

UK leads call for ICC to investigate Russia's war crimes

The UK has galvanised allies to refer atrocities in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court.

38 nations have now grouped together to expedite an ICC investigation, through state party referral.

The ICC Prosecutor can now proceed straight to an investigation.

The UK has led efforts to bring together allies today to expedite an ICC investigation into Russian war crimes in Ukraine, through state party referral. With 37 countries joining the UK, it is the largest referral in the history of the ICC.

Following a preliminary examination of the situation in Ukraine, opened by the International Criminal Court (ICC) in 2014 after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, the Prosecutor has, on Monday 28 February, stated his intention to seek authorisation from the ICC judges to launch an investigation into the Situation in Ukraine.

State party referral, made by a group of 38 countries, will enable the Prosecutor to proceed straight to an investigation, without the need for judicial approval.

Russia's use of indiscriminate force against innocent civilians, in its illegal and unprovoked invasion of Ukraine, amounts to war crimes, for which the Putin regime must be held accountable.

The Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

Putin's military machine is targeting civilians indiscriminately and tearing through towns across Ukraine.

An investigation by the International Criminal Court into Russia's barbaric acts is urgently needed and it is right that those responsible are held to account. The UK will work closely with allies to ensure justice is done.

Deputy Prime Minister, Lord Chancellor and Secretary of State for Justice, Dominic Raab, said:

As a founder member of the International Criminal Court, the UK is willing to provide the necessary technical assistance to support successful convictions.

The critical task now is to preserve properly all evidence of war crimes.

Any Russian leader or officer carrying out orders that amount to war crimes should know they face ending up in the dock of a court and ultimately in prison.

This referral is made by the following group of States Parties: Republic of Albania, Commonwealth of Australia, Republic of Austria, Kingdom of Belgium, Republic of Bulgaria, Canada, Republic of Colombia, Republic of Costa Rica, Republic of Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Kingdom of Denmark, Republic of Estonia, Republic of Finland, Republic of France, Georgia, Federal Republic of Germany, Hellenic Republic, Hungary, Republic of Iceland, Ireland, Republic of Italy, Republic of Latvia, Principality of Liechtenstein, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, Republic of Malta, Kingdom of Norway, Kingdom of the Netherlands, New Zealand, Republic of Poland, Republic of Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Republic of Slovenia, Kingdom of Spain, Kingdom of Sweden*, Swiss Confederation, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Lithuania have also made a coordinated referral.

ENDS

[PM statement on the vote at the UN General Assembly: 2 March 2022](#)

Press release

Prime Minister Boris Johnson's statement on the vote at the UN General Assembly.



Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

We are united in our abhorrence to the evil actions of Putin's regime and stand side-by-side on the international stage as we deplore its aggression in the strongest possible terms.

Rarely has the contrast between right and wrong been so stark. 141 countries voted to condemn Putin's war.

Along with my almost daily conversations with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, I have engaged world leaders in our joint mission to denounce Russia's actions and make clear – for the sake of innocent civilians – Russia should withdraw from Ukraine and Putin must fail.

We are – and will continue to be – unified in our resounding admiration for the courage and bravery of President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people.

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[Statement from the UK Presidency of the Convention on Cluster Munitions on their use in Ukraine](#)

Press release

The United Kingdom, as the President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), has made a statement setting out our grave concerns about reports of the use of cluster munitions in the Russian invasion of Ukraine



The United Kingdom, as the President of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), is gravely concerned by reports of the use of

cluster munitions in the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The Convention on Cluster Munitions was born out of a collective determination to address the humanitarian consequences of these weapons, which have had a devastating impact on civilians in many conflict areas. The United Kingdom calls upon all those that continue to use such weapons to cease immediately, and calls upon all states that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay.

States Parties to the CCM underscore our obligation never under any circumstances to use cluster munitions, and in accordance with the object and provisions of the Convention, we condemn any use of cluster munitions by any actor, remaining steadfast in our determination to achieve a world entirely free of any use of these weapons.

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[UK backs ambitious global action to tackle plastic pollution](#)

As the fifth session of the United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA-5) in Nairobi draws to a close, the UK has worked with international partners to secure a breakthrough on negotiations to kickstart a new legally binding treaty on plastic pollution.

While the terms of the treaty are still to be negotiated it could include measures that promote sustainable production and consumption of plastics, as well as more environmentally sound waste management.

It is also hoped it will help tackle marine plastic pollution, one of the greatest global environmental challenges. It's predicted that unless action is taken there will be a threefold increase in the amount of plastic flowing into the ocean between 2016 and 2040.

