Ukraine’s devastated dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-nova-kakhovka-dam-flooding-b2353196.html)

Russian forces shell Kherson during flood evacuation

At least three people were wounded in Russian shelling of the Ukrainian city of Kherson on Thursday as people were being evacuated because of flooding caused by the collapse of the nearby Kakhovka dam, police said.

“The shelling began precisely during the evacuation of citizens whose homes were flooded,” Ukraine‘s Interior Ministry said in a statement.

It reiterated accusations that Russia has abandoned people in territory it has occupied in the Kherson region, adding: “And it continues to prevent Ukraine from saving the most valuable -human lives.”

A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire but was unable immediately to provide any details of the circumstances.

Kherson lies on the Dnipro, about 60 km (37 miles) downstream from the Kakhovka dam.

Kherson governor Oleksandr Prokudin said earlier on Thursday that 68% of the flooded territory in the Kherson region was on the Russian-occupied left bank of the Dnipro River.

Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of shelling rescue workers in Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region, and each side blames the other for the destruction of the Kahkovka Hydroelectric Station and dam on Tuesday.

Sunak condemns ‘appalling act’ of destruction of Kakhovka dam

The destruction of of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine was an “appalling act,” Rishi Sunak has said.

Speaking to broadcasters on his trip to the US, the Prime Minister said: “We’re still establishing definitively the cause of the attack on the dam in Ukraine, but I want people to know we’re playing our part to support the Ukrainians in their response.”

He added: “This is an appalling act and hundreds of thousands of people are being affected by it.”

Mr Sunak also condemned Russia‘s “illegal, unprovoked act of aggression” in invading Ukraine.

Kherson governor says Russian forces shelling city

Russian forces shelled the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson and nearby coastal areas on Thursday, the regional governor said on Thursday.

Governor Oleksandr Prokudin made the remark on the Telegram messaging app as emergency workers tried to evacuate people following flooding caused by the destruction of the nearby Kakhovka dam on Tuesday.

A Reuters reporter in Kherson said he could hear what appeared to be artillery fire but was unable immediately to provide any details of the circumstances. Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of shelling rescue workers in Russian-occupied parts of the Kherson region.

Kremlin accuses Ukraine of shelling Russian rescuers in dam flood zone

The Kremlin on Thursday accused Ukraine of shelling Russian rescue workers in the area flooded after the huge Kakhovka dam in Ukraine‘s Kherson region was breached earlier this week

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Russian rescue workers in the area were working hard, but said the Ukrainian military was making their work more dangerous.

“The difficulty is that in a lot of places they (the rescuers) are forced to work in conditions of ongoing shelling from Ukraine, and this complicates their work,” Peskov told reporters.

He did not provide any immediate evidence for his assertion.

Ukrainian officials on Wednesday accused Russian forces of shelling rescue workers on the Kyiv-held right (west) bank of the Dnipro river. Moscow controls the left (east) bank.

The breach of the Kakhovka dam on Tuesday has led to massive flooding of the Dnipro river estuary downstream, with thousands evacuated and settlements on both side of the river inundated by water.

Peskov said that President Vladimir Putin was monitoring the situation in the region, but did not currently have any plans to visit the disaster area.

Thursday 8 June 2023 11:38 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The water level at a reservoir in southern Ukraine is approaching a dangerous low after the destruction of the dam at the nearby Kakhovka Hydroelectric Station, the state company overseeing the facility said on Thursday.

Moscow and Kyiv blamed each other for the collapse of the dam on Tuesday, which unleashed flood water from the Dnipro River on a wide area of southern Ukraine.

Ihor Syrota, general director of Ukrhydroenergo, told Ukrainian television that a drop below the current water level at the Kakhovka Reservoir could affect the nearby Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Station and water supply to other regions.

“We are reaching this dead zone, which is 12.70 (meters), after which there will be not be any water intake either for the cooling ponds at the Zaporizhzhia station...or...for all regions.”

The U.N. atomic watchdog said on Tuesday the plant, Europe’s largest, has enough water to cool its reactors for “several months” from a pond located above the reservoir.

Ukraine‘s nuclear energy company said on Thursday the situation was “stable and under control” at the Zaporizhzhia plant on Thursday morning.

Syrota added that Ukrhydroenergo was ready to work on an overlay across the damaged hydroelectric station and dam as soon as Russian forces left the eastern side of the Dnipro, and that it would take about two months to complete.

**Load-Date:** July 20, 2023

**End of Document**



[*Ukraine-Russia war – latest: Zelensky says ‘counter-offensive actions’ are underway*](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:68FB-D0D1-JBNF-W389-00000-00&context=1519360)

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**Section:** EUROPE,WORLD; Version:1

**Length:** 15969 words

**Byline:** Matt Mathers,William Mata and Maroosha Muzaffar

**Highlight:** Ukraine penetrates first line of Russia defence in some areas amid ‘significant operations’

**Body**

Ukrainian president [*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has said that counter-offensive and defensive actions are under way against Russian forces in an apparent confirmation of the long-awaited pushback of Putin’s troops.

Mr Zelensky said on Saturday that his top commanders were in a “positive” mindset as their troops engaged in intense fighting along the front line.

The Ukrainian leader, who was speaking at a [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) news conference alongside Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau, said: “The counter-offensive and defensive actions are taking place in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine). I will not speak about which stage or phase they are in.”

The comments come after an escalation of fighting in the south and east of Ukraine.

Britain’s Ministry of Defence said earlier today that Ukraine has “penetrated” the first line of Russian defences in some areas and is making “good progress” in its counteroffensive.

Kyiv has conducted “significant operations” over the past 48 hours in southern and eastern parts of the country, it added.

Key Points

Russia will soon have nuclear weapons in Belarus, says Putin Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam Western tanks, ammunition appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts US citizen detained in Russia on drug trafficking charges One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief says

Ukraine ‘penetrates’ first line of Russian defences in some areas

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has “penetrated” the first line of Russian defences in some areas and is making “good progress” in its counteroffensive, Britain’s Ministry of Defence has said.

[*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) has conducted “significant operations” over the past 48 hours in southern and eastern parts of the country, it added.

“In some areas, Ukrainian forces have likely made good progress and penetrated the first line of Russian defences,” the MoD said in a statement

“In others, Ukrainian progress has been slower.” The MoD added that Russia’s progress in the war has been “mixed”.

Ukraine's dam collapse is both a fast-moving disaster and a slow-moving ecological catastrophe

The destruction of the Kakhovka Dam was a fast-moving disaster that is swiftly evolving into a long-term environmental catastrophe affecting drinking water, food supplies and ecosystems reaching into the [*Black Sea*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/black-sea).

The short-term dangers can be seen from outer space — tens of thousands of parcels of land flooded, and more to come. [*Experts*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/experts) say the long-term consequences will be generational.

Full report:

[*Ukraine's dam collapse is both a fast-moving disaster and a slow-moving ecological catastrophe*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kherson-black-sea-experts-b2355364.html)

Zelensky confirms counteroffensive underway

President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged on Saturday that his military was engaged in "counter-offensive and defensive operations" a day after Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin said Kyiv’s long-vaunted drive to retake territory was well under way.

But the Ukrainian leader disclosed no details, telling reporters to pass on to Putin that his generals were optimistic.

Sporting his trademark khaki fatigues, Zelensky shrugged at a press conference when asked about Putin’s comments on Friday that Kyiv had begun its counter-offensive but made no progress.

"Counter-offensive and defensive actions are taking place in Ukraine, but I will not say in detail what stage they are at," Zelensky said, listing Ukraine’s top military brass by name.

"They (the generals) are all in a positive mood. Pass that on to Putin," he said with a smile, standing alongside visiting Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau.

He said Putin’s comments on the counter-offensive were "interesting...It is important that Russia always feels this: That they do not have long left, in my opinion."

Two drones crash in Russia’s Kaluga region -local governor

Two drones crashed early on Sunday in Russia’s Kaluga region, the governor of the region, Vladislav Shapsha, said on the Telegram messaging app.

One drone crashed near the village of Strelkovka, another in the woods in the Medynsky municipal district.

According to preliminary information, there were no casualties and only minimal damage, Shapsha said on Telegram.

The report could not be independently verified.

The Kaluga region borders the Moscow region to the north.

Watch: Kherson roof ‘washes up’ on beach 100 miles away from dam collapse, says MP

Parts of houses from [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) have washed up more than 100 miles away on a beach in Odesa, a Ukrainian MP has said.

Footage posted by Oleksiy Goncharenko on Friday, 9 June, shows a roof on Dolphin Beach near Malyi Fontan.

Hundreds of Ukrainians have been rescued after waters from the collapsed Nova Kakhovka dam submerged villages, fields and roads in southern Kherson.

[*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) has accused Russia of blowing up the dam and its hydropower plant, which was under Kremlin control.

Moscow has accused Ukraine of bombarding the dam.

[*Ukraine: Kherson roof ‘washes up’ on beach 100 miles away after dam collapse, says MP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-kherson-dam-russia-odesa-b2355130.html)

Tanks, missiles and keeping Russia guessing: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive truly began

Kyiv is seeking to smash through entrenched Russian lines, but has a tough battle ahead, writes Kim Sengupta:

[*Keeping Russia guessing: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive began | Kim Sengupta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-counteroffensive-b2354783.html)

ICYMI: UK will provide extra £16 million to flood-hit areas of Ukraine

The UK will provide an extra £16m of humanitarian aid to [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after a dam collapsed in the south of the country.

Flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam near [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) has directly affected 32,000 people.

Ukraine has accused [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) of blowing up the dam.

The money consists of £10 million for the Red Cross Movement, £5 million for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and £1m for the [*International Organisation for Migration*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/international-organisation-for-migration) (IOM).

Boats, community water filters, water pumps and waders will be given to the war-torn country and are expected to arrive there next week.

[*UK will provide extra £16 million to flood-hit areas of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-james-cleverly-kherson-international-organisation-for-migration-russia-b2355149.html)

Canada to give seized Russian aircraft to Ukraine

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau yesterday promised to hand over a seized An-124 Russian cargo jet to Ukraine.

“Today, through the legislation we passed, we are confiscating this aircraft that was owned by Russia and we are beginning the process of transferring this asset to Ukraine so that it will never again be used by Russia in support of war,” Mr Trudeau said.

The Russian Airlines aircraft arrived in Toronto on 27 February last year with a shipment of Covid tests from China. The aircraft arrived just a few hours before authorities closed the sky to Russian flights.

