



DEBATE PACK

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Russian annexation of Crimea

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The House of Commons Library prepares a briefing in hard copy and/or online for most non-legislative debates in the Chamber and Westminster Hall other than half-hour debates. Debate Packs are produced quickly after the announcement of parliamentary business. They are intended to provide a summary or overview of the issue being debated and identify relevant briefings and useful documents, including press and parliamentary material. More detailed briefing can be prepared for Members on request to the Library.

1. Background

Little green men

18 March 2019 was the fifth anniversary of Russia's annexation of Crimea. The process began in February 2014, as soldiers wearing Russian combat fatigues and carrying Russian weapons began seizing important installations in the peninsula. Russia initially denied they were Russian soldiers but [later said they were](#).

Referendum

After Russia had gained full control of Crimea a referendum was held in which voters were not given the chance to choose the status quo, conducted in polling stations under armed guard. Russian journalists reported that they had been allowed to vote.

97% had voted to join Russia, according to Russian official results, on a turnout of 87%. Later a member of the Russian Human Rights Council [mistakenly posted the real election results](#), showing that about 55% had voted to join Russia on a turnout of 40%, according to reports.

On 27 March, the UN General Assembly [adopted a resolution](#) calling on states not to recognise the annexation.

The annexation Moscow violated, among other agreements, the [1994 Budapest Memorandum](#) on Security Assurances for Ukraine, whereby Ukraine gave up the nuclear weapons that were on its territory on independence in exchange for undertakings from Russia, the US and the UK that its territorial integrity would be respected.

A [range of sanctions](#) was imposed on Russia by the EU, the US and allies over the annexation, including:

- economic sanctions, including restrictions on access to financial markets
- an arms embargo
- restrictions on the export of oil extraction technology
- targeted sanctions against certain individuals
- diplomatic sanctions – exclusion from the G8 and suspension of voting rights in the CoE

Council of Europe

On 7 April 2019, Thorbjørn Jagland, the Secretary General, said that Russia should have its voting rights in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe restored; otherwise Moscow might quit the organisation by summer 2019, according to Jagland. The 47-member

council oversees the 1949 [European Convention on Human Rights](#) and its associated court and some argue a Russian departure would deprive Russians of one of the last protections against authoritarian government.

Recent developments

Stability remains elusive in eastern Ukraine and Russia has moved to shore up its hold on Crimea. Russia is building a road and rail bridge across the Kerch Strait, connecting Crimea to Russia.



Source Ukrainian official and media sources/[BBC](#)

On 25 November 2018 Russian border patrol ships attacked and seized three Ukrainian Navy vessels attempting to enter the Sea of Azov from the Black Sea through the Kerch Strait, in a move that looked designed to gain complete control of the Sea of Azov. In December suspicions that Russia has nuclear arms in Crimea [were reported](#).

These developments suggest that, while the conflict in the eastern mainland regions of Ukraine may be resolved, Russia does not intend to restore Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea.

2. Press articles

The following is a selection of press and media articles relevant to this debate.

Please note: the Library is not responsible for either the views or accuracy of external content.

[Occupational hazards: The Russian military in Crimea](#)

European Council on Foreign Relations
Gustav Gressel
17 April 2019

['Ruxit' would be 'blow' similar to Brexit – Council of Europe chief](#)

RT
8 April 2019

[Bring Russia back in from the cold, says Council of Europe chief](#)

Financial Times
Ben Hall
7 April 2019

[Russian Lawmakers to Assess Damages From Ukraine's 'Annexation' of Crimea](#)

Moscow Times
21 March 2019

[Five years after Crimea annexation, tensions remain](#)

Fox News
Amy Kellogg
19 March 2019

[Five years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution](#)

The Brookings Institution
Steven Pifer
18 March 2019

[If Trump Wants to Show He's Tough on Russia, Here's What He Should Do Next](#)

Roman Sohn and Ariana Gic
Atlantic Council
30 July 2018

[Crimea: One year on from annexation; critics harassed, attacked and silenced](#)

Amnesty International
18 March 2015

[Russia's Real Aims in Crimea](#)

Carnegie Endowment for International Peace
Wojciech Konończuk
13 March 2014

3. Press releases

3.1 British government

[Foreign Secretary statement on the fifth anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea](#)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office
18 March 2019

Five years ago, Russia illegally annexed the peninsula of Crimea in a blatant land grab from Ukraine.

Russia seized key Parliamentary and Police buildings from the Ukrainian authorities and then ran a sham referendum in an attempt to legitimise its actions.

Once President Putin signed an illegal decree to absorb Crimea into Russia, the Russian authorities ran illegitimate 'elections' and imposed Russian citizenship, Russian law and military conscription on everyone living in this part of Ukraine.

Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt said:

I condemn the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, Ukraine, five years ago. The UK will never recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and we call on Russia to end their illegitimate control of the peninsula and their attempts to redraw the boundaries of Europe. Russia's pattern of unacceptable behaviour has continued with their supply of weapons and personnel to the conflict it initiated in eastern Ukraine, the illegal construction of a bridge connecting mainland Russia with Crimea, and their relentless attempts to monopolise the Kerch Strait in a campaign intended to undermine Ukraine's economy and demoralise its citizens.

Russia continues to commit human rights violations beyond its borders by systematically persecuting those who voice their opposition to the illegal annexation of Crimea. I call for the immediate release of all Ukrainian political prisoners, who are being held in Crimea and Russia without access to international monitoring organisations or essential medical treatment. Russia must also immediately release the 24 Ukrainian servicemen, who were detained whilst lawfully attempting to sail through the Kerch Strait.

We join NATO and the EU in condemning Russia's unjustified use of force on Ukrainian vessels in November last year. The UK, along with our EU and G7 partners, remains unwavering in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Crimea is Ukraine.

Repeated violations of Ukraine's territorial integrity by Russia
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
12 February 2019

Statement by Ambassador Jonathan Allen, UK Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN, at the Security Council Briefing on Ukraine.

Thank you Mr President and may I also thank all of our briefers. Mr President, the Russian Ambassador spoke at length and in colourful and imaginative language about many other actors as he introduced this topic but he said nothing about Russia's role. The German Ambassador - an eyewitness to Minsk - showed us why with his accounts of the events of the time and Russia's actions.

Mr President, the United Kingdom welcomes this opportunity to discuss the repeated violations of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity at the hands of Russia. Russia's aggression towards Ukraine is not limited to the Donbas and Crimea - Russia seeks to undermine Ukraine at every opportunity; undermining the ceasefire; supplying the Russian-backed separatists with weapons and calling illegitimate elections- all in breach of the Minsk agreement. These actions have a tragic impact on the lives of Ukrainian civilians. As the French Ambassador said: in the five years since this conflict began, over 12,800 people have lost their lives. Almost 25,000 have been injured. And 3.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Russia bears a heavy responsibility for the ongoing loss of life.

