

# Joint Expeditionary Force leaders' statement: 15 March 2022

We, the Leaders of the United Kingdom, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden, united through our membership of the Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), met today to reaffirm our commitment to the restoration of peace and security in Europe in light of Russia's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression. We condemn in the strongest possible terms Putin's brutal attack against Ukraine, its territorial integrity and people. This is a clear violation of the sovereignty, freedom and independence of a democratic European country and a flagrant breach of Russia's obligations under international law. We call upon Russia to implement and uphold an immediate ceasefire to halt the developing humanitarian crisis and allow rapid and unimpeded access for Ukraine's civilian population to food, water and medical aid. Russia must respect international humanitarian law. We support the investigations of the International Criminal Court into alleged war crimes. The world will hold Russia to account for its actions. Putin must fail. We are working in lockstep with Allies and international partners to impose unprecedented sanctions on Putin's regime in response to its illegal invasion, and to ensure that Belarus is also held to account for its involvement. We call on Putin to de-escalate, withdraw his forces and return Ukraine to its internationally recognised boundaries.

We are steadfast in our commitment to support Ukraine in the face of this unconscionable attack and pay tribute to the courage and resolve of the Ukrainian people, led by President Zelenskyy. JEF nations remain committed to supporting Ukraine at pace with military aid to ensure Ukraine is best able to defend itself. Directly, and through multilateral organisations, we are providing significant economic and humanitarian support in response to the deteriorating situation in Ukraine and the region, to ensure that Ukrainians have access to basic necessities and medical supplies. Special attention must be paid to the security of women and girls who represent a majority of those fleeing the war. We welcome the international unity shown at the UN General Assembly and invite the international community to sustain and coordinate the political, humanitarian, and economic support that is so vital for a free and independent Ukraine.

Putin's actions are fundamentally challenging the security architecture of the Euro-Atlantic area. We need to ensure that such actions remain unacceptable and that no other nations can fall victim to attempts of violent expansionism. All sovereign nations have the right to choose their own security arrangements without the threat of external aggression. To that end, as a like-minded group of nations willing to demonstrate resolve, we will ensure that JEF continues to play a credible role in contributing to defence and deterrence in the region, keeping our countries and our continent safe. We commit to an enhanced programme of integrated JEF exercises and activities at sea, on land and in the air in the High North, North Atlantic and Baltic

Sea region. These activities, already being developed, demonstrate our solidarity, capability and resolve. We will work in complementarity to NATO and the EU to ensure that Russia cannot continue to threaten European security, including through recalibrating our approach to Russia, reducing our reliance on Russian hydrocarbons, taking part in forward defence in conjunction with our Allies, reinforcing our cooperation within and beyond the JEF, and playing an active part in restoring a safer and more peaceful world.