Zelenskiy says counteroffensive actions “taking place” in Ukraine

Volodymyr Zelenskiy said yesterday that his military was engaged in “counter-offensive and defensive operations” a day after Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin said Kyiv’s long-vaunted drive to retake territory was well underway.

“Counter-offensive and defensive actions are taking place in Ukraine, but I will not say in detail what stage they are at,” Mr Zelenskiy said.

“They (the generals) are all in a positive mood. Pass that on to Putin,” he added.

US citizen detained in Russia on drug trafficking charges

A [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) citizen has been detained in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) on drug trafficking charges, local reports said.

According to [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) ’s courts of general jurisdiction, the man was detained on Saturday when “the Khamovniki District Court of Moscow took a preventive measure against an American citizen”.

In a statement on [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) , the court described the man as a “former paratrooper and musician” who is now “accused of engaging in the narcotics business through attracting young people”.

“A preventative measure in the form of detention was taken,” the statement added, according to CNN.

Drone crashes in Russia’s Kaluga region, local governor claims

A drone crashed early today near the village of Strelkovka in Russia’s Kaluga region, the governor of the region, Vladislav Shapsha, said on the Telegram messaging app.

“According to preliminary information -no casualties,” Shapsha said on Telegram.

Reuters could not independently verify the report.

The Kaluga region borders the Moscow region to the north.

-Reuters

ICYMI: Last reactor shut down at Ukraine's largest nuclear plant as fighting, flooding continues

Ukraine’s nuclear energy agency says it has put the last operating reactor at Europe’s largest nuclear power plant into a “cold shutdown” — a safety precaution amid catastrophic flooding from the collapse of a nearby dam as [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ‘s war on Ukraine drags on through its 16th month.

Russian forces continued pummeling the country with missiles and drones overnight, with Ukrainian officials reporting at least four deaths and damage to a military airfield.

[*Last reactor shut down at Ukraine's largest nuclear plant as fighting, flooding continues*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-russia-kyiv-europe-b2355110.html)

15 cars of an empty freight train derailed in Russia late on Saturday

Fifteen cars of an empty freight train derailed in Russia’s southern Belgorod region bordering Ukraine, the local governor said late on Saturday, adding there was no immediate information about the cause.

“According to preliminary information, there are no casualties,” the governor, Vyacheslav Gladkov, said on the Telegram messaging app.

The accident happened near a train station in the Alexeyevsky municipal district and the train was empty, Gladkov said. Reuters could not independently verify the report.

Blasts and attacks on the region’s infrastructure have become nearly a daily reality in recent weeks, with officials blaming either Ukrainian forces or pro-Ukrainian saboteurs.

Ukraine almost never publicly claims responsibility for attacks inside Russia or on Russian-controlled territory in Ukraine.

Tomorrow’s front page

The Independent is set to lead on ‘Tories in turmoil’ for Sunday, June 11.

Read that story [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/boris-johnson-resigns-sunak-by-elections-b2355169.html).

And to see the full paper, [*click here*](https://edition.independent.co.uk/).

Pictures of the week: Ukraine features in montage

The Independent has put together a gallery of some of the best pictures from the past seven days.

And this picture from the Nova Kakhovka dam collapse has made the cut.

[*See the whole gallery here.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/best-photos-trump-indictment-weather-ukraine-b2353277.html)

Britain thanked in video

Ukraine’s ministry of defence has tweeted its thanks to the British equivalent.

"’Oh, I'm gonna try with a little help from my friends’ The Beatles,” the tweet read. “Thank you @DefenceHQ for all your tremendous support! Let’s win together!”

You can [*read about some of the weapons the UK has sent to Ukraine here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-weapons-missiles-russia-uk-b2202961.html).