Despite the parties recommitment the ceasefire on 29 December, violations are increasing and that continues to be military activity in the disengagement zones. However, our understanding of the situation within non-government controlled territory is limited because the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission is unable to carry out its mandate. It is unable to do so because of Russia's repeated refusal to support the Special Monitoring Mission. This threatens the ceasefire and ultimately the security of Ukraine and the wider region. A raft of incidents that Russia is yet to provide an explanation for, only reinforces this conclusion. For example, the downing of an SMM long range UAV near the Ukraine-Russia border, outside Ukraine government control last year. And just last week, SMM twice observed the Russian electronic jamming system 'ZHITEL' in the Donbas. I would ask the Russian Ambassador to ensure his country's support for the Special Monitoring Mission and to allow them to observe. I ask what people have to hide?

Mr President, a further example of Russian attempts to destabilise Ukraine is the illegitimate elections in the non-government controlled territories of the so-called Luhansk People's Republic and Donetsk People's Republic in the Donbas last November. This represents a clear breach of the Minsk agreements and unnecessarily increases tensions. Russia could use its considerable influence on the Russian backed separatists to encourage them to comply with their commitments. Instead Russia fuels the conflict by supplying weapons and personnel to the armed formations.

Mr President, next month marks the fifth anniversary of the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. And it's worth reminding ourselves of

the facts. In response to Russia's plans for an illegal and illegitimate referendum in Crimea. The Security Council on the 15th March 2014 voted on a draft resolution that reaffirmed the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Ukraine and noted that Ukraine had not authorised the referendum and that it had no validity. Russia vetoed that resolution. Following the illegal and illegitimate referendum in Crimea on 16th March, on 27th March 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 68262 supported by one hundred member states which affirmed the General Assembly's commitment to the territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders and underscored the invalidity of the referendum.

Mr President, we not only object to the illegal annexation of Crimea because it is illegal. We also object to it due to the Russian government's appalling treatment of many of those who live there. Human rights violations are prevalent. Ethnic and religious groups such as the Crimean Tatars are persecuted. Mr President, despite calls in General Assembly resolutions for the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights to visit Crimea, Russia continues to refuse. We, the international community must stand united and call for Russia to release all political prisoners and allow urgent, unrestricted access for human rights monitoring organisations immediately. Again, what does the Russian Federation not want the world to see?

Mr President, less than three months ago, Russian authorities admitted to using force in the Black Sea to seize three Ukrainian naval vessels injuring three Ukrainian servicemen. These actions are not in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea and they are a blatant attempt to destabilise Ukraine by harming economic activities of other ports of the Berdyansk and Mariupol - hampering Ukraine's ability to manage its economy. Let me be clear, Mr President, Russia's actions in Ukraine have no basis in international law. We cannot and will not ignore such actions. They represent a serious challenge to the international rules-based order. This is an order which benefits us all and keeps us safe. To protect it, the international community must continue to stand united and remain focused on Russia's behaviour and its attempts to integrate Crimea into Russia - including through the construction of a bridge across the Kerch straits.

I would like to end by reiterating the United Kingdom's full support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity - including within its internationally recognised borders and territorial waters. We look forward to discussing the situation in Ukraine further at the forthcoming General Assembly debate on 20th February. And I take note of the Russian Ambassador's enthusiasm for Security Council meetings on Ukraine and look forward next time to hearing about what Russia is doing to meet its obligations and bring an end to the suffering of the people of Ukraine. Thank you, Mr President.

"The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned at the persecution of the Crimea Tatar minority."

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
16 November 2016**

Statement by Ambassador Martin Shearman, of the UK Mission to the United Nations, on the Third Committee resolutions on Crimea.

Thank you, Madam Chair,

The United Kingdom strongly supports and is a co-sponsor of this resolution on the "Situation of Human Rights in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol."

We share the serious concerns that it raises. The deterioration in human rights on the Crimean Peninsula since the start of the Russian Federation's illegal annexation has been well documented by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). The OHCHR has detailed the arrests, ill-treatment, torture and intimidation perpetrated against political opponents and minorities, as well as the denial of basic human rights to those who do not accept the forced imposition of Russian legislation and citizenship on the Peninsula.

The United Kingdom remains deeply concerned at the persecution of the Crimea Tatar minority, including the banning of the Tatar Mejlis and at the use of anti-extremist legislation to silence dissenting views.

It is deplorable that the de facto authorities continue to deny access to all international monitoring organisations, thereby preventing an independent assessment of the human rights situation in Crimea. The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Human Rights Monitoring Mission for Ukraine, has been operating in the Ukraine for two years, yet throughout that period it has been systematically refused access to Crimea. Restoring access to the Crimean peninsula for international human rights monitoring bodies is therefore the primary, and necessary, goal for this draft resolution.

We urge all delegations to give the resolution their support.

I thank you, Madam Chair.

Foreign Secretary welcomes UN vote to support Crimea

**Foreign and Commonwealth Office
27 March 2014**

Following a UN General Assembly vote in favour of the resolution to affirm the commitment to Ukraine's territorial integrity, Foreign Secretary William Hague said:

The international community has sent a strong message through the passing of this resolution that Russia cannot simply trample over international law. The result reinforces the fundamental principles upon which the UN was founded: principles of territorial integrity and of

the non-use of force. President Putin should take notice of this clear and resounding message and work together with all parties to de-escalate the situation.

PM statement on President Putin's actions on Crimea

Prime Minister's Office, 10 Downing Street

18 March 2014

David Cameron has made a statement about President Putin's actions to attempt to annex Crimea.

The Prime Minister said:

The steps taken by President Putin today to attempt to annex Crimea to Russia are in flagrant breach of international law and send a chilling message across the continent of Europe.

Britain depends on the stability and security of the international order. That relies on a rules based system where those who ignore it face consequences. And that's why the EU and the United States have already imposed sanctions.

It is completely unacceptable for Russia to use force to change borders, on the basis of a sham referendum held at the barrel of a Russian gun. President Putin should be in no doubt that Russia will face more serious consequences and I will push European leaders to agree further EU measures when we meet on Thursday.

The choice remains for President Putin: take the path of de-escalation or face increasing isolation and tighter sanctions.

Foreign Secretary condemns Russia's recognition of Crimea as a 'sovereign state'

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

17 March 2014

The Kremlin has this evening announced that President Putin has signed a decree recognising Crimea as a sovereign state.

The United Kingdom, in common with the European Union and the majority of the international community, does not recognise the 16th March Crimea referendum or its outcome as legal or legitimate.

The Foreign Secretary said:

The UK condemns in the strongest terms Russia's flagrant disregard of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. For the UK and her allies the Crimea remains part of Ukraine.

We are witnessing a clear attempt to pave the way for the annexation of part of the sovereign territory of an independent European state, through military force and an illegal and illegitimate referendum.

The UK calls again on Russia to enter into dialogue with Ukraine and with the international community to resolve this crisis through diplomacy and in accordance with international law, not to exacerbate it further through unilateral and provocative actions.

Continuing to ignore those calls will bring serious consequences for Russia. We will urgently consider our response to this latest escalation with our allies and partners, including at the European Council this week.

3.2 Foreign governments

[Concert to mark the fifth anniversary of Crimea's reunification with Russia](#)

President of Russia

18 March 2019

Vladimir Putin attended Crimean Spring: Five Years at Home Harbour concert held to mark the fifth anniversary of the 2014 Crimean referendum and Crimea's reunification with Russia.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin:

Friends,

I would like to speak to those present here, on this square in Simferopol, as well as to all people of Sevastopol and Crimea who are not here but whose hearts are with us.

