

Ukraine: Foreign Secretary statement to Parliament, 28 March 2022

With permission, I want to update the House, on behalf of my Rt Hon Friend the Prime Minister, on the NATO and G7 Leaders meetings in Brussels last week.

Together with our allies, we agreed to keep the pressure up on Putin to end his appalling war in Ukraine: through tougher sanctions to debilitate the Russian economy; supplying weapons to Ukraine and boosting NATO's Eastern Flank; providing humanitarian aid and dealing with the wider consequences of this crisis; and supporting Ukraine in any negotiations they undertake.

Strength is the only thing Putin understands.

Our sanctions are pushing back the Russian economy by years.

We owe it to the brave Ukrainians to keep up our tough approach to get peace.

We owe it to ourselves to stand with them for the cause of freedom and democracy in Europe and across the world.

It is vital we step up this pressure.

We cannot wait for more appalling atrocities to be committed in Ukraine. We know that the impact of sanctions degrades over time.

That is why we need to act now.

Next week, NATO Foreign Ministers will meet to follow up on the statements of Leaders, and I will be pressing allies over the next week for all of us to do more.

On oil and gas, the UK has already committed to end imports of Russian oil by the end of this year.

We must agree a clear timetable with our partners across the G7 to end dependence on Russian oil and gas permanently.

On banks, we've already sanctioned 16 major Russian banks. We have hit Gazprombank and we have placed a clearing prohibition on Sberbank, Russia's largest bank. We want to see others adopt these sanctions and go further.

On individuals, we've cracked down on oligarchs like Roman Abramovich. Last week we sanctioned the despicable Wagner Group of mercenaries.

On ports, Britain has banned entry to all of our ports by Russian vessels. I will be lobbying partners across the G7 to join us in stopping Russian ships.

We must maximise the flow of weapons that are being supplied to Ukraine under

the UN Charter of self-defence.

The UK was the first European country to start sending lethal aid to Ukraine.

We are more than doubling our support with a further 6,000 missiles, including NLAWs and Javelin anti-tank weapons.

And we are now equipping our Ukrainian friends with anti-aircraft Starstreak missiles.

We are also strengthening NATO's Eastern Flank, deploying troops to Bulgaria, and doubling the numbers in Poland and Estonia.

We are coordinating deliveries with our allies and we want others to join us in getting Ukraine what it needs.

The UK is providing £220m in humanitarian support to help the people of Ukraine, from shelters to heaters to medicine.

Today we announced our partnership with Australia to fly out more relief, including blankets, cooking equipment and power generators.

And we are getting supplies directly into Ukraine's encircled cities with £2 million of canned food, water and dried food.

As refugees come into countries like Poland, we are working with the UNHCR so they are informed about the UK's Homes for Ukraine scheme.

This scheme has already got over 150,000 applications, thanks to the generosity of the British public.

We know Putin is not serious about talks. He is still wantonly bombing innocent citizens across Ukraine.

And that is why we need to do more to ensure he loses and we force him to think again.

We must not just stop Putin in Ukraine, but we must also look to the long-term.

We need to ensure that any future talks don't end up selling Ukraine out or repeating the mistakes of the past.

We remember the uneasy settlement in 2014, which failed to give Ukraine lasting security. Putin just came back for more.

That is why we cannot allow him to win from this appalling aggression and why this Government is determined Putin's regime should be held to account at the International Criminal Court.

We will work to restore Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We have set up a negotiations unit to ensure the strongest possible support is available to the Ukrainians, alongside our international partners.

We have played a leading role alongside our G7 allies in driving the response to Putin's war. And I want to ensure that unity continues.

Sanctions were put on by the G7 in unison and they shouldn't be removed as long as Putin continues with his war and he still has troops in Ukraine.

That is not all. We need to ensure that Putin can never act in this aggressive way again.

Any long-term settlement needs to include a clear sanctions snapback which would be triggered automatically by any Russian aggression.

In the aftermath of Putin's war, Ukraine will need our help to build back.

In these exceptional circumstances, we have a duty to step up with a new reconstruction plan for rebuilding Ukraine.

And we will work with the international community to do this.

At this defining moment, the free world has shown a united response.

Putin is not making the progress he craves. And he is still not serious about talks.

President Zelenskyy and the Ukrainian people know that everybody in the United Kingdom stands firm with them.

We were the first European country to recognise Ukraine's independence from the Soviet Union.

Thirty years on, we are the first to strengthen their defences against Putin's invasion... and lead the way in our support. Over the next week, I will be working to drive forward progress in unison with our allies. Together, we can secure a lasting peace, which restores Ukraine's sovereignty.

Together, we can ensure Putin fails and Ukraine prevails.

I commend this statement to the House.