"Oh, I'm gonna try with a little help from my friends"The BeatlesThank you [*@DefenceHQ*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) for all your tremendous support!Let’s win together! [*pic.twitter.com/EvOtFRBoLl*](https://t.co/EvOtFRBoLl) — Defense of Ukraine (@DefenceU) [*June 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceU/status/1667565787245334528?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Tweet of thanks from Ukraine to Canada Sunday 11 June 2023 00:00 , William Mata Volodymyr Zelensky has tweeted his thanks to Canada’s prime minister Justin Trudeau after weapons were pledged to help Ukraine’s cause. The Ukraine president tweeted on Saturday evening: Grateful to Prime Minister @JustinTrudeau and all the people of Canada for their support in the fight against Russian aggression and the new defense package. “Weapons and rounds, in particular the important 155mm. Air-to-air missiles. Training of our pilots and a coalition of modern fighters.“Coalition of Patriot systems. Step by step, together, we enhance global freedom.” Grateful to Prime Minister [*@JustinTrudeau*](https://twitter.com/JustinTrudeau?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) and all the people of Canada for their support in the fight against Russian aggression and the new defense package. Weapons and rounds, in particular the important 155mm. Air-to-air missiles. Training of our pilots and a coalition of…— Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*June 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1667583431360823296?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) France warns Iran on drone deliveries to RussiaSaturday 10 June 2023 23:00 , William Mata France has reportedly stepped in to warn Iran about the consequences of delivering drones to Russia.Reuters reports: French President Emmanuel Macron warned Iranian counterpart Ebrahim Raisi on Saturday about the consequences of delivering drones to Russia, Mr Macron's office said on Saturday. In a phone call, Mr Macron urged Iran to "immediately cease" the support it is giving Russia in the war against Ukraine. Mr Macron also expressed concerns about the trajectory of the Iranian nuclear programme, the statement said. Britain, France, Germany, the United States and Ukraine say the supply of Iranian-made drones to Russia violates a 2015 UUN Security Council resolution enshrining the Iran nuclear deal. The White House said on Friday that Russia appeared to be deepening its defense cooperation with Iran and had received hundreds of one-way attack drones that it is using to strike Ukraine. Nord Stream sabotage probe turns to clues inside PolandSaturday 10 June 2023 22:00 , Reuters German investigators are examining evidence suggesting a sabotage team used Poland as an operating base to damage the Nord Stream pipelines in the Baltic Sea in September, the Wall Street Journal reported on Saturday.The investigators have reconstructed the two-week voyage of the “Andromeda”, a 50-foot (15-metre) yacht suspected of being involved in the sabotage of the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines, the newspaper said.The Journal cited people familiar with the voyage as indicating the sabotage crew had placed deep-sea explosives on Nord Stream 1, before they set the vessel on a course towards Poland. It added that Germany was trying to match DNA samples found on the vessel “to at least one Ukrainian soldier”.Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office and Poland’s government spokesman did not immediately respond to requests for comment from Reuters, but one senior Polish official suggested the newspaper report was the result of Russian propaganda.“Information about Polish or Ukrainian clues in the destruction of NS1 and NS2, repeated in the media space, is consistently used by the Russian apparatus of influence to create the impression/presumption among the recipients that Warsaw and Kiev were behind this incident,” Stanislaw Zaryn, deputy to Poland’s Minister Coordinator of Special Services, wrote on Twitter.Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 put Europe’s reliance on Russian natural gas in the political spotlight. The destruction of the Nord Stream pipelines hastened the region’s switch to other energy suppliers.‘We will overcome'Saturday 10 June 2023 21:00 , William Mata President Volodymyr Zelensky has released a statement alongside a video in which he has criticised a “shameful indifference” from parts of the world to the crisis in Ukraine. He shared the message on Twitter shortly after 6pm, having spent the day meeting Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau. Mr Zelensky wrote: “Now, unfortunately, we see that at some levels in the world there is simply a shameful indifference to the ecocide and human tragedy caused by the Russian terrorist attack on the Kakhovka HPP.“When international organizations that are supposed to protect life on a global scale do not have time to organize and send a rescue mission to the occupied territory even in a week... When some world players do not dare to come out even with clear and strong statements that would condemn this new Russian war crime... Terrorists are simply fueled by this weakness of the world, this indifference – it encourages them. And we have to overcome this. And we will overcome.“We are pressing and encouraging so that international organizations and international support come to the part of Kherson region where the occupiers are now.”Now, unfortunately, we see that at some levels in the world there is simply a shameful indifference to the ecocide and human tragedy caused by the Russian terrorist attack on the Kakhovka HPP.When international organizations that are supposed to protect life on a global scale… [*pic.twitter.com/wCwIodo8xT*](https://t.co/wCwIodo8xT) — Володимир Зеленський (@ZelenskyyUa) [*June 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/ZelenskyyUa/status/1667577810922139650?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Zelensky: Tell Putin my generals are in a positive moodSaturday 10 June 2023 20:00 , William Mata President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday that Ukrainian counter-offensive operations were under way, but declined to divulge details, telling a press conference to pass on to Vladimir Putin that Ukraine's generals are optimistic.The Ukrainian leader, in his trademark khaki fatigues, shrugged at a press conference in Kyiv when asked about comments by the Russian president, who said on Friday that Kyiv had begun its counter-offensive, but failed to make progress."Counter-offensive and defensive actions are taking place in Ukraine, but I will not say in detail what stage they are at," Zelensky said, listing Ukraine's top military brass by name."They (the generals) are all in a positive mood. Pass that on to Putin," he said with a smile standing alongside visiting Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.Top stories from the daySaturday 10 June 2023 19:00 , William Mata Here are some of the headlines and links from June 10. [*UK will provide extra £16 million to flood-hit areas of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-james-cleverly-kherson-international-organisation-for-migration-russia-b2355149.html) The UK will provide an extra £16 million of humanitarian aid to Ukraine after a dam collapsed in the south of the country. Flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam near Kherson has directly affected 32,000 people.[*Ukraine: Kherson roof ‘washes up’ on beach 100 miles away from dam collapse, says MP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-kherson-dam-russia-odesa-b2355130.html) Parts of houses from Kherson have washed up more than 100 miles away on a beach in Odesa, a Ukrainian MP has said. Footage posted by Oleksiy Goncharenko on Friday, 9 June, shows a roof on Dolphin Beach near Malyi Fontan.[*New Zealand’s state broadcaster launches investigation over ‘pro-Russia’ stories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/radio-new-zealandnew-pro-russia-stories-probe-b2355134.html) New Zealand’s state broadcaster has launched an investigation after it was found that some stories about the Ukraine and Russia war were edited to reflect the “pro-Russian view”. Local media reported that the state-funded Radio New Zealand [RNZ] published at least four articles attributed to the Reuters wire service that had been edited “inappropriately” to add the pro-Kremlin tone.[*Last reactor shut down at Ukraine's largest nuclear plant as fighting, flooding continues*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-russia-kyiv-europe-b2355110.html) Ukraine’s nuclear energy agency says it has put the last operating reactor at Europe’s largest nuclear power plant into a “cold shutdown” — a safety precaution amid catastrophic flooding from the collapse of a nearby dam as Russia's war on Ukraine drags on through its 16th month.Pictures: Ukraine at war, June 10Saturday 10 June 2023 18:00 , William Mata‘Counteroffensive action is underway’Saturday 10 June 2023 16:46 , William Mata Volodymyr Zelensky has said that that counteroffensive action is underway. The Ukrainian president spoke as Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau visited Kyiv and accused Russia over flooding from the breached Kakhovka dam.He had previously said that the action was under way but could not give any detail.[*#UPDATE*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/UPDATE?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Saturday that counteroffensive action was underway as Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau visited Kyiv and accused Russia over flooding from the breached Kakhovka dam.[*https://t.co/L2f9wwAfIS*](https://t.co/L2f9wwAfIS) — AFP News Agency (@AFP) [*June 10, 2023*](https://twitter.com/AFP/status/1667557230928076800?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) South Africa's president briefs Xi on African Russia-Ukraine peace planSaturday 10 June 2023 16:01 , Matt Mathers South Africa’s president Cyril Ramaphosa has briefed Chinese leader Xi Jinping on the upcoming visit by African leaders to Russia and Ukraine in a bid to end hostilities, the South African presidency said on Saturday.Chinese state broadcaster reported that the two leaders had a phone call on Friday. In a statement, South Africa’s presidency said Ramaphosa told Xi he noted the peace plan proposed by China and affirmed African leaders’ support for initiatives aimed at a peaceful resolution of the conflict.“President Xi Jinping commended the initiative by the African continent and acknowledged the impact the conflict has had on human lives and on food security in Africa,” the presidency statement said.It will be ‘very difficult’ for Johnson to make comeback -Sir John CurticeSaturday 10 June 2023 15:13 , Matt Mathers It will be “very difficult” for Boris Johnson to make a comeback into politics, a leading pollster says.Sir John Curtice argued “a very significant section of the public have decided they no longer believe what Boris says” and because of this, he believes the ex PM will struggle to get into a significant role in British politics in the future.Appearing on GB News, Curtice told Anne Diamond and Stephen Dixon: “The honest truth is I think it’s going to be very, very difficult for him to come back. The fundamental difficulty that Mr Johnson faces is that even though he is highly charismatic and at least at one point in time was a very highly effective campaigner that he was, in the wake of the party gate and other allegations, a very significant section of the public has decided they no longer believe what he says.“If you take a YouGov poll that was published only two or three days ago, in that poll, only 5% of people said they did not think that Mr Johnson had lied to the House of Commons over the various party gate gatherings. Even a charismatic politician, even a politician who is brilliant and has the ability to command a lot of people, a politician whose relationship with the truth is regarded as too loose by significant sections is a politician who’s going to find it very difficult to get through or find a way back into certainly a significant role in British politics in the future.”Trudeau announces military aid for Kyiv, says Canada to help train pilotsSaturday 10 June 2023 14:45 , Matt Mathers Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau said during a trip to Kyiv on Saturday that Canada would take part in a multinational effort to train Ukrainian fighter pilots and announced $375 million worth of military aid for the country.Trudeau also told a press conference alongside Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky that Canada was seizing a Russian-owned Antonov cargo aircraft that landed in Canada last year and starting the process of forfeiting the aircraft to Ukraine.Zelensky says Ukrainian counterattacks are under way, but stays coy on detailsSaturday 10 June 2023 14:26 , Matt Mathers President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Saturday that counteroffensive and defensive operations were taking place in Ukraine, but told reporters that he would not say what stage they were at.Zelensky shrugged and raised his eyebrows dismissively at a press conference in Kyiv when asked to respond after Russian president Vladimir Putin said on Friday that Kyiv forces had certainly begun their much-vaunted counteroffensive.Earlier, counterattacking Ukrainian forces said they have advanced up to 1,400 metres at a number of sections of the front line near the eastern city of Bakhmut in the past day.Kherson roof ‘washes up’ on beach 100 miles away from dam collapse, says MPSaturday 10 June 2023 13:50 , Matt Mathers Parts of houses from Kherson have washed up more than 100 miles away on a beach in Odesa, a Ukrainian MP has said.Holly Patrickreports: Footage posted by Oleksiy Goncharenko on Friday, 9 June, shows a roof on Dolphin Beach near Malyi Fontan.Hundreds of Ukrainians have been rescued after waters from the collpased Nova Kakhovka dam submerged villages, fields and roads southern Kherson.Ukraine has accused Russia of bowing up the dam and its hydropower plant, which was under Kremlin control.Moscow has accused Ukraine of bombarding the dam.[*Ukraine: Kherson roof ‘washes up’ on beach 100 miles away after dam collapse, says MP*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-kherson-dam-russia-odesa-b2355130.html) UK will provide extra £16 million to flood-hit areas of UkrainSaturday 10 June 2023 13:30 , Matt Mathers The UK will provide an extra £16 million of humanitarian aid to Ukraine after a dam collapsed in the south of the country.Flooding caused by the destruction of the Kakhovka dam near Kherson has directly affected 32,000 people.Ukraine has accused Russia of blowing up the dam.Gwyn Wright reports: [*UK will provide extra £16 million to flood-hit areas of Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/ukraine-james-cleverly-kherson-international-organisation-for-migration-russia-b2355149.html) New Zealand’s state broadcaster launches investigation over ‘pro-Russia’ storiesSaturday 10 June 2023 12:42 , Matt Mathers[*New Zealand*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/new-zealand) ’s state broadcaster has launched an investigation after it was found that some stories about the [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) and Russia war were edited to reflect the “pro-Russian view”.Local media reported that the state-funded Radio New Zealand [RNZ] published at least four articles attributed to the [*Reuters*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/reuters) wire service that had been edited “inappropriately” to add the pro-Kremlin tone.Maroosha Muzaffar reports: [*New Zealand’s state broadcaster launches investigation over ‘pro-Russia’ stories*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/australasia/radio-new-zealandnew-pro-russia-stories-probe-b2355134.html) Ukraine’s army reports new gains against Russian forces near BakhmutSaturday 10 June 2023 12:00 , Matt Mathers Counterattacking Ukrainian forces have advanced up to 1,400 metres at a number of sections of the front line near the eastern city of Bakhmut in the past day, a military spokesman said on Saturday.The advance is the latest in a series of similar gains reported this week by Kyiv near Bakhmut, which Russia said it had fully captured last month after the bloodiest and longest battle since it began its full-scale invasion in February 2022."We’re trying...to conduct strikes on the enemy, we’re counterattacking. We’ve managed to advance up to 1,400 metres on various sections of the front," the spokesperson for the eastern military command said, when asked about fighting near Bakhmut.Reactor at Zaporizhzhia power plant put into ‘cold shutdown’Saturday 10 June 2023 11:29 , Matt Mathers Ukraine’s nuclear energy agency has put the last operating reactor at Europe’s largest nuclear power plant into "cold shutdown".The move is a safety precaution amid catastrophic flooding from the collapse of a nearby dam, as Russia’s war on Ukraine drags on through its 16th month.Russian forces have continued pummelling the country with missiles and drones overnight, with Ukrainian officials reporting at least four deaths and damage to a military airfield.Five out of six reactors at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which is occupied by Russian forces, are already in a state of cold shutdown, in which all control rods are inserted into the reactor core to stop the nuclear fission reaction and generation of heat and pressure.Energoatom, the Ukrainian nuclear agency, said there was "no direct threat" to the Zaporizhzhia plant due to the breach of the Kakhovka dam further down the Dnieper River, which has forced thousands of people to flee flooding and also sharply reduced water levels in a reservoir used to help cool the facility.Canada’s Trudeau visits Kyiv in show of support for UkraineSaturday 10 June 2023 10:58 , Matt Mathers Canadian prime minister Justin Trudeau