I would like to congratulate you on the fifth anniversary of Crimea and Sevastopol's reunification with Russia. This event has become part of our lives, our perception and our history as the Crimean Spring. And this was possible thanks to the referendum that took place five years ago, where all of you took part and voted for this historic decision.

You know, I will dare to make a certain historical comparison. The actions of the people of Crimea and Sevastopol remind me of the actions of Red Army soldiers during the first tragic months after the breakout of the Great Patriotic War, when they tried to battle through to join their comrades and carried their field flags close to their hearts. You have also kept your love for our Fatherland, Russia, for many years and even decades, although you were not part of Russian statehood. Thank you.

Friends,

The events five years ago resulted in an incredible growth of patriotism across Russia and also demonstrated the great power of truth and justice. This is why Russia opened its heart and soul and embraced you into its huge multi-ethnic family with joy and happiness.

We have done a lot over the last five years, but there is still more to do. We have only created the basic conditions for development so far. But we will do everything we need to do, achieve all of the goals we have set and solve all of our tasks, because of this one condition: we are together.

I congratulate you. Thank you very much. I wish all of you good luck and happiness. I give all of you a hug!

Crimea Is Ukraine

**US Department of State
27 February 2019**

Five years ago, Russia's occupation of Ukraine's Crimean peninsula fueled an escalation of Russian aggression. Russia attempted to upend the international order, undermined basic human freedoms, and weakened our common security. The world has not forgotten the cynical lies Russia employed to justify its aggression and mask its attempted annexation of Ukrainian territory. Russia's use of force against a peaceful neighbor must not be tolerated by reputable states. The United States reiterates its unwavering position: Crimea is Ukraine and must be returned to Ukraine's control.

The United States remains gravely concerned by the worsening repression by Russia's occupation regime in Crimea. During the past five years, Russian occupation authorities have engaged in an array of abuses in a campaign to eliminate all opposition to its control over Crimea. As part of this campaign, Russia has arbitrarily detained and wrongfully convicted individuals for peaceful opposition to the occupation, and in some cases has forcibly transferred these individuals from occupied Crimea to Russia. The United States calls on Russia to release all of the Ukrainians, including members of the Crimean Tatar community, it has imprisoned in retaliation for their peaceful dissent. This includes Oleh Sentsov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Volodymyr Balukh, Ruslan Zeytullayev, and approximately 70 others. We call on Russia to cease all its abuses immediately, to end its occupation of Crimea, and, in the meantime, to comply with its obligations under international law, including the law of occupation.

In the Crimea Declaration of July 25, 2018, the United States reaffirmed its refusal to recognize the Kremlin's claims of sovereignty over Crimea. The United States also condemns Russia's illegal actions in Crimea and its continued aggression against Ukraine. The United States will maintain respective sanctions against Russia until the Russian government returns control of Crimea to Ukraine and fully implements the Minsk agreements. The United States reiterates its unbending support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters.

Volodymyr Groysman on 5 years of Crimea's annexation: We are approaching the day of reunification with the Ukrainian Crimea
Ukraine Government
27 February 2019

Ukraine and the Ukrainian Government are countering Russia's aggression and occupation of Ukrainian territories and are bringing the day of the reunification of continental Ukraine with the peninsula closer. This was stated by Prime Minister of Ukraine Volodymyr Groysman during the 5th International Forum "Occupied Crimea: 5 Years of Resistance". U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations, Ambassador Kurt Volker took part in the event.

The Head of Government stressed that the history of occupation of Crimea became a personal history of many families, including the family of the Prime Minister. "At one point, the leadership of Russia decided that they can do the same as dictators, aggressors, thieves and murderers have been doing before. And who became hostage to this aggression? Millions of people - from Ukrainian Crimea to Ukrainian Donbass. What did they bring to our land? Suffering, divorce of families. And the main thing! Our citizens today are in Russian prisons, because they defend their right to freedom and free views," Volodymyr Groysman stressed.

The Prime Minister emphasized that today calls for the liberation of Crimea and the release of Ukrainian political prisoners are questions not only of Ukraine, but of the entire civilized world, because it concerns global security.

"Compare Crimea before the annexation and after the annexation. Before annexation - it was a beautiful Ukrainian resort with a temporary stay of the Russian fleet that had to leave the peninsula and relocate to Russia. Today it is a military base that poses a threat to the entire democratic world. The whole democratic world must be united in order to force the aggressor to refuse from his plans and to begin to respect the law and sovereignty of other countries. We must fight for the release of every political prisoner so that Ukrainians return home," the Prime Minister said.

Volodymyr Groysman expressed confidence that aggressor should pay heavy price for his barbaric actions. The entire world should be united around this idea.

"We are not going to put up with aggression or other people's ambitions that are based on disrespect for other nations and the sovereignty of other states. I want to appeal to Crimeans: We remember, and we think about how to approach the day when we can celebrate the date of the liberation of Crimea from the Russian occupation forces. We will achieve this ... The Ukrainian Crimea will be a hospitable resort and a pearl of our state. Together we will win", the Prime Minister underscored.

3.3 International organisations

Statement by the North Atlantic Council on Crimea

NATO

18 March 2019

1. Five years ago, Russia used force against Ukraine to illegally and illegitimately annex Crimea. This violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity is a serious breach of international law and a major challenge to Euro-Atlantic security. We strongly condemn this act, which we do not and will not recognise. We call on Russia to return control of Crimea to Ukraine. We reiterate our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders and territorial waters. Crimea is the territory of Ukraine.
2. Allies are deeply concerned by the human rights abuses and violations being carried out by the Russian de-facto authorities in illegally annexed Crimea against Ukrainians, the Crimean Tatars, and members of other local communities. These violations include extrajudicial killings, abductions, enforced disappearances, violence, arbitrary detentions, arrest, and torture. Despite the 2017 Order of the International Court of Justice, the Mejlis, the Crimean Tatars' self-governing body, remains under persecution and is banned in its homeland.
3. NATO calls on Russia to bring an immediate end to all violations and abuses in illegally annexed Crimea, to release Ukrainian political prisoners and hostages, and to grant international monitoring organisations access to Crimea. Any attempts to legitimise or normalise the illegal and illegitimate annexation of Crimea must end, including the automatic imposition of Russian citizenship, forced population movements, conscription in the armed forces of the Russian Federation, and illegal holding of Russian election campaigns.
4. We condemn Russia's ongoing and wide-ranging military build-up in Crimea, and are concerned by Russia's efforts and stated plans for further military build-up in the Black Sea region. We also condemn Russia's construction of the Kerch Strait bridge, which represents another violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and is imposing additional hardship on Ukraine's economy. Russia's unjustified use of military force against Ukrainian ships and naval personnel near the Sea of Azov and the Kerch Strait in November 2018 is part of the larger pattern of Russian aggressive actions in the region. In line with United Nations General Assembly Resolution 73/194 from 17 December 2018, we call on Russia to unconditionally release the Ukrainian crew members it detained, to return the captured vessels and to comply with its international commitments by ensuring unhindered access to Ukrainian ports in the Sea of Azov and allowing freedom of navigation.
5. NATO's response to address Russia's illegal actions in Ukraine has been alongside and in support of an overall international effort, which has included sanctions. There can be no return to "business as usual" until there is a clear, constructive change in Russia's actions that demonstrates compliance with international law and its international obligations and responsibilities.

