

Putin's only aim is to spread terror in Ukraine: UK statement to the OSCE

Thank you Mr Chair. This week, President Putin has continued to mercilessly punish the Ukrainian people for Russia's poor performance on the battlefield. His military commanders have conducted missile strikes targeting power stations and water supplies throughout Ukraine. More widely, they continue to employ Iranian-provided Shaed-136 UAVs (otherwise known as suicide drones) and cruise missiles against civilians, residential buildings and civilian infrastructure in Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities.

None of this achieves any military purpose. Putin's only aim is to spread terror and to deprive Ukrainian families of shelter, light, and heat as harsh winter approaches. This is a particularly cruel act of vengeance which will cause most suffering amongst Ukraine's most vulnerable, including the elderly and young.

President Putin and his Russian military leaders have consistently planned and authorised operations which have breached international humanitarian law.

Mr Chair, when this Forum last convened, I asked our Russian colleague directly to explain how they could justify such callous attacks on civilians. He did not respond. Instead, he again elected to retreat from this chamber – a message in itself.

Perhaps my Russian colleague knows he is complicit in trying to hide the disastrous truth of the Kremlin's appalling and failing illegal invasion of Ukraine from his fellow citizens. Perhaps he knows that deliberate attacks on civilians are a clear breach of international humanitarian law. Perhaps he recognises the horrifying irony that whilst President Putin claims that Ukraine is part of Russia and Ukrainians are Russians, he also calls them Nazis who must be bombed without mercy.

Mr Chair, today we have again heard a litany of the Kremlin's lies, disinformation and incredulous conspiracy theories. These are clumsy attempts to distract from the enduring poor performance and failings of the Russian military on the battlefield.

The Wagner Group, the private military company on which the Russian military has been increasingly reliant, now appears not only to be recruiting Russian convicts, but has expanded its recruitment to include individuals suffering from serious diseases and medical conditions – a sign of desperation to recruit numbers not fighters.

Meanwhile, in many cases, newly mobilised Russian reservists have been deployed to Ukraine poorly equipped. Open source images suggest they are typically issued with AKMs, a weapon first introduced in 1959, many of which are likely to be in barely usable condition. Some appear to have been sent to Ukraine without weapons at all.

Badly trained and badly equipped amateurs are being sent to reinforce Russia's poorly equipped and poorly led, demoralised professional soldiers.

Mr Chair, the nuclear rhetoric we have heard today is irresponsible, including the absurd claim that Ukraine plans to detonate a radiological "dirty bomb" on its own territory. No other country is talking about nuclear use. No country is threatening Russia nor threatening President Putin. He should be clear that for the UK and our Allies, any use at all of nuclear weapons would fundamentally change the nature of this conflict. There would be severe consequences for Russia.

Mr Chair, as we have discussed previously, the Russian/Belarusian "regional grouping of forces" remains unlikely to be combat capable, not least because Russia is unlikely to be able to generate combat-ready formations of the size announced because of the number of forces it has committed in Ukraine and associated resourcing issues.

Separately, on 17 October, imagery showed two MiG-31K interceptor jets were almost certainly parked at the Machulishchi Airfield in Belarus. Also located with the aircraft were objects likely associated with the AS-24 KILLJOY air launch ballistic missile – which has not previously been deployed in Belarus.

It is worth noting that neither the "regional grouping of forces" nor the deployment of the KILLJOY ballistic missile currently provide a significant tactical advantage to Russia and so it is likely that these deployments aim to provide a distraction and to portray Belarus as increasingly complicit in Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

We call on the Belarusian regime to recognise this, desist from supporting Russia's attempts to stoke further instability in the region and to stop its active support of Russia's illegal invasion, which itself constitutes a breach of international law.

Mr Chair, President Putin and the Russian military leadership are demonstrating an unimaginable level of barbarity and depravity as they unleash their frustrations on the Ukrainian people. But they continue to fail to understand that every horrendous attack strengthens the Ukrainian resolve to defend their homeland from a brutal and barbaric invader. The UK remains steadfast – for however long it takes – to ensure that the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the independence of Ukraine is fully restored. Thank you.

[Committed to enhancing our services – new video released](#)

News story

Following the first in a series of helpful, bite-size videos released in July 2022, we have released our second video.



DBS Veterans UK – supporting our Armed Forces through service, transition and beyond.