visited Kyiv on Saturday in a gesture of support as Ukraine braces for a major counter-offensive against Russian forces and grapples with regular air strikes.Trudeau paid his respects at a memorial site in central Kyiv to Ukrainian soldiers who have been killed fighting pro-Russian forces since 2014.NATO member Canada, which has one of the world’s largest Ukrainian diasporas, has supplied military and financial assistance to Ukraine during the full-scale invasion launched by Russia in February 2022.Trudeau’s trip to Kyiv followed a night of Russian missile and drone attacks on targets outside the capital, including Odesa, Poltava region and Kharkiv.Dnipro river should return to its banks by June 16 after dam collapse -Russian-backed officialSaturday 10 June 2023 10:14 , Matt Mathers The southern reach of the Dnipro river is likely to return to its banks by June 16 following a vast flood unleashed by the breach of Ukraine’s Kakhovka dam this week, a Russian-installed official said on Saturday.The flood has inundated towns and villages below the dam, trapping residents and sweeping away entire houses on both sides of the Dnipro, which separates Ukrainian-controlled Kherson province from the southern section that Russian forces control.Vladimir Saldo, who heads the Russian-controlled part, said the water level at Nova Kakhovka, the town adjacent to the dam on the downstream side, had now dropped by 3 metres (10 feet) from Tuesday’s peak."The pumping of water and garbage collection from the streets have started," he said, adding that more than 6,000 people had now been evacuated from the flooded districts of Nova Kakhovka and from Oleshky and Hola Prystan, at the mouth of the river.He said preliminary calculations by the Russian hydroelectricity producer RusHydro indicated the Dnipro would return to its usual course below the now-destroyed Kakhovka power station by June 16.Russian strike damages infrastructure at Ukrainian military airfield -governorSaturday 10 June 2023 08:25 , Matt Mathers Russia fired missiles and attack drones at the central Ukrainian region of Poltava overnight, inflicting "some damage of infrastructure and equipment" at the Myrhorod military airfield, the regional governor said on Saturday.The attack that used ballistic and cruise missiles also damaged eight private residential homes and several vehicles, governor Dmytro Lunin said on Telegram messenger. No casualties were reported.Three killed in Russian drone attack on Odesa overnight -UkraineSaturday 10 June 2023 07:29 , Matt Mathers Three civilians were killed during a Russian drone attack on the Black Sea city of Odesa in the early hours of Saturday after drone debris fell on an apartment block starting a fire, the Ukrainian military said.Air defences in Odesa region shot down eight "Shahed" drones and two missiles in the latest in a spate of overnight air strikes on Ukrainian cities in recent weeks, a spokesperson for the southern military command said."As a result of the air fight, debris from one of the drones fell onto a high-rise apartment, causing a fire," the military official, Natalia Humeniuk, said in a statement.The emergency services said 27 people, including three children, were wounded, but that the fire had been rapidly put out and 12 people were rescued from the building.Three people die during a Russian drone attack on Odesa oblastSaturday 10 June 2023 07:00 , Maroosha Muzaffar Three people died and at least ten more were injured during a Russian drone attack on Odesa Oblast today, local reports said.According to Ukraine’s southern command, Russian forces attacked the region using Iranian-made drones. Officials, however, claimed that all the drones were destroyed by Ukrainian forces.A high-rise residential building was damaged by the falling debris. The resulting fire has since been extinguished, officials said.The blast wave also damaged the neighbouring residential buildings.Five dead and 13 missing due to floods after Kakhovka dam destruction, Ukrainian authorities claimSaturday 10 June 2023 06:30 , Maroosha Muzaffar At least five people in Kherson and Mykolaiv oblasts were killed, and 13 more were missing yesterday, according to Ukrainian officials.Ukraine’s interior ministry reported that dozens of settlements on both banks of the Dnipro River are flooded.The ministry said, four of the five victims died in southern Kherson Oblast, where 48 settlements have been flooded, including 34 on the Ukraine-controlled west bank of the Dnipro River and 14 on the Russian-occupied east bank, the Kyiv Independent reported.Mykolaiv Oblast police chief reported on 8 June that another victim died in the neighbouring Mykolaiv Oblast, where 23 settlements have been flooded.Over 130 explosions recorded across Sumy Oblast, Ukraine authorities claimSaturday 10 June 2023 06:00 , Maroosha Muzaffar Russian forces attacked seven communities in Sumy Oblast yesterday, the military administration of the region stated on Telegram.According to officials, Russian forces targeted the communities of Velyka Pysarivka, Bilopillia, Krasnopillia, Myropillia, Shalyhyne, Yunakivka, and Novoslobidske, according to Kyiv Independent.A total of 133 explosions were recorded across the seven communities.One local was reportedly injured in the Yunakivka community. The attacks also damaged a residential building, an outbuilding, and a garage in the same community.Russian ambassador to the US says Washington not looking for ‘diplomatic settlement of the conflict’Saturday 10 June 2023 05:30 , Maroosha Muzaffar Russian ambassador to the United States, Anatoly Antonov stated yesterday that the US does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict in Ukraine, the TASS news agency reported.Speaking about the next US package of military assistance to the Kyiv authorities, he said: “The United States continues to pump up its wards with new batches of deadly weapons. The appropriations for these purposes of such impressive financial resources indicate one thing: Washington does not intend to look for ways to a diplomatic settlement of the conflict.”He added that Washington “did nothing to bring the regime of [Volodymyr] Zelensky to the negotiating table”.He continued: “On the contrary, they are methodically pushing their puppets to continue sacrificing human lives in the name of the extravagant goal of inflicting a strategic defeat on Russia. It is impossible for Washington to retreat from this task. At stake is the reputation of the country’s leadership, which has chosen the path of war, and not diplomatic solutions.”Ukraine faces ‘hugely worse’ humanitarian situation after dam rupture, UN aid chief saysSaturday 10 June 2023 05:00 , Maroosha Muzaffar The humanitarian situation in Ukraine is “hugely worse” than before the Kakhovka dam collapsed, the UN’s top aid official warned yesterday.Undersecretary-General Martin Griffiths said an “extraordinary” 700,000 people are in need of drinking water and warned that the ravages of flooding in one of the world’s most important breadbaskets will almost inevitably lead to lower grain exports, higher food prices around the world, and less to eat for millions in need.“This is a viral problem,” he said in an interview with Associated Press. “But the truth is this is only the beginning of seeing the consequences of this act.”US ambassador to UN ‘gravely concerned’ by growing military cooperation between Russia and IranSaturday 10 June 2023 04:30 , Maroosha Muzaffar Linda Thomas-Greenfield, the US ambassador to the United Nations says she is “gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran” and called for an investigation into Iran’s transfer of attack drones to Russia.“I am gravely concerned by the growing military cooperation between Russia and Iran which continues to enable Russia’s prosecution of its brutal war against Ukraine,” Ms Thomas-Greenfield said.She says Russia and Iran are both violating UN Security Council Resolution.She cited information released by the US earlier Friday which documented how Iran “has provided Russia with hundreds of one-way attack UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles], as well as UAV production-related equipment.” The ambassador said Russia has been using these UAVs in recent weeks to unleash missile strikes on Kyiv and "terrorize Ukrainian civilians.”The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.Russia has received hundreds of Iranian drones to attack Ukraine, White House saysSaturday 10 June 2023 03:54 , Maroosha Muzaffar The White House claimed yesterday that Russia has received hundreds of drones from Iran to attack Ukraine.Citing newly declassified information, the White House said the drones or Uncrewed Aerial Vehicles [UAVs], were built in Iran, shipped across the Caspian Sea and then used by Russian forces against Ukraine.“Russia has been using Iranian UAVs in recent weeks to strike Kyiv and terrorise the Ukrainian population, and the Russia-Iran military partnership appears to be deepening,” White House spokesman John Kirby said in a statement.“We are also concerned that Russia is working with Iran to produce Iranian UAVs from inside Russia.”Mr Kirby also said that the US had information that Russia was receiving materials from Iran required to build a drone manufacturing plant that could be fully operational early next year.“We are releasing satellite imagery of the planned location of this UAV manufacturing plant in Russia’s Alabuga Special Economic Zone.”Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractorSaturday 10 June 2023 03:00 , Eleanor Noyce A grainy black-and-white gunsight video [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) released this week to bolster a claim its military blew up some of Ukraine’s most fearsome tanks actually documented the destruction of a tractor, according to a visual analysis by The Associated Press.The Russian Embassy in [*Washington*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/washington) announced Monday on [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) its forces had “annihilated” eight German-made Leopard tanks, among the most advanced and powerful weapons NATO countries have provided to Ukraine. The Russian Ministry of Defense then posted a video Tuesday on the social media network [*Telegram*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/telegram) with text saying it showed “footage of the destruction of foreign armoured vehicles, including Leopard tanks.”Michael Biesecker has the full story:[*Russia claims it blew up advanced Ukrainian tank, but video shows its helicopter attacked a tractor*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/russia-ap-washington-telegram-twitter-b2354651.html) ‘We will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil’, says Scotland Office minister of £150m housing fundSaturday 10 June 2023 02:00 , Eleanor Noyce A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.In Scotland, more than 24,000 displaced Ukrainians have arrived through an individual sponsor or the Scottish Government’s super-sponsor scheme.Thousands remain in temporary accommodation while waiting for a permanent home.Scotland Office minister John Lamont said: “The UK has a long, proud history of helping those fleeing danger or persecution and we will continue to help the Ukrainians whose lives were thrown into turmoil when Russia illegally invaded their country.“Today’s announcement of a further £30 million for Scotland to help rehome people from Ukraine brings a welcome boost to the great effort already made.“I want to thank everyone who has helped support Ukraine for more than a year now, including all those who have helped ***Ukrainian*** ***refugees*** make new lives in Scotland.”Petro Rewko, of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain, said his organisation welcomes the funding commitment during “difficult economic times”.He added: “Ukrainians everywhere are grateful to the government and the British people for opening their homes and hearts to Ukrainians fleeing their homes as a result of Russia’s illegal invasion of Ukraine.”£150m fund aims to help Ukrainians into their own homesSaturday 10 June 2023 01:00 , Eleanor Noyce A UK government fund of £150 million to help Ukrainians into their own homes and to continue sponsorship arrangements has been announced.Since Russia invaded Ukraine in February last year, more than 124,000 people have arrived in the UK under the Homes for Ukraine scheme.The new money will go to councils to help Ukrainian families into private rented accommodation and find work.It will also go towards continuing sponsorship arrangements, as many guests are in their second year in the UK.The funding is being divided according to the number of Ukrainians in each nation -England will receive around £109 million, Scotland £30 million, Wales £8 million and Northern Ireland £2 million.Those hosting Ukrainians will continue to receive a monthly £350 thank-you payment during guests’ first 12 months, rising to £500 a month during the following year.In March, the Red Cross warned many Ukrainians are staying in “inappropriate” accommodation.UK housing minister Felicity Buchan said: “The UK has an honourable tradition of offering shelter to those fleeing the horrors of war.“Thanks to the extraordinary generosity of hosts in this country, over 124,000 Ukrainians have now found safety in the UK.“Sadly, the fighting in Ukraine shows no sign of ending soon, so we are appealing for more people to become hosts while providing councils with this additional funding to support guests into long-term housing.”White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near MoscowSaturday 10 June 2023 00:01 , Eleanor Noyce[*Iran*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/iran) is providing [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) with materials to build a [*drone manufacturing plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-counter-offensive-today-b2354348.html) near Moscow, according to a newly-declassified [*US*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/us) intelligence report released by the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Friday.The plant in the Alabuga special economic zone several hundred miles east of the Russian capital will be used to [*counter Ukraine’s latest offensive*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html) and could be operational early next year, National Security Council spokesman John Kirby said.The White House released declassified satellite imagery from April of the industrial location where it believes the plant “will probably be built.”Bevan Hurley reports:[*White House accuses Iran of helping Russia build a drone factory near Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/iran-russia-drone-factory-ukraine-white-house-b2354711.html) 'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapseFriday 9 June 2023 23:00 , Eleanor Noyce The rescue volunteer holds out his hand, but the dog, stranded on a floating island of debris in a southern Ukrainian city inundated by flooding, is too traumatised to approach. Volodymyr Holubnichii offers the scared animal some food; the dog sniffs and relaxes.“Don’t be scared,” Holubnichii soothingly tells the animal, which eventually accepts a leash and being carried to safety.Holubnichii, a volunteer with Animal Rescue Kharkiv, spent days cruising the flooded streets of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) city after the Kakhovka dam collapsed on Tuesday and submerged entire towns. He is one among the organisation’s 70 volunteers determined to rescue as many animals as possible, plucking them from the rooftops and garages of flooded homes before they die of dehydration and hunger.Vasilisa Stepanenko reports:[*'All life should be valued': Volunteers rush to save animals after Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-kherson-ngo-russia-b2354830.html) Germany moves ahead with plans to buy Israel's Arrow-3 missile defence for 4 bln eurosFriday 9 June 2023 22:00 , Eleanor Noyce Germany plans to buy Israel’s Arrow-3 missile defence system for almost 4 billion euros ($4.30 billion) in total, and will ask lawmakers to release advance payments of up to 560 million euros next week, according to documents seen by Reuters on Friday.The Arrow-3 is designed to intercept ballistic missiles outside of the earth’s atmosphere.It is the top layer of Israel’s missile defence array, which extends from Iron Dome that intercepts short-range rockets to Arrow-3’s long-range missiles that destroy any non-conventional warheads at a safe altitude.Berlin aims to strike a government-to-government deal with Israel on the purchase of the Arrow-3 system at the end of the year, said the finance ministry’s procurement documents that were prepared for parliament.Germany will lose part or all of its advance payments should the deal fail, according to the papers, as the money would be used to compensate Israel for costs incurred by then.The German air force is supposed to take delivery of Arrow-3, that will cost about one billion euros more than originally planned, by the fourth quarter of 2025.Russia’s war in Ukraine has laid bare a shortage of ground-based air defence systems such as Raytheon’s Patriot units or the more recently developed IRIS-T in many Western nations.While Patriot and IRIS-T cover the medium layer of air defence, Arrow-3 -produced by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) -offers protection for the higher layer.Putin says Ukrainian counter-offensive has begun as drones strike within RussiaFriday 9 June 2023 21:00 , Eleanor Noyce Vladimir Putin says Ukrainian troops have started a long-expected counter-offensive and are suffering “significant” losses.The Russian president’s comments, hours after a string of drone strikes inside Russian territory, formed his latest effort to shape the narrative of the invasion he ordered more than 15 months ago, sparking widespread international condemnation and reviving Cold War-style tensions.The conflict entered a complex new phase this week with the rupture of a Dnieper River dam that sent floodwaters gushing through a large area of the front in southern Ukraine.Tens of thousands of civilians already facing the misery of regular shelling fled for higher ground on both sides of the swollen and sprawling waterway.Ukraine has played down talk of a counter-offensive, reasoning that the less said about its military moves the better.Speaking after he visited flood zones on Thursday, President Volodymyr Zelensky said he was in touch with Ukrainian forces “in all the hottest areas” and praised an unspecified “result” from their efforts.Mr Putin said Russian forces have the upper hand, telling reporters in Sochi: “We can clearly say the offensive has started, as indicated by the Ukrainian army’s use of strategic reserves.