Declaration by the High Representative Federica Mogherini on behalf of the EU on the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol

Council of the European Union

17 March 2019

Five years on from the illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol by the Russian Federation, the European Union remains steadfast in its commitment to Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

The European Union reiterates that it does not recognise and continues to condemn this violation of international law. It remains a direct challenge to international security, with grave implications for the international legal order that protects the territorial integrity, unity and sovereignty of all States.

The European Union remains committed to fully implementing its non-recognition policy, including through restrictive measures. The European Union calls again on UN Member States to consider similar non-recognition measures in line with the UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262.

Russia's violations of international law have led to a dangerous increase in tensions at the Kerch Strait and the Sea of Azov. The unjustified use of force by Russia against Ukraine on 25 November 2018 is a reminder of the negative effects of the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula on regional stability.

The EU reiterates its call on Russia to release the illegally captured Ukrainian crewmembers, vessels and equipment unconditionally and without further delay. Pending their release, Russia should respect their rights to legal representation and access by consular authorities, and to provide the injured crewmen with appropriate medical treatment.

The European Union condemns the construction of the Kerch Bridge without Ukraine's consent which constitutes a further violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU expects Russia to ensure unhindered and free passage of all ships through the Kerch Strait to and from the Azov Sea, in accordance with international law. The illegal restrictions to such passage have negative economic consequences for Ukraine's ports in the Azov Sea and the whole region.

The European Union does not and will not recognise the holding of elections by the Russian Federation in the Crimean peninsula. The increasing militarisation of the peninsula continues to impact negatively the security situation in the Black Sea region. In violation of international humanitarian law, Russian citizenship and conscription in the armed forces of the Russian Federation have been imposed on Crimean residents.

Since the illegal annexation by the Russian Federation, the human rights situation in the Crimean peninsula has significantly deteriorated. Residents of the peninsula face systematic restrictions of fundamental freedoms, such as freedom of expression, religion or belief and

association and the right to peaceful assembly. In accordance with UN General Assembly resolution 73/263 of 22 December 2018, it is crucial that the regional and international human rights monitoring mechanisms as well as the non-governmental human rights organisations have unimpeded access to Crimea and Sevastopol.

The rights of the Crimean Tatars have been gravely violated through the shutting down of Crimean Tatar media outlets, the banning of the activities of the Mejlis, their self-governing body, and the persecution of its leaders and members of their community. The EU expects Russia to reverse these decisions and to end the pressure on the Crimean Tatar community. Crimean Tatars, Ukrainians and all ethnic and religious communities in the peninsula must be ensured the possibility to maintain and develop their culture, cultural heritage traditions, education and identity. Russia must also take measures to improve the environmental situation, which has considerably worsened since the illegal annexation.

The EU reiterates its call for the immediate release of Oleh Sentsov, Edem Bekirov, Oleksandr Kolchenko, Mykola Semena, Volodymyr Balukh, Emir-Usein Kuku and all those who have been detained in the Crimean peninsula and sentenced in breach of international law. Journalists, human rights defenders and defence lawyers should be able to work independently and without undue interference and intimidation.

The EU calls for full compliance with international human rights standards in the peninsula. All pending cases of human rights violations and abuses, such as enforced disappearances, torture and killings, violence, politically motivated prosecutions, discrimination and harassment should be thoroughly investigated. Full, free and unrestricted access for international human rights actors to the whole territory of Ukraine, including Crimea and Sevastopol, continues to be paramount. The EU recalls UNGA Resolution 73/263 of 22 December 2018, and calls for its full implementation, including the Russian Federation's obligations under applicable international humanitarian law.

The Candidate Countries North Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania* and the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

4. PQs

Recent

[Crimea: Tatars](#)

02 Apr 2019 | 238283

Asked by: Paul Farrelly

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what representations he has made to (a) the Russian Ambassador in London and (b) his Russian counterpart on actions taken against Crimean Tatars in Russian-occupied Crimea.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We are deeply concerned by ongoing reports of human rights abuses against the Crimean Tatar community. The Foreign Secretary has not made direct representations to the Russian Ambassador in London but has publicly condemned Russian human rights abuses in Crimea. Most recently, he co-signed an op-ed with EU partners on 27 February in which he criticised Russia's treatment of the Tatar community, and, in a statement to mark the fifth anniversary of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, condemned Russia's continued pattern of human rights violations in the peninsula and called for the release of all Ukrainian political prisoners being held by Russia. The UK supports the work of the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine, which works to reduce violations by strengthening the field presence of human rights monitors and reporting on the situation. In coordination with international partners, we continue to raise our concerns in international fora, including the UN, OSCE and NATO.

[Russia: Sanctions](#)

28 Mar 2019 | HL14624

Asked by: Lord Stevenson of Balmacara

To ask Her Majesty's Government what assessment they have made of the impact of sanctions imposed by the United States and the EU, in response to the 2014 occupation and annexation of Crimea, on relations between Russia and the UK.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon
| Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Sanctions imposed alongside our international partners, including the US, in 2014 have had a coordinated impact on Russia by increasing economic pressure to change its Ukraine policy and sending a clear, united message that Russian aggression in Ukraine will not be tolerated. This impact has been strengthened by the continuation and maintenance of 2014 sanctions since their implementation. The current bilateral relationship is not the one the UK wants and we remain open to a different relationship with Russia - one where Russia desists from attacks that undermine international security and actions that undermine the territorial integrity of its neighbours.

Engagements

27 Feb 2019 | 655 c335

Asked by: John Whittingdale

Is my right hon. Friend aware that five years ago today Russian special forces seized the Government building in Crimea and raised the Russian flag? Will she confirm that the UK Government remain committed to the restoration of Ukrainian sovereignty over Crimea, and will she look at strengthening sanctions against Russia until that can be achieved?

Answered by: Theresa May | Department: Prime Minister

I am happy to give my right hon. Friend that confirmation. This was an illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia, and we have been doing everything we can to ensure that the appropriate sanctions are imposed that will have an impact. We have been one of the voices around the EU Council table that has been advocating the roll-over of sanctions at every stage and ensuring that, as we look at the actions of Russia here and elsewhere, we enhance those sanctions and rightfully put pressure on those who are responsible.

Ukraine: Politics and Government

19 Feb 2019 | 221577

Asked by: Jim Cunningham

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment he has made of the current levels of political stability in Ukraine; and if he will make a statement.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK remains concerned over persistent attempts by Russia to undermine political stability in Ukraine. Russia's malign intent is evident in their support for separatist forces in eastern Ukraine, the detention and mistreatment of civilians in Crimea, the recent firing on Ukrainian vessels in the Black Sea and their growing economic stranglehold on the Ukrainian ports of Mariupol and Berdyansk. This is reinforced by Russian disinformation campaigns and cyber-attacks designed to create a false narrative of Ukraine as a failing state.