Continuing with our commitment to enhancing our services based on customer feedback, this new video provides an overview of the key services Veterans UK provides for Serving Personnel, Service Leavers, Veterans and their families.

We provide the Armed Forces Pensions and Compensations Schemes, and welfare support for Services Leavers and Veterans. The next set of videos in development and to be released here will focus on how Veterans UK are here to support every stage of military life: In Service, Service Leavers and Veteran.

Customer Journey Maps

Our end users told us that they wanted and needed more information about how the compensation schemes and appeals processes worked. In response to this, we released a set of Customer Journey Maps – visit [Learning from our experiences together](#) to find out more.

As a continuation of this we have produced a second comprehensive suite of diagrams, this time for the Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS). These Customer Journey Maps illustrate the flow of various processes within the Scheme.

To view these Customer Journey Maps, visit – [Learning from our experiences together](#)

Further information and help

If you want to find out more about Veterans UK, you can visit our help page:

Make sure you bookmark the [Veterans UK GOV.UK landing](#) page to keep up to date with future video releases.

[DBS Veterans UK – supporting our Armed Forces through service, transition and beyond.](#)

We are also modernising our services and looking forward to providing more digitally enabled ways for individuals and their representatives to make a claim, monitor its progress, and stay in touch with us. We will keep you informed on these improvements as they develop, across our channels. You can also follow us on Facebook @modveteransuk and Twitter @VeteransUK_MOD.

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[UK sanctions Russian steel and petrochemical tycoons funding Putin's war](#)

- Oligarchs Abramov and Frolov, known for owning major stakes in Russian steel manufacturer Evraz, have been sanctioned for their involvement in sectors of major significance to Putin's military machine
- Shaimiev and Shigabutdinov, who are both connected to major petrochemical company AO TAIF, have also been sanctioned
- The UK has sanctioned more than 120 oligarchs with a global net worth of more than £140 billion

The UK has today (Wednesday 02 November) sanctioned four oligarchs who have enabled Putin to mobilise Russian industries to support his military effort.

Amongst those sanctioned today are Alexander Abramov and Alexander Frolov, who have been targeted for their involvement in the extractive, transport, and construction sectors.

The pair, known to be business associates of Roman Abramovich, previously owned major stakes in Russian steel manufacturer Evraz plc, are thought to have an estimated global net worth of £4.1 billion and £1.7 billion respectively, and are reported to have UK property investments worth an estimated £100 million.

The Foreign Secretary James Cleverly said:

Putin continues to rely on his cabal of selected elite to maintain control of his industrial complex and fuel his illegal invasion of Ukraine. Today we are sanctioning an additional four oligarchs who rely on Putin for their positions of authority and in turn fund his military machine.

By targeting these individuals, we are ramping up the economic pressure on Putin and will continue to do so until Ukraine prevails.

Also sanctioned today are Airat Shaimiev, who has an estimated global net worth of £902 million, and Albert Shigabutdinov, who has an estimated global net worth of £977 million. Like Abramov and Frolov, they are both subject to travel bans, asset freezes and transport sanctions.

The AO TAIF group, for which Shigabutdinov is the General Director and CEO, controls an estimated 96% of chemical and petrochemical processing in the Tatarstan region of Russia, including the production of crude oil. They are also known as one of the world's largest producers of synthetic rubber and a major producer of plastics.

Shaimiev is the CEO of state owned transport and construction company, OAO Tatavtodor.

Today's designations expand upon the UK's sanctions against oligarchs, targeting those who operate in the areas of strategic significance that prop up Putin's industrial military machine.

The UK has sanctioned more than 1,200 individuals and 120 entities, including more than 120 oligarchs with a net worth of more than £140 billion.

Background

- Alexander Grigoryevich Abramov is a former non-executive director of Evraz PLC. In this role, Abramov had been involved in obtaining a benefit from or supporting the Government of Russia by working as a Director at Evraz PLC, an entity carrying on business in sectors of strategic significance to the Russian Government, namely, the extractive sector, the transport sector, and the construction sector. Abramov's net worth is reported to be an estimated £4.1 billion. Abramov is subject to a travel ban, asset freeze and transport sanctions.
- Alexander Vladimirovich Frolov is a former director and former CEO of Evraz PLC. In this role, Frolov had been involved in obtaining a benefit from or supporting the Government of Russia by working as a Director at Evraz PLC, an entity carrying on business in sectors of strategic significance to the Russian Government, namely, the extractive sector, the transport sector, and the construction sector. Frolov's net worth is reported to be an estimated £1.7 billion. Frolov is subject to a travel ban, asset freeze and transport sanctions.
- Airat Mintimerovich Shaimiev is the CEO and a member of the board of directors of OAO Tatavtodor, a large state-owned transport and construction company which is engaged in the construction and servicing of public highways in Russia. In this role, Shaimiev had been involved