“But the Ukrainian troops haven’t achieved their stated tasks in a single area of fighting.”Kyiv has not specified whether reservists have been mobilised to the front, but western allies have poured firepower, defensive systems and other military assets and advice into Ukraine, raising the stakes for the counter-offensive.“We are seeing that the Ukrainian regime’s troops are suffering significant losses,” Mr Putin said. “It’s known that the offensive side suffers losses of three to one -it’s sort of classic -but in this case, the losses significantly exceed that classic level.”At least 13 people killed in flooding after dam explosion, authorities sayFriday 9 June 2023 19:51 , Andy Gregory At least five people have been killed in flooding caused by the Kakhovka dam, Ukraine has said, as it evacuated more people from the surrounding areas.Interior minister Ihor Klymenko said four people had died and 13 people were missing in the Kherson region, and that one person had died in the Mykolayiv region.A Russian-appointed official said eight people had died in Russian-held territory and more than 5,800 had been evacuated from their homes.US announces $2bn security package for UkraineFriday 9 June 2023 18:55 , Andy Gregory The US Department of Defence has announced an additional $2.1bn in security assistance for Ukraine on Friday, including air defense and ammunition capabilities, amid signs that Kyiv had begun its long-awaited counteroffensive against Russia.The package includes additional munitions for Patriot air defense systems, Raytheon Hawk air defense systems and missiles, 105mm and 203mm artillery rounds, small AeroVironment drones that can be launched by hand, laser-guided rocket system munitions and support for training and maintenance, the Defence Department.Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative (USAI) funds will be used to purchase the weapons, allowing Joe Biden’s administration to buy weapons from industry, rather than pull them from US stocks.Delivery of the weapons and systems depends on their availability and production timeline.Tanks, missiles and keeping Russia guessing: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive truly beganFriday 9 June 2023 18:01 , Andy GregoryOur world affairs editorKim Senguptareports:The build-up has been patient and methodical, progress slow and there is grim expectation of heavy losses to come. But Ukraine’s counteroffensive, one which will likely shape the final outcome of this war, is now underway.There is combat, fierce at times, at multiple flashpoints across the length of the vast frontline from Zaporizhzhia to Donetsk to Bakhmut. There are also missile strikes in separatist-held Luhansk, and raids across the Russian border, as Ukraine continues chess moves to try and keep the enemy on the back foot.Ukraine has been asking Western allies for advanced weaponry, tanks, missiles, artillery and warplanes in preparation for the mission and have got a substantial amount of them.German Leopards and British Challenger tanks, as well as Storm Shadow missiles, French AMX armoured cars, American Himars and Nasam artillery have been assimilated into specialist Ukrainian brigades. Advanced warplanes, F-16s are still missing. They are due to in the autumn, and this offensive may still be going on then – as Ukraine seeks to reclaim as much territory as it can before there is any possible ceasefire.[*Tanks, missiles and troops: The week Ukraine’s counteroffensive began | Kim Sengupta*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-putin-counteroffensive-b2354783.html) Putin claims Kyiv suffering large casualties in counteroffensiveFriday 9 June 2023 17:20 , Andy Gregory Vladimir Putin has claimed that Ukraine’s casualties significantly exceed the classical ratio of three attackers to one defender, as he said Kyiv’s counteroffensive was certainly under way.“All counteroffensive attempts made so far have failed. But the offensive potential of the troops of the Kyiv regime is still preserved,” the Russian president claimed.Putin says Ukrainian offensive has begun, but without successFriday 9 June 2023 16:05 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russian President Vladimir Putin told a conference in Sochi on Friday that Ukraine had begun its expected counteroffensive against Russian forces, but without success.“The offensive of the Armed Forces of Ukraine has begun. This is evidenced by the use of strategic reserves,” he said, in footage from the forum posted on Telegram.“Ukrainian troops did not achieve their goals in any sector -thanks to the courage of Russian soldiers, proper organisation of troops.”Putin says tactical nuclear weapons to be deployed in Belarus in JulyFriday 9 June 2023 15:43 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Russia will start deploying tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are made ready on July 7-8, President Vladimir Putin said on Friday, Moscow’s first move of such warheads outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.Putin announced in March he had agreed to deploy such weapons in Belarus, pointing to U.S deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in a host of European countries over many decades.“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko, discussing the planned nuclear deployment over a meal at the Russian leader’s summer retreat in the Black Sea resort of Sochi.“Preparation of the relevant facilities ends on July 7-8, and we will immediately begin activities related to the deployment of appropriate types of weapons on your territory,” Putin said, according to a Kremlin transcript of his remarks.Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”Hungary receives Ukrainian POWs from Russia, Ukraine says not informedFriday 9 June 2023 15:19 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Hungary said on Friday it had received a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war from Russia, a release that Ukraine welcomed while expressing concern that it had not been informed.The POWs were from the western part of Ukraine that borders Hungary, according to both the Russian Orthodox Church, which said it had assisted in the release, and Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister Zsolt Semjen.“This is my human and patriotic duty”.. we have brought back from Moscow 11 prisoners of war from Transcarpathia,” a post on Semjen’s official Facebook page said.Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban’s government has long supported the Russian Orthodox Church in Hungary, and blocked proposals from other EU members for sanctions against the Church’s overall leader Patriarch Kirill.A statement posted on the website of the Russian Orthodox Church’s Moscow Patriarchate late on Thursday said that “at the request of the Hungarian side, a group of Ukrainian prisoners of war of Transcarpathian origin who participated in the hostilities was transferred to Hungary”.Asked for comment early on Friday, a Hungarian government spokesman told Reuters the statement was “fake news”. Later on the spokesman was not reachable for comment.It was not clear what had caused the apparent confusion within the Hungarian government.Ukraine, which has secured successive prisoner exchanges with Russia with international mediation during Russia‘s more than 15-month-old invasion, said it had not been informed about the prisoners’ release. The foreign ministry said it had asked Hungary’s representative in Ukraine to grant immediate access to them.“The release of Ukrainian prisoners of war is always good news,” foreign ministry spokesperson Oleg Nikolenko wrote on Facebook, adding that the ministry had “emphasized the need to coordinate cooperation on such sensitive issues”.Nuclear weapons will be in Belarus within weeks, says PutinFriday 9 June 2023 14:47 , Jane Dalton Russia will station tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus after special storage facilities are ready on July 7-8, president Vladimir Putin has said, Moscow’s first move of such bombs outside Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union.Mr Putin says the United States and its Western allies are pumping arms into Ukraine as part of an expanding proxy war aimed at bringing Russia to its knees.In March he announced he wanted to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, an apparent warning to the US-led Nato military alliance over its support for Ukraine.Leading Nato countries say they will support Ukraine and help it defend itself for as long as it takes from what Kyiv casts as an imperial-style land grab by Russia which threatens the survival of the Ukrainian state.“Everything is going according to plan,” Putin told Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko when discussing the planned nuclear deployment during talks at the Russian leader’s Black Sea summer retreat in Sochi.Lukashenko said: “Thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich.”Putin, 70, casts the war as a battle for Russia’s own survival in the face of what he says is an ever-expanding Nato. He has warned the West that Moscow will not back down.Kazakh president to skip ‘Russian Davos’Friday 9 June 2023 14:45 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will not attend the annual economic forum in Russia‘s St Petersburg next week, the government said on Friday, after refusing to toe the Kremlin’s line over the Russian invasion of Ukraine at last year’s event.The Kazakh government said only two officials will represent the Central Asian nation at this year’s forum.Until its invasion of Ukraine, Russia regularly hosted world leaders and business titans at the forum, but Western officials and business figures now shun it, and last year Tokayev stole the limelight by rejecting the Kremlin claims on Ukraine.Sharing the stage with Russian President Putin -who will address the forum this year as well -Tokayev said then that Kazakhstan would not recognise the independence of pro-Russian statelets in eastern Ukraine or other ex-Soviet republics.His comments raised eyebrows because Kazakhstan, which shares the world’s longest continuous land border with Russia, has for decades been a member of Moscow-led security and trade blocs, and calls Russia its strategic partner.Asked who would attend the conference this year, a Kazakh government spokeswoman said only Deputy Prime Minister Roman Sklyar and Deputy Economy Minister Timur Zhaksylykov would go.Tokayev’s office declined to comment on the reasons why he was not attending.Russia‘s RIA news agency reported last month that Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, invited by Putin, said would not be able to attend the forum. Russian media have not announced plans by any other world leaders to attend.Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter showFriday 9 June 2023 14:25 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.“The Kakhovka dam was effectively Russian. It was built by the Russian government. It currently sits in Russian-controlled territory. The dam’s reservoir supplies water to Crimea, which has been for the last 240 years home of the Russian Black Sea Fleet,” [*said Carlson.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-twitter-video-ukraine-dam-b2352930.html) [*Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html) 'Our house was carried away' -flood survivors in Russian-held Ukraine speak of their escapeFriday 9 June 2023 14:00 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Pensioner Maria Mikhailovna says she was woken by her husband in the middle of the night to find their belongings underwater after the collapse of Ukraine‘s giant Nova Kakhovka Dam.“The water in the house was at waist level. At midnight everything had been dry -both inside and outside,” said the 73-year-old, who walks slowly with the help of a stick.“We can hardly walk. We went outside and were lucky that there were passers-by. They helped us to get to the ‘Vostok’ shop. Then we limped on to our friends,” she told Reuters.With water snapping at their heels, she and her husband then moved on from place to place, she said in the town of Hola Prystan in Ukraine‘s southern Kherson region, adding that she was grateful to her rescuers.They were brought to safety with other pensioners on Thursday in a rubber boat crewed by rescuers from Russia‘s Emergency Situations Ministry.Russian forces took control of Hola Prystan, a town where around 13,000 people once lived, last year as part of what Moscow calls its “special military operation”.After the vast Soviet-era Kakhovka Dam crumbled on Tuesday -a human and ecological disaster which Russia and Ukraine have blamed on each other -rubber dinghies have replaced cars in the town’s streets.Animals and people sheltered on roofs on Thursday: in one surreal scene a small group of goats and hens stood on what looked like part of a roof surrounded by floodwater as rescuers in dinghies passed by. The first one or two storeys of houses and people’s yards were underwater and an emerald green church was semi-submerged, with the tops of trees poking out from the water in places.Rescuers in boats scoured the town for survivors, shouting out the addresses they had checked to one another.Many of those rescued appeared elderly but small children and their mothers were also among those helped to safety.One woman had her pet cat in their bag and one elderly lady clutched a birdcage as she was ferried to dry land.A woman who gave her name as Oksana held back tears as she and her daughter were evacuated in a boat with their two pet dogs.“We ended up at the kindergarten because our house was carried away by a torrent of water,” said Oksana, as her daughter turned her head away to sob.Ukraine reports heavy fighting in eastFriday 9 June 2023 13:40 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Ukraine reported heavy fighting in the eastern region of Donetsk on Friday and a military spokesperson said Ukrainian forces had gained more ground near the devastated city of Bakhmut.“The situation is tense on all areas of the front,” Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar said on the Telegram messaging app.Naming eastern areas where fighting has been fierce for months, she said: “The enemy continues to focus its main efforts on the Lyman, Bakhmut, Avdiivsky and Mariinka directions, heavy fighting continues.”She said Ukrainian troops were repelling the Russian attacks.Reuters was unable to verify the situation on the battlefield.Serhiy Cherevaty, spokesperson for Ukraine‘s East military command said Ukrainian forces had advanced 1.2 km (0.75 mile) near Bakhmut over the past 24 hours.“We took advantage of the enemy’s rotation measures and the fact that units which entered do not know the area fully, and failed to conduct appropriate reconnaissance and coordination. We struck,” he told Ukrainian television. “We have been carrying out assaults for several days.”Over the past several days, Ukrainian forces have made their most rapid gains around the edges of Bakhmut, aiming to encircle the ruined eastern city which Russian forces seized control of last month.Russia‘s Defence Ministry said it was continuing to repel Ukrainian attacks in the southern region of Zaporizhzhia, Russian news agencies reported.Ukrainian officials made little mention of the situation in Zaporizhzhia but the head of the president’s office said a junior nurse and a plumber had been killed by Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in the Zaporizhzhia region.Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft serverFriday 9 June 2023 13:15 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain For most teenagers [*Minecraft*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/minecraft) remains just a hobby, but one Ukrainian schoolboy’s love for the game has meant he can now afford to buy his homeless mother a house.Lomond School pupil Maksym Gavrylenko has made a “substantial” sum after selling the server he ran from his bedroom, which allows gamers from all over the world to connect to and play together on, with friends.The 17-year-old boarding school pupil said: “I am very proud that I was able to turn my passion into a profitable business and I plan on treating my mother.“As a result of the war, she was forced to flee her home, leaving her homeless, so to buy her a property will make all the hours spent on this project worthwhile.”Read more here:[*Ukrainian schoolboy to buy home for his mother after selling Minecraft server*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tech/ukraine-boy-home-minecraft-server-b2354415.html) Latest British Defence Intelligence update for UkraineFriday 9 June 2023 12:57 , Maryam Zakir-Hussain Here is the latest update from the UK Ministry of Defence:Latest Defence Intelligence update on the situation in Ukraine -9 June 2023.Find out more about Defence Intelligence's use of language: [*https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf*](https://t.co/eWGFZRqlcf) [*#StandWithUkraine*](https://twitter.com/hashtag/StandWithUkraine?src=hash&ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw) [*pic.twitter.com/1iCNxfO6qK*](https://t.co/1iCNxfO6qK) — Ministry of Defence (@DefenceHQ) [*June 9, 2023*](https://twitter.com/DefenceHQ/status/1667048494677336064?ref_src=twsrc%5Etfw)

