



## Strengthening Canada-Ukraine Defence and Security Relations

### *Policy Recommendations on Security Relations*

The Canada-Ukraine relationship is defined by mutual trust and a common interest in peace, and grounded in a rules-based international order. For this reason, Canada has been a resolute supporter of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty since Russia's invasion and illegal occupation of Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula in February-March 2014 and its subsequent invasion and occupation of the Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts of Ukraine. Russia's invasion and occupation of Ukrainian territory has been condemned by Canada, along with the other G7 nations and the European Union (EU) as a violation of international law.

As NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg stated in his 2018 report on Ukraine, "A sovereign, independent and stable Ukraine, firmly committed to democracy and the rule of law, is key to Euro-Atlantic security." John Herbst, Director with the Atlantic Council's Eurasia Centre echoed this view recently when he stated to the Canadian parliamentary defence committee, "Moscow's war on Ukraine is not simply a matter of vital concern to [Kyiv]; it is critical to the west, because Ukraine is the front line of our defence against Kremlin aggression." As examples, Herbst noted "the cyber-attack on Estonia in 2007; the war in Georgia in 2008; interference in American, French, German and other elections, as well as in the British vote on Brexit; violations of nuclear forces treaties; and ongoing provocations against Baltic states and over NATO airspace."

The threat from Russia has not diminished. Since 2014, Russia has increased the number of its forces in occupied Ukrainian territory, constructed additional military installations, deployed weapons systems capable of reaching western Europe and beyond, and most recently, captured three Ukrainian naval vessels and 24 sailors in the Kerch Strait. Canada, as one of Ukraine's

#### **OUR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Enhance European Security
- Build and Modernize Ukraine's Defence Forces through Operation UNIFIER
- Strengthen Sanctions against Russia's financial, energy and defence sectors
- Support Human Rights and Advocate for Political Prisoners
- Establish a Pathway to a UN Peacekeeping Mission
- Counter Russia's State Sponsorship of Terrorism

strongest supporters, has led the international community in enacting measures to end Russia's aggression against Ukraine and other countries. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) will continue to work closely with the Government of Canada to strengthen our defence and security relationship with Ukraine through concrete measures to secure a lasting peace in Europe, return Ukrainian government control to currently occupied territories, and bring Ukraine closer to its stated objectives of integration into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

## **Recommendations**

### *Enhance European Security*

During the past five years, the Armed Forces of Ukraine has been transformed into a modern and professional defence force; it has strengthened ties with NATO and is working in cooperation with partners, including Canada, to adopt and comply with NATO standards. In 2017 Canada expanded its Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCCL) to allow lawful export of weapons to Ukraine. A recent *Atlantic Council* report referred to the late 2017 sale of anti-tank missiles from the US government as a "long awaited shift in US policy" and "an important signal to both allies and adversaries that enhanced support is necessary and justified for Ukraine."

Canada has supplied non-lethal military equipment to Ukraine's armed forces since 2014. Several Canadian and international security experts have now stated in the House of Commons Defence Committee that "the time has come for Canada to provide Ukraine with defensive weapons," both as a measure to reduce casualties on the eastern front, and to serve as a deterrent against further escalation of the conflict.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to undertake a comprehensive review of Ukraine's requests for military equipment and provide much-needed defensive weapons in the form of military-to-military assistance.

### *Build and Modernize Ukraine's Defence Forces through Operation UNIFIER*

Since September 2015, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have played a key role in helping build and modernize Ukraine's defence and security forces. Through Operation UNIFIER, which is part of the Multinational Joint Commission, the CAF has trained more than 10,000 Ukrainian soldiers, assisting Ukraine in its strategic objective of building capacity to enable enduring reforms. The UCC welcomes the March 2019 announcement by the Government of Canada to extend Canada's military training mission Operation UNIFIER to March 2022.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to act on all opportunities to expand training and support through Operation UNIFIER which bring Ukraine closer to Euro-Atlantic standards and interoperability with NATO.

### *Strengthen Sanctions against Russia*



Since 2014, Canada has worked collaboratively with the European Union (EU) and the United States (US) to strengthen sanctions against Russia in order to impose a greater cost to the Russian economy for its aggression and weaken its ability to wage war. In March 2019, the Government of Canada added an additional 129 individuals and entities under the Special Economic Measures (Ukraine) Regulations, bringing the total to 435. The UCC will continue to work closely with the Government of Canada to strengthen economic sanctions against Russia, particularly targeting Russia's financial, energy and defence sectors.

The UCC calls for the removal of Russia from the SWIFT payments system, a banking network that facilitates international transactions. Cutting off Russia's financial lifelines to the rest of the world will attach a higher cost to its violations of international law and deprive it of the resources that fund its aggressive policies.

*A sovereign, independent and stable Ukraine is key to Euro-Atlantic security*

### *Support Human Rights and Advocate for Political Prisoners*

Providing testimony before the House of Commons Justice Committee, human rights advocate and former Canadian MP Irwin Cotler stated that Russia was “maybe the most threatening of the major human rights violators because of its externalized aggression as well as its domestic repression.” The *Magnitsky Act*, in place since 2017, gives the Canadian government the power to enact economic sanctions on individuals who have committed human rights violations.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to use Magnitsky legislation more robustly, in the way it was intended, to hold Russian officials to account for their human rights abuses against Ukrainian prisoners being detained illegally in Russia, and to sanction the perpetrators of religious and cultural persecution against Crimean Tatars.

The UCC further calls on Parliament to table a resolution demanding the release of the nearly 100 Ukrainian political prisoners in Russia, similar to a resolution passed by the EU Parliament in 2018 calling for the release of filmmaker and writer Oleg Sentsov.

*Establish a Pathway to a  
UN Peacekeeping Mission*

Civilians in Ukraine are urgently in need of action from the international community; the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in Ukraine (UNOCHA Ukraine) cites evidence that “600,000 people, including 100,000 children, live within 10 km of a 457 km contact line, where there is daily shelling, armed clashes and extreme levels of mine contamination.”

The UCC calls for Canada to play a key role in establishing a UN international peacekeeping mission that would be deployed to the occupied territories of the Donbas (Donetsk and Luhansk regions).

*Counter Russia’s State  
Sponsorship of Terrorism*

In May 2014, the Government of Ukraine designated the occupying forces in Donetsk and Luhansk as terrorist organizations, citing evidence that they have killed and wounded hundreds of civilians, targeted busses, shopping centres, hospitals and humanitarian aid centres. Independent international investigative bodies have determined that Russia is responsible for the downing of a civilian Malaysian aircraft in July 2014, as well as for the use of chemical weapons on British soil. The Parliament of Ukraine has further called for the designation of Russia as a state sponsor of terrorism, and the US Congress is also in the process of considering such a designation.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to designate Russian-proxy organizations—the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk “Peoples’ Republics” as terrorist organizations under Canadian law. ■