

Prime Minister tells Ukraine “they will win” as he marks Independence Day: 24 August 2022

- Prime Minister Boris Johnson visits Kyiv to underline the UK’s unwavering, long term support to Ukraine as it marks 31 years of independence from the Soviet Union.
- Visit comes as the Prime Minister announces another major package of support, including unmanned surveillance and missile systems for the Armed Forces of Ukraine.
- The £54 million package of 2,000 state-of-the-art drones and loitering munitions will enable Ukraine to better track and target invading Russian forces.

The Prime Minister has travelled to Kyiv today in a show of strength and solidarity with Ukraine as he tells President Zelenskyy his country ‘can and will win the war’.

As part of the visit, his third to the city since the invasion, the Prime Minister also called on the international community to stay the course in Ukraine, as it continues to valiantly defend its sovereignty six months on from Putin’s brutal and illegal invasion.

While meeting President Zelenskyy in Kyiv today to mark 31 years of Ukraine’s independence from the Soviet Union, the Prime Minister also outlined the UK’s next major package of new support, including unmanned surveillance and anti-tank loitering munitions requested by the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

This package of unmanned air systems will be a step up in the Ukrainian’s current capability, improving their long range surveillance and defensive targeting ability.

It includes 850 hand launched Black Hornet micro-drones, which are specifically designed for use in towns and villages, and are deployed to detect approaching enemy forces.

Military personnel can be trained to fly the helicopter drones, which are smaller than a mobile phone, in under 20 minutes. Each drone feeds back live video and still images to allow forces on the ground to defend urban areas safely.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

For the past six months, the United Kingdom has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with Ukraine, supporting this sovereign country to defend itself from this barbaric and illegal invader.

Today's package of support will give the brave and resilient Ukrainian Armed Forces another boost in capability, allowing them to continue to push back Russian forces and fight for their freedom.

What happens in Ukraine matters to us all, which is why I am here today to deliver the message that the United Kingdom is with you and will be with you for the days and months ahead, and you can and will win.

The leaders also held talks on the challenges of the winter ahead for the country, and the Prime Minister reiterated the UK's all-encompassing and unwavering support for the Ukrainian people, from humanitarian aid to supporting the investigation of war crimes and rebuilding the country's economy.

In his final visit to the country before leaving Downing Street, the Prime Minister also received Ukraine's highest award that can be bestowed on foreign nationals, 'The Order of Liberty', for the UK's staunch support of Ukraine's freedom.

Today's £54 million military package comes as the UK also prepares to give minehunting vehicles to Ukraine to help detect Russian mines in the waters off its coast. Ukrainian personnel will be trained how to use them in UK waters in the coming weeks.

The UK also continues to expand the training of Ukrainian military personnel.

Eight other countries have signed up to the major training programmes, which trains civilians to become soldiers, since the Prime Minister announced the programme on his previous visit to Ukraine in June.

Partners contributing expertise and trainers to the rapidly expanding programme include Canada, Denmark, New Zealand, The Netherlands, Norway, Finland, Sweden and Lithuania.

The UK has also helped to drive continued international momentum on funding for defensive lethal aid to Ukraine. Since the Prime Minister announced an additional £1 billion to provide military aid to Ukraine at NATO in June, a further £1.2 bn worth of financial pledges from allies were secured for Ukraine at the Copenhagen Conference, co-hosted by the UK and Denmark earlier this month.

The UK has committed more than £2.3bn of military and financial aid to Ukraine since the invasion began in February.