The reality is that Ukraine has made enormous progress towards realising its potential as a fully democratic, modern and prosperous state. The UK is providing substantial assistance to strengthen Ukraine's democracy and institutions as part of its reform programme. This includes specific support to help Ukraine counter potential outside interference in presidential and parliamentary elections in 2019. The best answer to malign Russian activity remains a well-functioning, democratic and stable Ukraine.

[Topical Questions](#)

14 Jan 2019 | 652 c807

Asked by: Philip Hollobone

The Russian annexation of Crimea has been followed by the construction of the Kerch bridge to the Russian mainland. To date, no NATO ship has entered under the bridge into the sea of Azov. When does the Ministry of Defence expect that situation to change?

Answered by: Gavin Williamson | Department: Defence

We can be very proud that the Royal Navy was the first navy to enter the Black sea and go to Odessa in solidarity with our Ukrainian friends. Currently we have no plans, but we will continue to keep this situation under review; and we plan to make sure that further Royal Navy vessels visit the Black sea later this year.

[Russia: Ukraine](#)

19 Dec 2018 | HL12079

Asked by: The Marquess of Lothian

To ask Her Majesty's Government what long-term strategy they have formulated to deal with the conflict between Ukraine and Russia.

**Answering member: Lord Ahmad of Wimbledon
| Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office**

Russia's pattern of aggression undermines the international rules-based system. The Prime Minister has been clear that the UK is open to a different relationship, if Russia changes its behaviour. Ukraine is on the front line of Russia's aggressive actions. Russia has illegally annexed the Crimean peninsula, continues a conventional conflict in eastern Ukraine, and, most recently, has fired on Ukrainian ships. The UK is fully committed to upholding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine within its internationally-recognised borders. The UK is working with international partners to resolve the conflict peacefully and helping Ukraine to strengthen its democracy and institutions. It is imperative that Russia abides by its commitments under the Minsk Agreements and withdraws its forces from all of Ukraine, including Crimea. We fully support EU sanctions which will remain in place until there is progress on the Minsk process, and the Crimean peninsula is returned to Ukraine. To deal with the conflict, Her Majesty's Government provides substantial technical, development and political support to Ukraine in areas which include good governance, anti-corruption and defence reform and capability.

[Ukraine: Sovereignty](#)
03 Dec 2018 | 196687

Asked by: Jim Cunningham

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to support the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK continues to fully support Ukraine's independence and territorial integrity. Crimea and the Donbas are part of Ukraine – what Russia has done and continues to do there breaches its obligations under international law.

Together with partners, we continue to call on Russia to abide by its international commitments and withdraw its forces from all of Ukraine, including the Donbas and Crimea. We strongly condemn recent Russian aggression against Ukrainian vessels near the Kerch Strait. This is yet further evidence of Russia's continued violation of Ukrainian sovereignty following the illegal annexation of Crimea and construction of the Kerch Bridge.

The Foreign Secretary issued a statement on 26 November, and spoke with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister on 29 November to reiterate that the UK stands with Ukraine against Russian aggression. The UK also spoke in support of the independence and sovereignty of Ukraine at emergency sessions in the UN Security Council, NATO, EU and OSCE.

The UK is also providing over £35 million to support Ukraine in a range of areas including governance reform, anti-corruption and humanitarian aid to help Ukraine continue its transition to become a stable, transparent and prosperous state.

[Russia: Ukraine](#)
15 Nov 2018 | 188773

Asked by: Emily Thornberry

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the potential implications of the recent termination by the Ukrainian government of the 1997 Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between that country and Russia for the prospects of reaching a negotiated settlement to the ongoing disputes between those countries in line with the Minsk Accords.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Russia's actions in Ukraine have deliberately violated a number of international agreements and commitments including the 1997 Russia-Ukraine Treaty of Friendship. We continue to work with international partners to support Ukraine as it deals with the ongoing impact of Russia's aggression against it.

We need to be very clear about where the fundamental problem lies. It is Russia which created this conflict, Russia which supplies weaponry and personnel to the separatists, and Russia which refrains from using its considerable influence on the separatists to get them to comply with their Minsk commitments.

We fully support diplomatic efforts through the Minsk Process. It is imperative that Russia abides by its commitments under the Minsk Agreement and withdraws its forces from all of Ukraine, including Crimea.

Ukraine: Military Aid

25 Jul 2018 | 164956

Asked by: Nia Griffith

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, pursuant to the Prime Minister's oral contribution of 16 July 2018, Official Report, column 24, what support the Government is offering to the Government of Ukraine in relation to the situation in the Crimea.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK is absolutely clear in its rejection of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The British Government regularly highlights, publically and multilaterally, Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and human rights abuses towards those who oppose the illegal annexation. In public statements, including the UK statement at the recent UN Human Rights Council, our bilateral contacts with Russia and in multilateral fora - we have called on Russia to immediately release Ukrainian prisoners detained for politically motivated reasons. The EU has taken practical measures to reinforce its policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea, including on 18 June the EU renewed trade sanctions in response to Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol for a further 12 months; and on 5 July economic sanctions were renewed for a further 6 months.

Russia: Council of Europe

26 Apr 2018 | 137138

Asked by: Liam Byrne

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what criteria he plans to use to decide whether to support lifting the suspension of Russian credentials at the council of Europe.

Answering member: Sir Alan Duncan | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

In accordance with its status as a statutory body of the Council of Europe and independent from the Committee of Ministers, the decision is a matter for the Parliamentary Assembly (PACE) to decide. PACE has made clear its own criteria for Russia to return which are laid down in the its own resolution requirements. PACE has not suspended Russia; the decision was taken by Russia since 2015 not to present credentials for its own Delegation in response to voting restrictions placed upon

them by PACE following the illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014. The UK is clear that a Russian return to PACE would be contingent on the withdrawal of all Russian military personnel and support for separatists in Eastern Ukraine, as well as an end to the illegal annexation of the Crimean peninsula.

From when Russia annexed Crimea

[Ukraine: Politics and Government](#)

02 Jun 2015 | 327

Asked by: Jim Cunningham

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent assessment his Department has made of the political situation in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine.

Answering member: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

Russia's destabilisation of eastern Ukraine has resulted in a humanitarian crisis, with over 1.5 million people displaced, over 6000 people killed and tens of thousands wounded. The situation there will only improve when Russia abides by the commitments it made at Minsk; withdraws its troops, its heavy weaponry and support for the separatists.

Since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea we have become increasingly concerned by the deteriorating human rights situation there. We continue to call for free and unconditional access by international humanitarian and human rights organisations to Crimea at all times.

[Ukraine: Russia](#)

17 Mar 2015 | 226956

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what assessment he has made of the implications for his policies of President Putin's statement that the Russian annexation of Crimea was planned before the referendum on self-determination.

Answering member: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

UK policy, which is fully in line with our international partners including the EU and US, has not changed. We do not, and will not, recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. Russia's intervention in Ukraine represents a flagrant violation of a number of its international commitments. That is why Russia has been isolated in the Security Council and in the wider international community. Our message to Russia remains constant: return Crimea to Ukraine. Until Moscow does so, it can expect the EU's Crimea sanctions to remain in place.

[Ukraine: Russia](#)

21 Jan 2015 | 220986

Asked by: Tim Farron

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what recent representations he has made to the Russian government about its annexation of Crimea.