This comes as our landmark Environment Act gives us a raft of new powers to step-up our war against plastic pollution. We are also committed to introducing a Deposit Return Scheme for drinks containers, which will recycle billions more plastic bottles and stop them being landfilled or littered.

At the conference, which was attended by the Lord Zac Goldsmith, UK Government Minister for International Environment, the UK provided support to kick start negotiations on a legally binding treaty on plastic pollution. The UK has also supported other ambitious action, including on:

- Establishing an intergovernmental Science Policy Panel to conduct horizon scanning, assess current issues and facilitate communication between scientists and policy makers
- Agreeing on the importance of nature-based solutions and on actions to scale up their implementation to simultaneously provide benefits to people and the planet.

Lord Zac Goldsmith, UK Government Minister for International Environment said:

This agreement by governments at UNEA is truly historic, and I'm so proud that the UK co-sponsored the proposals and helped get them over the line. In the space of just one human lifetime, we have caused unimaginable damage to the global environment, choking every single part of the global ocean with plastic pollution. And although there is much to be done now to turn it into an ambitious and far-reaching treaty, we can now begin to close this ugly chapter. I am so grateful to UK negotiators for their fantastic work securing agreement this week.

While there are multilateral agreements to tackle biodiversity loss and climate change, up to now there has been no equivalent agreement to tackle plastic pollution.

The resolution, proposed by Peru and Rwanda, had received strong support and was backed by over 60 countries.

The plans have also received considerable support from the private and third sector with 111 organisations having signed [The Business Call for a UN Treaty on Plastic Pollution](#) including Coca-Cola, PepsiCo, P&G and Unilever.

The resolution titled "End plastic pollution: towards a legally binding international instrument" establishes an Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee (INC) tasked with preparing a new treaty that would address plastic pollution through a life-cycle approach, with the aim of producing the treaty by 2024.

The UK was also a key proponent of plans for a new science-policy panel to contribute to policy making on the sound management of chemicals and waste, and preventing pollution. This will act in a similar way to the IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which provides advice to governments on the scientific consensus on climate science.

This new science-policy panel will produce assessments on current issues; identify possible future risks and opportunities and provide up-to-date and relevant information, promoting effective communication between scientists and policy makers.

We have made nature a top priority during our COP26 Presidency year alongside strong action on cutting emissions. The UK has continued to drive international support for nature-based solutions that address biodiversity

loss, climate change and poverty, co-sponsoring a resolution on their benefits and how to scale them up.

UK Statement on Ukraine to the Emergency Meeting of the IAEA Board of Governors

World news story

Delivered by Ambassador Corinne Kitsell at the International Atomic Energy Agency, 2 March 2022



Thank you Chair,

The United Kingdom would like to thank Canada and Poland for requesting this emergency meeting of the Board of Governors. We fully support the resolution text before us.

The United Kingdom is clear that Russia's assault on Ukraine is an unprovoked, premeditated attack against a sovereign democratic state and a clear violation of international law and the UN Charter. The United Kingdom remains unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We condemn the Russian Federation's unlawful actions in Ukraine and are gravely concerned that these actions seriously endanger the safety and security of nuclear materials and facilities in Ukraine. This constitutes a serious risk to the population of Ukraine, neighbouring states and the whole international community. We also condemn Russia's campaign of disinformation – including the false notion that Ukraine have been pursuing nuclear weapons.

Chair,

We strongly reaffirm the decision of the IAEA General Conference in 2009 that “any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency”. Russia’s actions show a flagrant disregard for this decision, and for its other international commitments under the Budapest Memorandum and the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty.

We are deeply concerned that Russia’s aggression has already damaged two radioactive waste disposal sites at Kharkiv and Kyiv. We commend the efforts of the Ukrainian regulator and staff at Ukrainian nuclear facilities who continue to provide updates on the status of nuclear sites and radiation monitoring data to the IAEA. We note that data has been severely disrupted for the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and Exclusion Zone and urge an immediate return to regular reporting from the site.

Russia’s actions are also a direct threat to the IAEA’s critical mission to support the peaceful use of nuclear technology and to our collective commitment to strengthen nuclear safety and security. The United Kingdom fully supports the IAEA in their professional and impartial efforts to restore nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

We call upon the Russian Federation to cease all unlawful activities in Ukraine. It must de-escalate and withdraw its troops, and cease all use of force against Ukrainian Nuclear facilities. Full control over all nuclear facilities within Ukraine’s internationally recognised borders must be restored to the competent Ukrainian authorities, so that Ukraine can ensure their safe and secure operations in accordance with the NPT and the IAEA Statute.

Thank you Chair.

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