Russian shelling kills two civilians in Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia

A junior nurse and a plumber were killed in Russian shelling of a hospital in Huliai Pole in Ukraine‘s Zaporizhzhia region, a senior Ukrainian official said on Friday.

Andriy Yermak, the head of the president’s office, said on the Telegram messaging app under a photo of a devastated building that two others were wounded in Huliai Pole, a small town close to front line in southern Ukraine.

Reuters was unable to verify the situation in the town.

Stay tuned for updates as we have them.

Top Dutch court upholds decision awarding Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine

The Dutch Supreme Court on Thursday upheld lower court decisions ordering the return of ancient Crimean gold artefacts to Ukraine, marking the end of a long legal process.

The artefacts had been on display at the Allard Pierson Museum in the Netherlands when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, and Ukraine and museums in Crimea had demanded their return.

“This decision ends this dispute. The Allard Pierson Museum must return these artistic treasures to the State of Ukraine and not to the museums in Crimea,” the ruling said.

The pieces, including a solid gold Scythian helmet and a golden neck ornament each weighing more than 1 kg (35 oz), were on loan at the museum in Amsterdam.

The U.N., the European Union and the Netherlands recognise the “territorial integrity” of Ukraine in its pre-2014 borders.

Lower courts in the Netherlands found in 2016 and 2021 that the pieces should be returned to Ukraine.

The appeals court decision in 2021 noted that under Ukrainian law the artefacts will be held at the National Historical Museum in Kyiv “until the situation in Crimea has stabilized.”

The 2021 decision “struck a fair balance between infringing on the rights of the museums and the interests of the State of Ukraine in protecting its cultural heritage,” the Dutch Supreme Court said on Friday.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

“And I believe that that support will be real, even though you hear some voices today on Capitol Hill about whether or not we should continue to support Ukraine and for how long we should support them.”

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-rishi-sunak-ukraine-volodymyr-zelensky-kyiv-b2354193.html)

Russia accuses ex-defence industry worker of spying for Germany

Russia has detained a former defence industry worker on suspicion of spying for Germany and charged him with high treason, Moscow’s FSB security service said on Friday.

According to the FSB, the suspect had worked for a military contractor in the Siberian region of Omsk and had offered to hand over information in exchange for German citizenship.

It said the man had initiated contact with a German official and had gathered information about “important military facilities”. It gave no further details.

Reuters was not able to independently verify the FSB’s account.

The FSB distributed a video to Russian news agencies showing what appeared to be an FSB officer in camouflage jumping out of a vehicle and pinning a man to the ground.

On Wednesday, the FSB said it had arrested a resident of the far eastern Primorsky Krai region on suspicion of spying for Ukraine.

Thunberg criticises Russia over Ukraine dam 'ecocide'

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg has accused Russia of causing the collapse of the Kakhovka dam in Ukraine, calling it an act of “ecocide”.

The burst of the huge dam, under Russian control in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region, unleashed large floods, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc. Russia and Ukraine have blamed each other for its destruction.

“This ecocide as a continuation of Russia‘s unprovoked full-scale invasion of Ukraine is yet another atrocity which leaves the world lost for words. Our eyes are once again on Russia who must be held accountable for their crimes,” Thunberg, 20, said on Twitter on Thursday.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy replied on Twitter: “Thank you for your position and for upholding the truth @GretaThunberg! (Russia) must be held accountable for all its evil against people, life and nature!”.

Thunberg on Friday told Reuters during a weekly climate protest by the Swedish parliament that the aftermath of the dam burst was “absolutely horrifying and awful”.

“Russia needs to be held accountable for their action and for their crimes. The eyes of the world are on them now,” Thunberg, who graduates from high school on Friday, said.

The United States said on Tuesday it could not say conclusively what caused the dam’s destruction but it was assessing reports that Russia, which has been occupying the dam since last year, was behind the blast.

Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city

Three people were lightly wounded after a drone crashed into a residential building in central Voronezh, a city in southwestern Russia near the border with Ukraine, regional governor Alexander Gusev reported on Friday morning.

Gusev spoke to Russian state media, which also published photos showing a high-rise apartment block with some of its windows blown out and damage to parts of its facade.

State media reports also cited the building’s administrators as saying that “several apartments were damaged” in the explosion. There was no immediate comment on who may have been behind the drone strike.

[*Governor: Three wounded as drone strikes building in Russian border city*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/kyiv-ap-ukraine-b2354482.html)

Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that points towards its counteroffensive shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has already been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

The Kremlin has repeatedly claimed to have repelled Ukrainian attacks – that it calls the counteroffensive – across various points of the war’s frontlines for a number of days, but Russian military bloggers noted an increase in clashes overnight Wednesday and into Thursday. One said: “Wave after wave of the enemy is trying to break through our defence.”

[*Ukraine attacks Putin’s troops as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/zaporizhzhia-power-plant-ukraine-counteroffensive-b2354423.html)

Russian intelligence investigating drone strike on city of Voronezh -Kremlin

The Kremlin said on Friday that Russia‘s intelligence services were investigating a drone attack on the Russian city of Voronezh, which it blamed on Ukraine.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said the security services were working to clarify details of the incident.