in obtaining a benefit from or supporting the Government of Russia by working as the CEO at OAO Tatavtodor, an entity carrying on business in sectors of strategic significance to the Russian Government, namely, the transport sector, and the construction sector. Shaimiev's net worth is reported to be an estimated £902 million. Shaimiev is subject to a travel ban, asset freeze and transport sanctions.

- Albert Kashafovich Shigabutdinov is the General Director and CEO of the AO TAIF Group of companies, which comprises companies operating in the Russian energy, financial services and information, communications and digital technologies sectors. In this role, Shigabutdinov had been involved in obtaining a benefit from or supporting the Government of Russia by working as the CEO at AO TAIF Group of companies, an entity carrying on business in sectors of strategic significance to the Russian Government, namely, the energy, financial services and information, communications and digital technologies sectors. Shigabutdinov's net worth is reported to be an estimated £977 million. Shigabutdinov is subject to a travel ban, asset freeze and transport sanctions.

Asset freeze

An asset freeze prevents any UK citizen, or any business in the UK, from dealing with any funds or economic resources which are owned, held or controlled by the designated person. UK financial sanctions apply to all persons within the territory and territorial sea of the UK and to all UK persons, wherever they are in the world. It also prevents funds or economic resources being provided to or for the benefit of the designated person.

Travel ban

A travel ban means that the designated person must be refused leave to enter or to remain in the United Kingdom, providing the individual is an excluded person under section 8B of the Immigration Act 1971.

Transport sanctions

Recently introduced powers make it a criminal offence for any Russian aircraft to fly or land in the UK and give the government powers to remove aircraft belonging to designated Russian individuals and entities from the UK aircraft register, even if the sanctioned individual is not on board. Russian ships are also banned from UK ports.

[Directors banned in care home](#)

investment scheme

Christopher Bateman (49) and his business partner, Nicola Fairweather (48) are banned for 25 years from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

The Insolvency Service's investigations were triggered when two connected companies, GCC Management Ltd and Amek Solutions Ltd, entered into insolvency procedures. Bateman, from Knutsford, and Fairweather, from Macclesfield, were directors of both companies.

GCC Management was an unregulated company that offered people the opportunity to invest in the purchase of care homes, with the promise of fixed rate returns of 10% to 30%. Amek Solutions advised on and/or arranged investments in GCC Management.

Investigators found Bateman caused Amek Solutions to breach the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. Misconduct included: advising people – many being unsophisticated investors – to transfer funds from their pensions; failing to advise investors to seek independent financial advice; and Amek did not have authority to encourage investments.

Amek Solutions promoted GCC Management's scheme to at least 133 people, who invested close to £6.3 million from their pensions despite not being protected under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Amek Solutions was rewarded by receiving more than £5.4 million in commission from GCC Management.

Investigators also looked into the affairs of GCC Management and found that when the company entered into liquidation, investors were owed £13.2 million.

GCC Management produced misleading and unrealistic marketing materials based on a business plan which lacked commercial viability, there were no mitigation plans to help investors if returns couldn't be made, and the company sent false information to investors about when their returns would be repaid.

By September 2012, GCC Management only had one operating care home that had generated income, which was much lower than expected. However, the company continued to push their investment opportunities to dupe more investors.

Investigators calculated that at least 243 people invested more than £11.6 million with GCC Management. 166 of these investors transferred more than £7.8 million from their existing pensions.

From the funds they received through deception, GCC Management made unaccounted payments worth millions that did not benefit the company or its investors. This included £1.4 million paid to connected companies Bateman and Fairweather were directors of and another £1.4 million to foreign exchange companies.

Robert Clarke, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Our thorough investigations uncovered extensive abuse of investors who have lost millions of pounds through Bateman and Fairweather's deceitful activities. Many investors were regular people who were not familiar with investments and were duped to transfer money from their hard-earned pensions.

