

UK donates fleet of armoured vehicles to Ukraine to evacuate civilians from besieged areas

- UK to donate a fleet of 13 armoured vehicles to Ukraine to rescue civilians from besieged areas.
- Vehicles will also transport key workers to rebuild vital infrastructure
- Delivery of the highly specialised fleet is in direct response to a request from the Government of Ukraine

The UK is sending a fleet of 13 protective armoured vehicles to Ukraine, to safely evacuate people from the shelled areas in east of the country.

The steel-plated vehicles will be sent following a direct request from the Ukraine government for safe and resilient transport for civilians. They will also be used to transport officials from Ukrainian ministries to temporary command posts set up for government work and the rebuilding of key infrastructure, such as energy supplies, in besieged areas.

The Ukrainian police and the National Guard will also utilise the fleet to rebuild vital railway lines in the east of Ukraine.

The fleet is made up of highly specialised 4x4s that have been upgraded with armour to resist high velocity bullets, anti-personnel mines and improvised explosive devices – all tactics which have been used by Russian forces to slaughter civilians.

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said:

The intentional targeting of innocent civilians is a war crime.

This latest donation of armoured vehicles will help protect innocent Ukrainians attempting to flee Russian shelling and support Ukrainian officials carrying out vital work.

The unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine continues to have a massive human cost, including the murdering of innocent civilians and mass displacement of families, as well as the destruction to vital infrastructure including schools and hospitals. It is estimated that more than 12 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance with the actual figure likely to be much higher.

The vehicles, donated from the Foreign Commonwealth & Development Office's fleet, will start to arrive in the east of Ukraine in the coming days with UK government logistics teams working with partners on the ground to dispatch them as quickly as possible.

That package includes £220 million to provide medical supplies and basic necessities on the ground, saving lives and protecting vulnerable people. This includes support through the UN, the Red Cross and NGOs, including the DEC and UK-Med.

The UK has also sent a rapid donation of food supplies following a request from the government, committed to donating up to 42 ambulances to help bring vital lifesaving care, and sent more than 5 million medical items to support lifesaving work in Ukraine.

The UK has also been playing a lead role in supporting Ukraine militarily, committing to provide Stormer armoured vehicles, Air Defence Systems, 120 armoured vehicles, new anti-ship missiles, and over 5,000 anti-tank missiles, in addition to the Challenger 2 tanks provided to Poland to backfill those they are donating to Ukraine.

The UK Ambassador to Kyiv, Melinda Simmons, also returned to Kyiv on Friday.

- the fleet is part of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) supply and is worth £660,000. The vehicles will be delivered in batches to meet the request from the Government of Ukraine
- the vehicles are protected by steel plating, with reinforced glass, enhanced suspension and upgraded brakes, and include internal VHF 2-way radio for long range communication outdoors