The regional governor said earlier on Friday that three people had been lightly wounded when a drone struck an apartment building in the city, about 180 km (110 miles) from the border with Ukraine.

There was no immediate comment on the episode from Ukraine.#

Russia and China to continue expanding military cooperation -TASS

Russia and China will continue to expand their military cooperation, rUSSIAN Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov was quoted as saying on Friday by the TASS news agency.

Gerasimov has invited his Chinese counterpart to visit Russia, news agencies reported.

“The practice of joint operational and combat training of the Russian and Chinese Armed Forces should remain an important area of further activities,” Gerasimov was quoted as saying.

Ukraine says it intercepted call proving Russia blew up Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving a Russian “sabotage group” blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine.

The destruction of the facility on Tuesday unleashed mass flooding, forcing thousands of residents to flee and wreaking environmental havoc.

Russia and its proxy officials in Ukraine have blamed Kyiv for destroying the dam but have offered varying explanations.

The Security Service of Ukraine (SBU) posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip on its Telegram channel of the alleged conversation, which featured two men who appeared to be discussing the fallout from the disaster in Russian.

“They (the Ukrainians) didn’t strike it. That was our sabotage group,” said one of the men, who the SBU described as a Russian soldier. “They wanted to, like, scare (people) with that dam.”

“It didn’t go according to plan, and (they did) more than what they planned for.”

The SBU did not offer further details of the conversation or its participants. It said it had opened a criminal investigation into war crimes and “ecocide”.

“The invaders wanted to blackmail Ukraine by blowing up the dam and staged a man-made disaster in the south of our country,” the SBU said in a statement.

Ukraine security service says it intercepted call proving Russia destroyed Kakhovka dam

Ukraine‘s domestic security service said on Friday it had intercepted a telephone call proving Russian forces blew up the Kakhovka hydroelectric station and dam in southern Ukraine‘s Kherson region.

The Security Service of Ukraine posted a one-and-a-half minute audio clip of the alleged conversation on its Telegram channel.

In pictures: Ukrainian soldiers on the frontline in Luhansk region

Pictures show Ukrainian soldiers working during a combat operation on the frontline near Kreminna, Luhansk region.

One killed in latest Russian air strike on Ukraine, Kyiv says

Russia unleashed a new air strike on Ukraine overnight, killing at least one person in a combined assault of cruise missiles and attack drones, Ukrainian authorities said.

The Ukrainian military reported shooting down four out of six missiles launched during the attack, which the air force said lasted around six hours, and 10 out of 16 drones.

The interior ministry said one person had been killed, three were wounded, and four buildings were destroyed from falling debris.

It posted images on the Telegram messaging app of firefighters attending to the smouldering wreckage of what appeared to be residential homes.

The air force also said two cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in the central Ukrainian region of Cherkasy during an earlier attack on Thursday evening.

Regional governor Ihor Taburets said at least eight people had been wounded in that strike, which he said hit a carwash and an industrial object.

Moscow in recent weeks has stepped up regular air strikes against Ukraine as Kyiv prepared for a counteroffensive to try to take back Russian-occupied territory.

Russia reports heavy fighting in Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine

Russia‘s army on Friday reported heavy fighting in the Donetsk and Zaporizhzhia regions of Ukraine, saying over 21 Ukrainian tanks had been destroyed in battles across key sections of the front line.

A spokesman for Russia‘s Vostok group of forces said 13 Ukrainian tanks were destroyed in battles in the Zaporizhzhia region and eight in the Donetsk region. It reported artillery, drone and infantry battles.

Reuters could not independently verify the battlefield claims.

Russian military bloggers said there were intense battles on the Zaporizhzhia front near the city of Orikhiv as Ukraine sought to pierce Russian defences and drive a wedge through Russian forces.

Russia said Ukraine began a major offensive on Sunday morning, first in southern Donetsk, but Moscow said its forces repelled the attacks. Ukraine accused Moscow of spreading lies.

Damaged reservoir can still help Ukrainian nuclear plant, says UN body

The UN nuclear watchdog has confirmed water is still being pumping to the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant from the reservoir of the breached Ukrainian Nova Kakhovka dam.

The water is sufficient to cool the reactors and pumps are still operating at water levels earlier thought to make this impossible, the International Atomic Energy Agency said.

The plant, occupied by Russia since the early days of its invasion last year, also has other water sources to fall back on if the reservoir’s water is no longer available, the IAEA said.

It added that these include a large cooling pond above the reservoir with several months’ worth of water.

“In these difficult and challenging circumstances, this is providing some more time before possibly switching to alternative water supplies including the large cooling pond next to the plant,” IAEA chief Rafael Grossi said in a statement.

Four cruise missiles, 10 attack drones downed overnight, says Ukraine

Ukraine’s military has shot down four cruise missiles and 10 attack drones during a Russian air strike overnight, the air force said in a statement this morning.

It said Russian forces had launched 16 drones and six cruise missiles during the attack, and that two other cruise missiles had struck a civilian object in central Ukraine during an earlier attack last evening.

The overnight barrage of Russian missile attack comes after a brief lull of a week. Russian forces had amped up the overnight missile attacks in May to overwhelm and exhaust Ukraine’s air defences in more than 17 separate volleys.

Western tanks appear on Ukraine battlefield as heavy fighting starts

Powerful Western tanks and ammunition sent to Ukraine by its allies have finally emerged on the battlefield as Russian forces report a surge in attacks that suggest Kyiv’s counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub – is said to involve Western-supplied tanks, armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Russian military bloggers confirmed the presence of at least two Leopard 2 tanks sent by Germany, in a first such use of its war vehicle as they shared visuals from fortified positions along the frontline in the continuing full-scale invasion of Ukraine by Russia.

The Leopard II main battle tanks were also seen in the Zaporizhzhia region where a significant Ukrainian force scaled up their assault on Russian lines in the southern region in the past 24 hours.

Russian Colonel General Alexander Romanchuk claimed, without providing evidence, that Moscow’s forces had destroyed three Leopard tanks. The officer also said that the general in charge of Russia’s troops in Ukraine, chief of the general staff Valery Gerasimov, briefed President Vladimir Putin on the battles in Zaporizhzhia.

At least two US-produced M113 armoured personnel carriers, or APCs, were also seen in a video shared by Russian military bloggers, reported FT.com.

Russia continues to shell Kherson evacuation points to inflict more damage, says Zelensky

Russian forces continue to shell the Kherson region despite it reeling in the aftermath of the Nova Kakhovka dam’s destruction, Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky said.

“Russian terrorists are trying to further aggravate the situation they have caused with their ecocide. This is absolutely deliberate. They continue to shell Kherson and the communities of the region, which have already been flooded by terrorists,” Mr Zelensky said.

He added that the Russian forces are also shelling evacuation points “which is a manifestation of evil that perhaps no terrorists in the world, except for Russian ones, have ever done”.

He added that the Russian forces in the region “have completely abandoned people on the left bank of Kherson region to their fate”.

“The catastrophe has been expanding there for two days now. And this is also an absolutely conscious choice of the Russian leadership. There is no one left in the world today who does not see that Russia is ruled by savages. Savages who themselves are the biggest disaster on the planet today,” Mr Zelensky said.

Pentagon readies new $2bn air defence package for Ukraine – report

The US is set to announce a new arms package for Ukraine valued at more than $2bn (£1.5bn) as soon as today, officials from the Biden administration have said, reported Bloomberg.

The funds under the Ukraine Security Assistance Initiative will be heavy on air defence munitions and will help Ukraine purchase Hawk missile launchers and two types of advanced Patriot air defence missiles, the report said.

Zelensky cheers ‘results’ in Bakhmut in Ukraine’s counteroffensive battle

Volodymyr Zelensky has hailed what he described as “results” in heavy fighting in Donetsk region in eastern Ukraine, one of the pockets where Ukrainian counteroffensive is underway.

“There is very heavy fighting in Donetsk region,” Mr Zelensky said in his daily video message, speaking from inside a train after visiting areas affected by the breach of the Kakhovka power dam.

“But there are results and I am grateful to those who achieved these results. Well done in Bakhmut. Step by step,” he said.

The war-time president referred to other areas where fighting is going on, but said he would provide no details.

Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse

Before-and-after images of the area downstream from a dam that collapsed Tuesday vividly show the extent of the devastation of a large, flooded swathe of southern Ukraine.

Before the Kakhovka dam on the Dnieper River broke, farm fields appear green and crossed by peaceful streets and farm roads and dotted with trees. Afterward, only metal roofs and treetops poke above the murky water. Greenhouses and homes are almost entirely submerged.

The pre-collapse satellite photos were taken in May and early June. Photos of the same area taken after the dam collapsed clearly show how much of it has become unlivable. Brown water as high as people covers much of the territory captured in the images.

Read more:

[*Before-and-after satellite images show profound toll of Ukraine dam collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ukraine-ap-russia-kherson-experts-b2354106.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) has visited the [*flood*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/flood) -hit areas of [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) to evaluate the response to damage caused by the Kakhovka dam attack.

More than 40,000 people in areas downstream from the Kakhovka hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) are at risk of losing their homes and livelihoods after the breach unleashed torrents of flood water from the Dnipro river.

“In Kherson, I visited a crossing point where people are being evacuated from flooded areas,” the president of [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) wrote, sharing footage of his visit.

“Our task is to protect lives and help people as much as possible. I thank the rescuers and volunteers.”

[*Zelensky visits flood-hit Kherson to survey damage after dam breach*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-russia-zelensky-kherson-flooding-b2353967.html)

Kremlin says ammonia pipeline blast is negative for Black Sea grain deal

The Kremlin said on Thursday that there would be a “negative impact” on the fate of a Black Sea grain deal from a blast which damaged a pipeline used to export Russian ammonia via Ukraine that Moscow wants restarted.

The Togliatti-Odesa pipeline, which once pumped up to 2.5 million tonnes of ammonia annually for global export to Ukraine‘s Pivdennyi port on the Black Sea from Togliatti in western Russia, has lain idle since the start of the war in February last year.

Russia has accused Ukrainian forces of blowing up a part of the pipeline, the world’s longest carrying ammonia, in Ukraine‘s Kharkiv region on Monday. The regional Ukrainian governor said Russia had shelled the pipeline on Tuesday. Neither side provided evidence to back their allegations.