Answering member: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

We have made clear that we will not recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea, which remains a part of the sovereign territory of Ukraine. This point is raised as a matter of principle in any high-level level UK/Russia bilateral meetings. I last raised this issue the last time I met the Russian Ambassador in December.

[Ukraine](#)

28 Oct 2014 | 211379

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what the Government's policy is on recognition of Crimea as the territory of Ukraine.

Answering member: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The UK does not, and will not, recognise the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia. Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea is a flagrant violation of a number of Russia's international commitments, including under the UN Charter, the OSCE Helsinki Final Act and the 1997 Partition Treaty on the Status and Conditions of the Black Sea Fleet with Ukraine. That is why Russia has been isolated in the Security Council and in the wider international community.

[Ukraine: Russia](#)

22 Jul 2014 | 205915

Asked by: Andrew Rosindell

To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, what steps he is taking to ensure that Crimea is still internationally recognised as part of the Ukraine.

Answering member: David Lidington | Department: Foreign and Commonwealth Office

The Government strongly condemns Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea which violates the UN Charter and is illegal under international law. The UK co-sponsored UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262 on the "Territorial Integrity of Ukraine", which was adopted on 27 March 2014 with 100 votes in favour and only 11 against. This result delivered a resounding international condemnation of Russian actions in Crimea and made clear Russia's isolation in the Security Council and in the international community.

G7 leaders issued a statement on 4 June which affirmed G7 countries' non-recognition of Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and condemned the unacceptable interference in Ukraine's sovereign affairs by the Russian Federation. G7 Leaders confirmed the decision by G7 countries to impose sanctions on individuals and entities who had actively supported or implemented the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity and who were threatening the peace, security and stability of Ukraine. They underlined their implementation of a strict policy of non-recognition with respect to Crimea/Sevastopol, in line with UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262.

The EU has regularly condemned Russian actions in Crimea and eastern Ukraine and supported action including the imposition of travel bans and asset freezes on 72 individuals and the sanctioning of two entities; the cancellation of the EU-Russia Summit; agreement not to hold bilateral summits; and a decision to block Russian membership of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and International Energy Agency.

On 16 July, and in line with the EU's policy of non-recognition of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol, the Prime Minister and other EU Leaders requested the European Commission and the European External Action Service to present proposals for additional measures on restricting investments in Crimea and Sevastopol. The European Council also asked the International Financial Institutions to refrain from financing any projects that explicitly or implicitly recognised the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol.

The UK remains firmly committed to Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

Topical Questions

17 Mar 2014 | 577 c552

Asked by: Sir Gerald Howarth

Given that Russia has effectively annexed Crimea, in contravention of the Budapest agreement signed by Britain, the United States and Ukraine in 1994, and that it continues to threaten eastern Ukraine, what consideration has my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, or indeed NATO, given to mounting maritime exercises in the Black sea so that a message may be sent to Mr Putin's Russia that any attack on Odessa would be a step too far?

Answered by: Philip Hammond | Department: Defence

We are clear that a graduated response to these unjustified actions by Russia is necessary, but it should be a diplomatic response in terms of economic and trade sanctions. Meetings are ongoing today across the European Union to try to agree the best way to deliver that response.

5. Other Parliamentary material

5.1 Debates

Recent

[Ukraine](#)

17 Dec 2018 | House of Lords | 794 cc135-152GC

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of the current situation in Ukraine.

[Russia and the Council of Europe](#)

18 Jul 2018 | House of Commons | 645 cc101-123WH

Motion, that this House has considered Russia and the Council of Europe. Agreed to on question.

[Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe](#)

30 Mar 2017 | House of Lords | 782 cc81-96GC

Lords question for short debate on what assessment they have made of the future role of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe, in the light of the continued conflict in the east of Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea by the Russian Federation.

From when Russia annexed Crimea

[Ukraine](#)

03 Apr 2014 | House of Lords | 753 cc308-323GC

Lords question for short debate on what is their assessment of the political situation in Ukraine.

[Ukraine](#)

18 Mar 2014 | House of Lords | 753 cc99-154

Lords motion to take note of the situation in Ukraine. Agreed to on question.

[Ukraine](#)

18 Mar 2014 | House of Commons | 577 cc649-700

Motion to consider. Agreed to on question.

5.2 Statements

Recent

[Foreign Affairs Council – 18 February 2019](#)

28 Feb 2019 | HCWS1366

Sir Alan Duncan (Minister of State for Foreign and

Commonwealth Affairs): My Right Honourable Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs attended the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC) on 18 February. It was chaired by the High Representative of the European Union (EU) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HRVP), Federica Mogherini. The meeting was held in Brussels.

[...]

Ukraine

The Council had a comprehensive discussion on Ukraine, covering the reform process as well as the security and humanitarian situation, in particular in eastern Ukraine and the Sea of Azov. The Council reiterated its full support for Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity and sovereignty and continued condemnation of the illegal annexation of Crimea and Sevastopol by Russia. Foreign Ministers acknowledged the important progress Ukraine has accomplished in key areas over the past five years and highlighted the need to maintain reform momentum. The Council also expressed the importance of ensuring that the elections in Ukraine are well conducted. They highlighted the importance of ensuring that the OSCE election observation mission can conduct its work and can observe the elections in full accordance with its usual practice. Ministers exchanged views on how the EU can help, following the developments in the Azov Sea and Kerch strait region, particularly through strengthened support in the affected areas, including in sectors such as railway and road connections, training, and support for SMEs. They reiterated the EU's call for all detained Ukrainian seamen to be released immediately as well as for the return of the seized vessels and free passage of all ships through the Kerch Straits.

[...]

From when Russia annexed Crimea

[Ministry of Defence Support to Ukraine](#)

19 Nov 2015 | HCWS317

Michael Fallon (Secretary of State for Defence): I have today laid before Parliament a Ministry of Defence Departmental Minute concerning a further gifting package which the UK intends to make to the Government of Ukraine.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its destabilising activities in Eastern Ukraine, including direct military support to the separatists, has demonstrated its disregard for international law. Since fighting began,

nearly 8,000 people have been killed and approximately 18,000 injured. Around 1.4 million people have been displaced in Ukraine.

The latest ceasefire agreement, reached on 29 August, has seen a reduction in violence in the conflict zone. However, until there is a political settlement to the conflict the Ukrainian Armed Forces (UAF) have to remain deployed forward and continue to suffer fatalities and casualties. As a result of the prolonged engagement in this conflict, the UAF face a chronic shortage of basic equipment, and have requested help.

This Government is committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Our proposed gift of non-lethal equipment is designed to prevent further Ukrainian fatalities and casualties and to help improve resilience on the ground.

The gifting package consists of 170 large tents with ancillary equipment to mitigate winter conditions and 600 sets of cold weather clothing. Subject to completion of the Departmental Minute process, delivery is expected to be undertaken over the coming weeks. The total cost of this proposed package of equipment is approximately £971,000, including transportation costs and contingency.

[Ministry of Defence Support to Ukraine](#)

06 Mar 2015 | HCWS354

Michael Fallon (Secretary of State for Defence): I have today laid before Parliament a Ministry of Defence Departmental Minute describing a gifting package which the UK intends to make to the Government of Ukraine.

Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and its destabilising activities in Eastern Ukraine, including direct military support to the separatists, have demonstrated its disregard for international law. The latest ceasefire agreement, reached in Minsk on 12 February and which came into force on 15 February, has seen a reduction in violence in the conflict zone. We very much hope it will help end the conflict. However, fighting has not ceased in some areas and there continue to be fatalities and casualties amongst the Ukrainian armed forces.

This Government is committed to supporting Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. As a result of their prolonged engagement in this conflict, the Ukrainians face a serious shortage of basic equipment, and have requested help.

Our proposed gift of non-lethal equipment is designed to prevent further Ukrainian fatalities and casualties and to help improve situational awareness on the ground.

The Departmental Minute, which I have today laid before Parliament, describes a gifting package to the Ukrainian armed forces that will comprise five priority items that are needed which will provide immediate benefits. These items are Individual first aid kits, Global Positioning Systems (GPS) units, helmet-mounted monocular night

vision goggles (MNVGs), ruggedised laptops, and Mk6 helmets. Subject to completion of the Departmental Minute process, delivery is expected to be undertaken over the coming weeks. The total cost of this proposed package of equipment is approximately £850,000, including transportation and contingency costs.

This gifting package is being provided alongside other training activities, which are being delivered by UK military personnel to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

Ukraine

10 Feb 2015 | 592 cc616-633

[Extract: only the Secretary of State's opening statement is included below]

Philip Hammond (Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs): With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on the situation in Ukraine.

The past month has seen an escalation of violence in the eastern regions of Ukraine. Fighting has been intense around the town of Debaltseve, a strategically important rail and road hub between the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk. The Ukrainians have suffered indiscriminate missile attacks on buses in Donetsk and Volnovakha and on the port city of Mariupol. What is happening on the ground now resembles, to all intents and purposes, a small-scale conventional war. Over 5,000 people have been killed since the crisis began last spring, and over 1.5 million people have been displaced from their homes.

In recent weeks, Russia has aggravated the effects of its initial incursion by stepping up the military support it provides to its proxies. It has transferred hundreds of heavy weapons, including rocket launchers, heavy artillery, tanks and armoured vehicles; and it maintains hundreds of regular soldiers, including special forces, in Ukraine, as well as command and control elements, air defence systems, unmanned aerial vehicles, and electronic warfare systems. The Russian army is also the source of ex-regulars who resign their army posts to fight in Donbass as "volunteers". The recent escalation in fighting would not have been possible without the military support and strategic direction that Russia provides.

In these circumstances, it is vital that all the countries who have a stake in the rules-based international system remain clear and united against Russian aggression. In Normandy last summer, we agreed with the US and our European partners that the most effective channel of communication with the Kremlin would be through a small group. This is known as the Normandy Format, comprising Germany, France as the host of the Normandy meeting, Ukraine and Russia.

Chancellor Merkel and President Hollande met President Poroshenko in Kiev last Thursday, and President Putin in the Kremlin on Friday. On Saturday, in Munich, I held meetings with Secretary of State Kerry and German Foreign Minister Steinmeier to assess the prospects for a

diplomatic resolution of the crisis. On Sunday, the German Chancellor and the French President held a conference call with Poroshenko and Putin, agreeing to meet in the Normandy format in Minsk tomorrow. Their aim is to reach agreement on an implementation plan for the Minsk ceasefire agreements that the Russians entered into last September, updated, as they need to be, to reflect subsequent changes on the ground.

The UK welcomes these efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the situation in eastern Ukraine, while remaining sceptical of Russian commitment to such a resolution. It is clear that Putin respects strength, so Britain's focus has been, and will continue to be, on ensuring that the EU remains robust, resolved and united on the maintenance of economic sanctions, and closely aligned with the US.

The consensus within the European Union that Russia must pay a price for its disregard of the international rules-based system remains strong. Equally, there is a clear consensus that the EU does not, and will not, recognise Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea. The emergency EU Foreign Affairs Council on 29 January agreed to roll over all the Crimea-related tier 2 sanctions against individuals and companies. That is another clear sign that the EU remains united in its response to Russian action in Ukraine.

The package of economic sanctions which the European Union and the US has imposed on Russia, coupled with the catastrophic impact on the Russian economy of the decline in the oil price, is a critical element of the pressure on President Putin to change his behaviour. Britain was and remains at the forefront of the successful effort to build and maintain an EU-wide consensus on a sanctions regime on Russia, to the evident surprise and dismay of the Kremlin. Yesterday in Brussels I represented the UK at the EU Foreign Affairs Council, which discussed Ukraine and reconfirmed its decision to apply additional sanctions, but, at the suggestion of the Ukrainian Foreign Minister and as a gesture of support for the political process, decided to delay their entry into force until next Monday. The informal European Council of Heads of State and Government will have further discussions about Ukraine on Thursday.

The crisis has inflicted substantial damage on Ukraine's economy. The World Bank estimates that it shrank by 8.2% in 2014. Public debt has risen sharply, foreign exchange reserves have fallen and the currency has lost nearly half its value against the US dollar. Ukraine clearly needs support from international partners to stabilise the economy, in return for which it must pursue the reforms to which it has committed under the association agreement with the European Union and the International Monetary Fund programme. Britain is providing £10 million in technical assistance to support economic and governance reforms and the humanitarian effort. The EU will make a substantial contribution to the immediate estimated \$15 billion financing needs of the country, the majority of which will be provided through an IMF-led package.

We shall also continue to work through NATO to offer technical support to the Ukrainian armed forces and reassurance to our eastern NATO

allies. At the NATO Wales summit last September, NATO allies sent a strong message to Russia, agreeing to maintain NATO's long-standing capacity building work in Ukraine by setting up five dedicated trust funds for Ukraine, one of which will be co-led by the UK.

The Wales summit also agreed a readiness action plan to reassure our eastern allies. As part of the package, NATO allies agreed to a new spearhead unit—the very high readiness joint taskforce—within the NATO response force, which, supported by the newly created forward integration units in the Baltic and eastern European states, will be able to deploy at very short notice wherever they are needed.

On 5 February, NATO Defence Ministers agreed the size and scope of that mission. My right hon. Friend the Defence Secretary has announced that the UK will lead the force in 2017 and on a rotational basis thereafter. The UK also made a commitment to contribute to headquarters in Poland and Romania and the six NATO forward integration unit headquarters in the Baltic states, Poland, Romania and Bulgaria. In addition, the UK will contribute four RAF Typhoons to operate alongside Norway in support of the Baltic air policing mission.

The UK also remains a strong supporter of the OSCE's monitoring mission in eastern Ukraine. We have provided funding of more than £2 million, the second largest number of monitors and 10 armoured vehicles to allow monitors to move around dangerous areas in a more secure manner.

Our policy since the start of the crisis has been to supply non-lethal assistance to Ukrainian armed forces, in line with our assessment that there must be a political solution to this crisis. We have increased our defence engagement with Ukraine and are providing additional support on crisis management, anti-corruption, defence reform and strategic communications.