The judge commented in court that this was an appalling exploitation of relatively unsophisticated investors. Thankfully Bateman and Fairweather have been removed from the corporate arena for a significant amount of time and this should send a clear message to other company directors that there are serious consequences if you dupe those seeking to invest pension funds to best effect.

About the directors

Christopher Bateman is from Knutsford, Cheshire, and his date of birth is August 1973. On 1 August 2022, in the Manchester High Court of Justice, HHJ Cawson KC made a disqualification order for 14 years against Christopher Bateman in relation to his misconduct in Amek Solutions and GCC Management. Richard Tetlow appeared for the Insolvency Service. The defendant did not appear nor did anyone appear on his behalf.

Nicola Fairweather is from Macclesfield, Cheshire, and her date of birth is November 1973. On 5 February 2020, the Secretary of State accepted an 11-year disqualification undertaking from Nicola Fairweather, after she did not dispute causing or allowing GCC Management to operate with a lack of commercial probity to the detriment of its investors.

About the companies

GCC Management Ltd (Company number 07460611) entered creditors voluntary liquidation on 09 November 2017.

Amek Solutions Ltd (Company number 07054820) entered compulsory liquidation on 31 October 2018.

About disqualifications

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[UKHO presents 2021 Alexander Dalrymple Award to the US Office of Coast Survey](#)

The UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) has presented the 2021 Alexander Dalrymple Award to the US Office of Coast Survey (OCS) in recognition of its outstanding contribution to global hydrography.

UK National Hydrographer Rear Admiral Rhett Hatcher handed over the award on behalf of the UKHO at the [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#)'s headquarters. The award was accepted by Rear Admiral Ben Evans, US National Hydrographer and Director of the OCS. Following delays caused by the pandemic, the award presentation took place on 5 October 2022.

As a key office within the NOAA, the OCS is responsible for surveying and charting the waters within the US Exclusive Economic Zone. It has been at the forefront of hydrographic developments for many years.

The award recognises the instrumental role played by the OCS in laying the foundations for the hydrographic community entering an exciting new era of digitalisation. Notably, this has included its successful modernisation of NOAA's chart production processes and delivery.

As a pre-cursor to the next generation of digital navigation services, the OCS launched the [NOAA Custom Chart Tool 1.0](#) in 2021. The dynamic map tool enables users to create and download their own custom nautical charts using Electronic Navigational Chart (ENC) data.

The OCS has also helped steer the modernisation, discoverability and accessibility of hydrographic data on a global scale. From its strategic work with the International Hydrographic Organization to its unconditional support of the [Seabed 2030](#) initiative, this collaboration – combined with ongoing technological innovation – will benefit the global hydrographic community into the future.

Commenting on the award, Rear Admiral Rhett Hatcher said: "Following a thoroughly eventful and highly demanding 12-month period in 2021 related to maintaining outputs in the eyes of the COVID-19 pandemic storm in particular, but also recognising the fact that they have been at the top of their game for much longer, the significant contribution of the Office of Coast Survey to hydrographic good practise cannot be underestimated. Their successes rightly generate prominence, but, in equal measure, value-add for the rest of the international hydrographic community.

"It was an absolute pleasure to present the Alexander Dalrymple Award to the current Director, Rear Admiral Ben Evans, in person during a very useful visit to the OCS headquarters in Silver Spring near Washington DC, where he and his wonderful staff fulfil a key set of tasks for the US Government both

in national waters and across the globe.”

On behalf of the OCS, Rear Admiral Evans said: “The Alexander Dalrymple award is a tremendous honour, which recognises the tireless efforts of my predecessors and the entire staff of Coast Survey. I deeply appreciate Admiral Hatcher’s visit to present it and the opportunity to discuss issues of common interest in hydrography and nautical charting.

“While we have made significant progress, there remains much to do as we contemplate a new era of S-100 products and the growing demand for hydrographic data for a wide range of non-navigation applications. Coast Survey values its strong ties with the UKHO and all our international partners, and I look forward to working together as we continue to improve mapping and charting of the world’s oceans and the safety and efficiency of marine transportation.”

Named after the first Hydrographer of the British Admiralty, the Alexander Dalrymple Award has been awarded each year by the UKHO since 2006 to recognise outstanding contributions to hydrography. Recipients of the award are selected by the Executive Committee of the UKHO for their efforts in raising the standards of hydrography, cartography and navigation around the world.