



Strengthening Canada-Ukraine Defence and Security Relations

Policy Recommendations on Security Relations

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2014, Canada has been a resolute supporter of Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty. Russia's invasion of Ukraine and occupation of Crimea and parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts has been condemned by Canada, the G7, and the European Union, who have all implemented sanctions against Russia for its violations of international law.

The Russian authorities deny Ukraine's right to exist as an independent state, and the Kremlin seeks once again to subjugate Ukraine to Moscow's rule. Since 2014, the Ukrainian people have bravely defended their country from Russia's aggression. Over 13,000 Ukrainians have been killed, 30,000 have been wounded, and over 1.5 million have been internally displaced as a result of Russia's war.

The people of Ukraine have chosen their own common destiny for their country as a democratic, pluralist, European state. The strategic goal of NATO and EU membership has been enshrined in Ukraine's Constitution and National Security Strategy. A sovereign and independent Ukraine is key to Euro-Atlantic security. In 2008, NATO leaders affirmed that Ukraine would become a member of NATO.

In June 2021, NATO leaders reiterated this decision, and stressed that "Ukraine will become a member of the Alliance with a Membership Action Plan (MAP) as an integral part of the process. We stand firm in our support for Ukraine's right to decide its own future and foreign policy course free from outside interference."

OUR RECOMMENDATIONS

- Support NATO membership for Ukraine
- Enhance European Security
- Extend and enhance Operation UNIFIER, Canada's military training mission to Ukraine
- Ensure that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline never becomes operational
- Strengthen sanctions against Russia's financial and energy sectors
- Support human rights and advocate for political prisoners
- Counter Russia's state sponsorship of terrorism

The threat of further Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory is ever-present. In April 2021, Russia moved a significant quantity of troops and materiel to border regions and Russian-occupied Ukrainian territory. Ukraine's membership in NATO would not only strengthen Ukraine's security; NATO membership for Ukraine would also strengthen European security and deter Russian aggression against other European states.

The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) will continue to work closely with the Government of Canada to strengthen Canada's defence and security relationship with Ukraine to ensure that Ukrainian government control returns to Russian-occupied Ukrainian territories and secure a lasting peace in Europe.

Recommendations

Support NATO membership for Ukraine

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to work with NATO allies to accelerate a NATO Membership Action Plan for Ukraine, in keeping with NATO's Open-Door Policy and Ukraine's strategic decision to become a member of the Alliance. Canada should continue to work through the NATO-Ukraine Trust Funds and the Defence Reform Advisory Board to support Ukraine's reform efforts in the defence and security sectors.

Ukrainian authorities have committed to a series of reforms which are necessary to implement as part of fulfilling Ukraine's NATO aspirations – these include promoting the rule of law, an inclusive political process enacting decentralization reforms and combatting corruption. Canadian international assistance to Ukraine should continue to focus on implementing these reforms.

Extend and enhance Operation UNIFIER, Canada's military training mission to Ukraine

Since September 2015, the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) have played a vital role in helping build and modernize Ukraine's defence and security forces through Operation UNIFIER. Operation UNIFIER, wherein some 200 CAF personnel are deployed to Ukraine on six-month rotations, has trained over 24,000 Ukrainian defence personnel, greatly enhancing Ukraine's battle-readiness and defence capacity.

Operation UNIFIER is currently scheduled through March 2022. This Mission has been a resounding success. CAF personnel are acknowledged throughout the world as extraordinarily effective military trainers and instructors. In turn, the CAF also has the opportunity to learn from the experiences of Ukrainian soldiers who are bravely defending their country.

The UCC calls on Canada to extend Operation UNIFIER past March 2022 and to increase the scope of the Mission to accelerate full interoperability between Ukrainian and NATO Armed Forces.

The UCC expresses its gratitude to, and admiration for, the Canadian Armed Forces personnel who serve in uniform in defence of Canada.

Enhance European Security



Since 2014, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have been transformed into a modern, professional and capable fighting force. The provision of defensive weapons to Ukraine by the United States (such as anti-tank missiles) and other countries have greatly enhanced Ukraine's ability to defend itself against further Russian aggression.

In 2017, Canada expanded its Automatic Firearms Country Control List (AFCCCL) to allow for the lawful export of weapons to Ukraine. *The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to undertake a comprehensive review of Ukraine's requests for military equipment and provide defensive weapons in the form of military-to-military assistance, and to increase the provision of real-time satellite imagery and intelligence to Ukraine on Russian military movements.*

Along with its land forces, the sea and air defences of the Ukrainian Armed Forces need to be enhanced. Russian provocations and attacks in the Black Sea and Azov Sea need to be met with a strong deterrence capability of sea and air forces. *The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to work with allies to increase Ukraine's naval and air defence capacities and increase NATO air and naval presence in the Black Sea and Azov Sea regions.*

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

Ensure that the Nord Stream 2 pipeline never becomes operational

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline, if completed, would allow Russia to deliver natural gas directly to Germany, bypassing Ukraine's pipelines. Nord Stream 2 is not a commercial project; it is a geopolitical project.

