



BRIEFING NOTE TO CANADA'S MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

Canada's Security and Military Assistance to Ukraine



*Canadian Instructor with Ukrainian soldiers during live-fire exercise, Starychi, Ukraine
(Photo – Canada's Department of National Defence)*

Policy Recommendations:

1. Extend and expand Operation UNIFIER training for Ukraine's military until 2025.
2. Lead an international peacekeeping mission to the Ukraine / Russia border.

March, 2019

Operation UNIFIER

Approximately 200 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) personnel are deployed to Ukraine to train Ukrainian soldiers through Operation UNIFIER. The training is taking place at several locations across western and central Ukraine, including:

- the International Peacekeeping and Security Centre (IPSC) in Starychi
- 201st Engineer Training Centre and the Demining Centre in Kamianets-Podilskyi
- 205th Tactical Medical Training Centre in Desna
- 25th Military Police Training Centre in L'viv

Since the start of the mission in September 2015 more than **10,300** Security Forces of Ukraine (SFU) candidates have participated in the training provided via **230** course serials.

Canada's commitment to UNIFIER ends on March 31, 2019. CAF personnel are acknowledged throughout the world as extraordinarily effective and successful military trainers and instructors. UNIFIER has been a resounding success in providing mentorship and guidance to Ukrainian personnel. Training has included instruction in military engineering and explosive device disposal, medical training and assisting with increasing the battle-readiness of Ukrainian soldiers.

This mission provides an important benefit to Canadian soldiers. Lt-Col. Jason Guiney, former Commander of Joint Task Force Ukraine stated, "Although they have learned a lot of skills from us, I think we have learned equally as much from them about the type of threat they face on the front lines. [...] There are modern main battle tanks, electronic warfare, jamming, use of drones, cyber-attacks, and these are all valuable lessons for the Canadian military because these are threats that we have not faced ourselves."

Policy Recommendations:

1. **Extend and expand Operation UNIFIER** and its commitment to continue training Ukraine's military and security personnel, at current or increased levels of CAF personnel participation, through to at least 2025.
2. **Lead International peacekeeping mission to the internationally recognized Ukraine/Russia border** – Canada has a long, proud and effective history in peacekeeping operations around the world. Canada can play a crucial role in establishing and leading a UN international peacekeeping mission that would be deployed to the Ukraine-Russia border and to the territory of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts currently occupied by Russia.

Background

The Russian Federation invaded, occupied and illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in March 2014 (Autonomous Republic of Crimea) and has waged war against Ukraine in the eastern oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk for almost five years.

Thousands of regular Russian troops and massive amounts of Russian high-tech heavy weapons are present on sovereign Ukrainian territory in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts.

On February 20, 2019 President of Ukraine Petro Poroshenko announced* during the UN General Assembly debates that the Russian armed formations in Donbas had 496 tanks, noting that it is more than Germany or France, Spain or Italy have in their arsenal.

Russian armaments in occupied eastern Ukraine*:

496 Tanks
938 Armored combat vehicles
128 Multiple launch rocket systems
776 Artillery systems

According to Ukraine's President Poroshenko's statement** on December 1, 2018, Russia has deployed a large army along the border with Ukraine. This army is set for a quick invasion of Ukraine unless Western allies of Ukraine act decisively.

Russian armaments along Ukraine's eastern border**:

80,000 Troops
2,300 Armored combat vehicles
1,400 Artillery and multiple rocket systems
900 Tanks
500 Airplanes
300 Helicopters
80 Ships
8 Submarines

As of February 27, 2019, Russia had deployed three divisions and 28 battalion tactical groups as well as at least 30 "Iskander" ballistic missile complexes along the north and east of the Ukrainian border as well as in Crimea. It has also deployed the latest C-400 surface-to-air missile systems in Crimea and increased concentration of Russian military arsenal in the Black Sea region.

Sources:

* <https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-ukrayini-na-debatah-generalnoyi-asambleyi-53282>

** <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-s-poroshenko-says-russia-amassing-forces-along-border/29632362.html>

The human toll of Russia's war against Ukraine:

13,000 Deaths
30,000 Wounded
1.5 million Internally displaced persons

From March 2016 onwards, attacks by Russian-proxy forces on Ukrainian positions along the eastern front increased again, with daily use by Russian-proxies of heavy weapons, including mortars and artillery. From May 1, 2016 to March 1, 2019, more than 470 Ukrainian soldiers were killed and at least 2700 wounded in combat on the eastern front.

On November 25, 2018, the Russian FSB coast guard ships blocked three Ukrainian vessels attempting to pass from the Black Sea into the Sea of Azov through the Kerch Strait to the port of Mariupol, ramming a tug boat, opening fire and injuring six and detaining all 24 Ukrainian sailors.

Russia's aggression against Ukraine is not an isolated phenomenon. Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has fomented instability through frozen conflicts in neighbouring states as a means of controlling their domestic and exerting foreign influence.

Ukraine is defending its sovereignty and independence against a Russian war of aggression, while concurrently implementing comprehensive reforms.

Canada and Western allies must continue to support Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty by providing meaningful support to Ukraine's reform process and strengthening Ukraine's security and defence capabilities.

About the UCC

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) is the voice of Canada's Ukrainian community. It brings together under one umbrella all the national, provincial and local Ukrainian Canadian organizations.

Together with its member organizations, the UCC has been a leading, coordinating and has represented the interests of one of Canada's largest ethnic communities (1.4 million) since 1940. It has been instrumental in shaping Canada's social, economic and political landscape and provides a high standard of leadership in developing and advancing the priorities of Ukrainian Canadians.