Asked by reporters about how the damaged pipeline could affect the fate of the Black Sea grain deal, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said: “It can only have a negative impact.”

He described it as “yet another complication in terms of extending the deal,” adding that Russia did not know “what kind of destruction” there had been to the ammonia pipeline.

Russia has threatened to walk away from the Black Sea grain deal on 17 July if demands to improve its own food and fertiliser exports are not met. The deal, struck in July last year, facilitates the “safe navigation” of grain, foodstuffs and fertilisers -including ammonia -for export to global markets.

Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for ‘discrediting' Russian military

The co-chair of the Nobel Peace Prize-winning human rights group Memorial, Oleg Orlov, went on trial in [*Moscow*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/moscow) Thursday, charged with “discrediting” the Russian military in his criticism of Russia’s campaign in [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

If convicted, he could face up to five years in prison.

Orlov has been fined twice for anti-war pickets, with the new charges based on an article he wrote denouncing Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Discrediting the Russian military is a criminal offence under a law adopted after Russia sent troops into Ukraine in February 2022. The law is regularly used against Kremlin critics.

Memorial and its supporters have called the trial politically motivated.

Read more:

[*Renowned human rights campaigner Oleg Orlov on trial for “discrediting” Russian military*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/ap-ukraine-moscow-nobel-peace-prize-novaya-gazeta-b2354161.html)

ICYMI: Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms

[*Volodymyr Zelensky*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/volodymyr-zelensky) will not attend the main [*G20*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/g20) conference as invites for the summit this year were sent out only to the members of the Group of 20, host country [*India*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/india) has confirmed.

The confirmation by Delhi has put an end to speculation and expectations that Mr Zelensky would participate in the event that will bring together world leaders of major economies in [*Delhi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/delhi).

Mr Zelensky had recently met Indian [*prime minister Narendra Modi in Hiroshima, Japan*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/modi-zelensky-ukraine-g7-russia-putin-war-b2342884.html) on the sidelines of the G7 summit.

Speaking during a special press conference marking nine years of the [*foreign policy*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/foreign-policy) of the [*Narendra Modi*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/narendra-modi) government, foreign minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar said invitations were being sent out to G20 members only.

Shweta Sharma has the full story:

[*Zelensky won’t attend G20 summit in India, New Delhi confirms*](https://www.independent.co.uk/asia/india/zelensky-invitation-g20-summit-india-jaishankar-b2353761.html)

Eight injured in two missile strikes in central Ukraine -governor

Two missiles hit sites near the city of Uman in central Ukraine on Thursday, injuring eight people, the regional governor said.

Ihor Taburets, governor of Cherkasy region, wrote on the Telegram messaging app that the missiles hit an industrial site and a car wash in the evening. He said two of the injured were seriously hurt, according to preliminary information.

Pictures posted on his Telegram channel showed emergency teams combing through sites largely reduced to rubble, with smoke rising in the background.

The strikes occurred during air raid alerts announced throughout Ukraine for about an hour in mid-evening.

Reuters could not independently verify the accounts.

A missile attack in April on an apartment building in Uman killed 23 residents, in the first such strike in several weeks.

Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine

[*Rishi Sunak*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/rishi-sunak) and [*Joe Biden*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/joe-biden) stressed their “unwavering support” for [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) , with the president saying the US will help [*Kyiv*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kyiv) for “as long as it takes”.

The two leaders emphasised the need for long-term security arrangements for the war-torn nation as deterrence against aggression from Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At a joint press conference at the [*White House*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/white-house) on Thursday, Mr Biden was asked about hesitation about more funding for Ukraine among some lawmakers in the rival Republican Party.

The Democratic US president said: “I believe we’ll have the funding necessary to support Ukraine as long as it takes.

Sophie Wingate reports:

[*Rishi Sunak and Joe Biden stress ‘unwavering support’ for Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/joe-biden-ukraine-rishi-sunak-white-house-volodymyr-zelensky-b2354193.html)

Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up

A significant Ukrainian force has launched an assault on Russian lines in the southern [*Zaporizhzhia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/zaporizhzhia) region – with a surge in attacks that pointed towards its counteroffensive is shifting into high gear.

A number of US and Ukrainian officials suggested this was the start in earnest of Kyiv’s bid to reclaim territory lost to Russian occupation during Moscow’s invasion. [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) ‘s commanders and government have always said there would be no official announcement of the start of the counteroffensive and there has been an increase in military activity all week.

The combat against Russian positions – including intense fighting outside of the town of Tokmak, a Russian logistical hub, is said to involve western-supplied tanks and armoured vehicles and infantry backed by artillery.

Chris Stevenson reports:

[*Ukraine goes on the attack in Zaporizhzhia – as counteroffensive steps up*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-counteroffensive-zaporizhzhia-b2354196.html)

Ukraine tells ‘clown’ Tucker Carlson to check his facts after pro-Kremlin rant in first Twitter show

The Ukrainian government has branded [*Tucker Carlson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/tucker-carlson) a “clown” and told him to check his facts after he launched a pro-Kremlin rant on his first [*Twitter*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/twitter) show.

The former Fox News host told viewers that a “fair person would conclude” that [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) destroyed the Nova Kakhovka damn which collapsed and caused massive flooding in the country.

Carlson, a popular voice for the Kremlin, added that the dam was “effectively Russian” and that the damage “hurts [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) ” more than Ukraine.

[*Click here for the full story.*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/us-politics/tucker-carlson-ukraine-russia-twitter-b2354145.html)

'Graveyard' of dead fish forms in southern Ukraine after Kakhovka dam destruction

A [*graveyard*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/graveyard) of dead [*fish*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/fish) has formed in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine) after the Nova Kakhovka [*dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/dam) was breached.

Footage from the area close to the destroyed dam shows thousands of fish washed up in an area of â€‹â€‹the reservoir, which has seen a rapid shallowing of the [*water*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/water).

“By blowing up the Kakhovskaya HPP, the aggressor caused an unheard-of act of ecocide, the victims of which were not only people, but also thousands of innocent animals,” the State Agency of Land Reclamation and Fisheries of Ukraine wrote, sharing the footage.

Trapped villagers saved from roofs in flooded south Ukraine as more await help

Rescuers in boats have saved hundreds of people from the roofs of flooded houses after the massive dam breach in southern Ukraine, volunteers and officials said on Thursday, but others were getting more desperate as they waited for help.

Friends and family posted frantic appeals in online chatrooms with names, photos and GPS locations of residents, including some children and many elderly people, who were still waiting to be picked up.

The coordinator of a volunteer group on the Telegram messaging app said the appeals were arriving continuously and getting more urgent than the day before because people were running out of food and drinking water.

Ukraine and Russia have both accused each other of blowing up the giant Kakhovka dam on the Dnipro River, which burst in the early hours of Tuesday. On the Russian-controlled left bank of the river, Moscow-installed officials have ordered residents of several districts to evacuate.

Vladimir Saldo, the top Russian-installed official in the Kherson region, said midday Thursday that approximately 4,300 people had been evacuated, including 171 children and 42 people with disabilities. More than 14,000 homes have been flooded, emergency services said.

Another official, Andrei Alekseyenko, said the level of the Dnipro had risen to 12 metres in the worst-hit areas, Oleshky and Hola Prystan. He said 344 people had been saved by boat from roofs and upper floors.

In Telegram channels, some people sent grateful messages for successful rescues.

Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack

Satellite images have revealed the damage from the massive collapse of a major dam and hydroelectric [*power plant*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/power-plant) in southern [*Ukraine*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/ukraine).

The critical soviet-era [*Nova Kakhovka dam*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/nova-kakhovka-dam) , which lies along the Dnipro river in [*Russia*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/russia) -held Kherson, was blown up on Tuesday and collapsed soon after, sending water gushing into nearby villages and towns in the region with a 42,000-strong population.

The [*UN*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/un) said the collapse will have [*“catastrophic” and “far-reaching consequences”*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-russia-dam-dnipro-b2352617.html) for thousands of people with the loss of homes, food, safe water and livelihoods even as Russia and Ukraine traded accusations over the incident.

The latest satellite images provided by Maxar Technologies to The Independent on Tuesday showed the “largely destroyed” Nova Kakhovka dam and the hydroelectric plant as well as wide swathes of heavily flooded towns and villages.

[*Satellite images reveal scale of destruction after Nova Kakhovka dam attack*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-kakhovka-dam-before-and-after-b2353652.html)

Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse

A cat was rescued from flooding in [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) after the destruction of a huge hydroelectric dam on front lines between Russian and Ukrainian forces.

The Kakhovka dam, under Russian control, was blown up on Tuesday, 6 June, collapsing shortly after.

Water has surged into nearby villages, causing widespread flooding in region with a 42,000-strong population.

The incident constitutes a “war crime,” Volodymyr Zelensky has said.

It is the “largest man-made environmental disaster in Europe in decades,” the Ukrainian president added.

[*Cat rescued from devastating Kherson floods after damn collapse*](https://www.independent.co.uk/tv/news/ukraine-dam-russia-war-kherson-flood-b2353832.html)

Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot we can’t screw it up’

The blowing up of the Nova Kakhovka dam will delay an expected armoured thrust in the area by Ukrainian forces, but military action in the preliminary stages of Kyiv’s counteroffensive continues across the frontline, writes Kim Sengupta.

The route along the dam near [*Kherson*](https://www.independent.co.uk/topic/kherson) was one the Ukrainians would have taken to move armour – like tanks – and heavy equipment. There were also plans for landings on islands downstream, where fierce clashes have been taking place for some time. The submerging of these pathways means that tactics are redrawn and troops and weapons repositioned.

[*Ukraine on manoeuvres in its counterpunch against Russia: ‘This is our big shot’*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-war-dam-russia-attack-b2353310.html)

WHO rushes supplies to Ukraine, readies to tackle disease in flood areas

The World Health Organisation has rushed emergency supplies to flood-hit parts of Ukraine and are preparing to respond to an array of health risks including trauma, drowning and waterborne diseases like cholera, officials said on Thursday.

Russia and Ukraine have traded blame for the bursting of the Soviet-era Kakhovka hydroelectric dam, which sent waters cascading across the war zone of southern Ukraine in the early hours of Tuesday, forcing tens of thousands to flee their homes.

“The impact of the region’s water supply sanitation systems and public health services cannot be underestimated,” WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a press briefing.

“The WHO has rushed in to support the authorities and health care workers in preventive measures against waterborne diseases and to improve disease surveillance.”

Click [*here*](https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/russia-ukraine-war-putin-latest-news-b2355382.html) to read the full blog on The Independent's website

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