Unfortunately, the Biden administration has issued waivers on mandatory sanctions that would, if implemented, have stopped the completion of Nord Stream 2. The mandatory sanctions were adopted with overwhelming bipartisan support in the US Congress, through the *Protecting European Energy Security Act* and the *Protecting European Energy Security Clarification Act*. Legislation that would override the administration's waivers is being considered by the U.S. Congress, but this legislation is unlikely to be adopted before the pipeline is completed.

If the Nord Stream 2 pipeline becomes operational, it will remove an important impediment to a further Russian invasion of Ukraine, as Russia currently relies on Ukrainian pipelines to transport gas to the EU. By constructing the pipeline, Russia is seeking to weaponize energy, weaken European resolve, and European and NATO unity. Nord Stream 2 is a threat to global security and must be stopped.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is strongly opposed by many EU states, including Poland, Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. The European Parliament also strongly opposes Nord Stream 2.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to join our American and European allies in explicitly voicing its opposition to the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and working with European states and the US Congress to ensure that Nord Stream 2 does not become operational.

Strengthen sanctions against Russia's financial and energy sectors

Since 2014, Canada has worked with the EU and the U.S. to impose sanctions against Russia in order to impose economic costs for Russia's aggression and weaken its ability to wage war. The Russian regime has proven through its actions that it responds only to strength. The UCC believes that the costs on Russia must be significantly raised to ensure deterrence from further aggression.

Cutting off Russia's financial lifelines to the rest of the world will attach a higher cost to Russia's aggression and violations of international law and deprive the Russian regime of the resources that fund its aggressive policies.

The last significant Canadian sanctions implemented against Russia were in March 2019, when 114 individuals and 15 entities were sanctioned for aggressive actions against Ukraine. Two minor sanctions announcements followed in January 2020 and March 2021. Since March 2019, both the U.S. and the EU have expanded sanctions against Russian individuals and entities more broadly than has Canada.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to significantly strengthen sectoral economic sanctions against Russia, and work with allies to remove Russia from the SWIFT International Payments System.

Support human rights and advocate for political prisoners

Russia is currently illegally detaining over 100 political prisoners who are Ukrainian citizens, many from occupied Crimea. The Indigenous Crimean Tatar People, and all others who oppose Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea, are the targets of a systemic campaign of torture, terror and repression at the hands of the Russian occupation officials. A similarly grave human rights situation exists in the Russian-occupied parts of Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, where Ukrainian captives of Russian and proxy forces are targets of systemic human rights violations and torture.

Canada has the authority to sanction the perpetrators of these violations of internationally recognized human rights, utilizing the *Magnitsky Act*, adopted in 2017. The Government of Canada has chosen thus far not to exercise the authorities granted under the Magnitsky Act to sanction the Russian officials responsible for the human rights violations of Ukrainian citizens.

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The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to use the Magnitsky Act to directly target human rights abusers by instituting travel bans and asset freezes against them in order to hold Russian officials to account for human rights abuses against Ukrainian prisoners being held illegally in Russia and occupied Crimea, Donetsk and Luhansk.

Coupled with its systemic and egregious violations of the human rights of Ukrainian citizens living under Russian occupation, the Russian government has carried out a campaign of intimidation and pressure against the Ukrainian national minority that lives in Russia. Ukrainian institutions have been closed or banned, and Ukrainian activists who are citizens of Russia have been targeted with repression.

The Ukrainian World Congress (UWC) has been banned from operating on Russian territory as an “undesirable organization.” The UWC has attempted to seek redress before the Russian courts, which has resulted in the persecution of the UWC’s nominal plaintiff by Russian authorities.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to assign officials from the Canadian Embassy in Russia to attend, observe and report on court proceedings targeting Ukrainian political prisoners and activists of Ukrainian organizations in Russia, as a sign of solidarity and to raise international awareness about these cases of abuse of internationally recognized human rights.

Counter Russia’s state sponsorship of terrorism

In May 2014, the Government of Ukraine designated the occupying forces in Donetsk and Luhansk – the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk “Peoples’ Republics” – as terrorist organizations, due to these organizations’ indiscriminate targeting of civilians with mortar, artillery and rocket attacks, and systemic use of torture and political terror against civilians.

An independent international investigation found that the civilian airliner, Flight MH-17, was shot down on July 17, 2014 by a Russian BUK-TELAR missile system of the Russian Armed Forces’ 53rd Anti-Aircraft Missile brigade, in Russian-occupied eastern Ukraine. Russia has also used chemical weapons on British soil.

In April 2020 the US announced the designation of the Russian Imperial Movement – “Russkoe Imperskoe Dvizhenie” (RID) as a Specially-Designated Global Terrorist (SDGT). The UCC wrote to the Government of Canada several days later calling on Canada to list the RID as a terrorist entity. In February 2021, Canada listed the RID as a terrorist entity.

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Credible reports have exposed the RID's involvement in Russia's military invasion of Ukraine in Crimea and eastern Ukraine. The RID has also been linked to Igor "Girkin" Strelkov, a former colonel of Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB). Strelkov has been indicted by Dutch prosecutors for his role in the downing of Flight-MH 17.

Russia has proven, time and again, that it is willing to flout international law, invade neighbouring states, target civilian aircraft, and use chemical and radioactive weapons, endangering the lives of hundreds of people.

The UCC calls on the Government of Canada to list the so-called Donetsk and Luhansk "Peoples' Republics" as terrorist organizations and designate Russia a state supporter of terrorism. ■