We have offered three members of the Ukrainian armed forces who were wounded in the Donbass life-changing specialist medical assistance in the form of reconstructive surgery at the Queen Elizabeth hospital in Birmingham. We are providing a substantial package of non-lethal equipment to Ukraine, comprising medical kits, winter clothing and equipment, body armour, helmets and fuel. The package is focused on reducing fatalities and casualties among members of the Ukrainian armed forces.

It is a national decision for each country in the NATO alliance to decide whether to supply lethal aid to Ukraine. The UK is not planning to do so, but we reserve the right to keep this position under review. Different members of the alliance take nuanced positions on this question, and are entitled to do so. However, we share a clear understanding that while there is no military solution to this conflict, we could not allow the Ukrainian armed forces to collapse.

By its illegal annexation of Crimea and its destabilising activities in eastern Ukraine, including its direct military support of the separatists, Russia has demonstrated its disregard for international law. It is clear that President Putin respects only strength, and by standing united,

using our combined economic muscle to impose significant economic costs on Russia, the international community has shown its determination to rebuff Russia's anachronistic behaviour.

The ball is now firmly in Russia's court. Until we see Russia complying with the terms of the Minsk agreement on the ground—withdrawing troops, stopping the flow of weapons and closing the border—there must be no let-up in the pressure. Fine words in a declaration tomorrow will, of course, be welcome, but we have seen them before. The proof of the pudding will be in actions on the ground. We will monitor the situation carefully, and we will agree to a relaxation of the pressure only when we see clear evidence of changed Russian behaviour and systematic compliance with Russia's obligations under the original Minsk agreement.

Meanwhile, there will be no let-up in our efforts—with the US, in the EU and through NATO—to ensure that Mr Putin hears a clear and consistent message: civilised nations do not behave in the way Russia under Putin has behaved towards Ukraine, and those of us who live by the rules-based international system will be steadfast in defending it against such aggression. I commend this statement to the House.

This statement was repeated and debated in the House of Lords
[\[759 cc1109-1121\]](#)

[OSCE Ministerial Council, Basel, 4-5 December 2014](#)
15 Dec 2014 | HCWS102

Mr David Lidington (Minister for Europe): I represented the United Kingdom at the 21st Ministerial Council meeting of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Basel, Switzerland on 4-5 December 2014 and hosted by Swiss Federal President and OSCE Chairman-in-Office Didier Burkhalter. The Council is the key decision-making body of the OSCE and was attended by Ministers from across its 57 participating States.

The Council took place in the final month of a year when the OSCE has been at the centre of the international response to the Ukraine crisis, and this subject dominated the Council. In my interventions in the discussions that took place on 3 and 4 December, I made clear that by its actions Russia was fully responsible for the instability in eastern Ukraine, and that its illegal annexation of Crimea would not be recognised by the international community. I said that Russia must implement its commitments under the Minsk Protocols, by withdrawing military personnel, equipment and weapons from Ukraine's sovereign territory, ceasing the supply of separatist factions, and securing its border with Ukraine. Only then will there be space for a political solution to the crisis. I also commended the role of the OSCE in facilitating dialogue and providing valuable impartial reporting from eastern Ukraine, in particular its Special Monitoring Mission, to which the UK has provided and will continue to provide significant financial and personnel support.

Similar sentiments were expressed in plenary by US Secretary of State Kerry, German Foreign Minister Steinmeier, Ukrainian Foreign Minister Klimkin and EU High Representative Mogherini among others. It is regrettable that Russian obstruction meant that a declaration on the OSCE's role in, and support to, Ukraine could not be agreed despite the vast majority of OSCE States' desire to do so. However, in his Chairman's summary (<https://www.news.admin.ch/message/index.html?lang=en&msg-id=55531>), President Burkhalter noted that many states had expressed the view that the crisis was the result of the pressure of one participating State against another; that the so-called referendum in Crimea had been in contradiction with the Ukrainian constitution; that Russia's actions in Crimea had been in violation of fundamental OSCE commitments and international law; and that the territorial integrity, political independence and unity of Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders must be respected.

In the margins of the Council, I attended a meeting hosted by the Lithuanian Foreign Minister with Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev, who described the restrictions and violations that the Tatars are now experiencing following Russia's illegal annexation. Separately I met representatives of Russia-based civil society groups, who detailed the worrying trends of restrictions and threats that such groups face from the Russian authorities. Both meetings underlined the need for tough messages to be given to Russia about its conduct both in eastern Ukraine and Crimea, and also within Russia where human rights must be properly respected.

[...]

Russia and Ukraine: Restrictive Measures

30 Jul 2014 | 755 cc153-4WS

Baroness Warsi (Senior Minister of State, Foreign and Commonwealth Office): I wish to update the House on the matter of restricted measures applied against Russia, in light of the situation in Ukraine.

On 25 July, the European Council added 15 more persons and 18 entities responsible for action against Ukraine's territorial integrity, to the list of those subject to an asset freeze and a visa ban.

The European Council also widened the designation criteria in the legal basis for restrictive measures to be applied. This paved the way for imposing asset freezes and visa bans on persons and entities that actively support or are benefiting from Russian decision makers responsible for the annexation of Crimea or the destabilisation of eastern Ukraine.

Following the conclusions of the special meeting of the European Council of 16 July, the escalation of violence in eastern Ukraine, and the killing of almost 300 innocent civilians on board Malaysian Airlines flight MH17, the EU agreed to strengthen restrictive measures against Russia.

On 29 July, the EU agreed a package of significant additional restrictive measures targeting sectoral co-operation and exchanges with the Russian Federation.

These restrictive measures will:

- limit access to EU primary and secondary capital markets for Russian state-owned financial institutions;
- impose an embargo on trade in arms;
- establish an export ban for dual use goods for military end users; and
- curtail Russian access to certain sensitive technologies that can be used for oil production and exploration.

The European Council also on 29 July agreed to a ban on European investment in key sectors in Crimea and to add eight further persons, some which could be considered to fall in to the “crony” category as well as three entities to the list of those subject to an asset freeze and a visa ban. This will bring the number of persons currently under EU sanctions in connection with the situation in Ukraine to 95, while the number of entities will rise to 23.

The 29 July package reinforces the measures already adopted by the EU since March 2014 on the situation in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea.

These restrictive measures are a response to the unacceptable Russian behaviour in destabilising another country and are aimed at applying pressure to Russia to change such behaviour. These measures are designed to have a cost for the Russian economy.

Work on this package within the European Union has been aimed at ensuring that it is fair and balanced, has economic impact shared evenly across the EU, and has more impact on Russia than on the EU itself.

Any further measures, should these be required, would be proportionate, carefully constructed and designed to keep pressure on the Russian authorities to act to restore and ensure Ukraine’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

An Amended Regulation on listing further names of entities and individuals—from the 29 July decisions—and a Council Decision and Council Regulation on the Crimea investment ban will be agreed by written procedure today. A Council Decision and Council Regulation on so-called “Tier 3” sectoral restrictive measures will be agreed by written procedure tomorrow. Restrictions are expected to come into effect on 1 August.

Copies of these documents will be deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

European Council

10 Mar 2014 | 577 cc25-44

[Extract: only the Prime Minister's opening statement is included below]

David Cameron (Prime Minister): With permission, Mr Speaker, I would like to make a statement on last week's emergency European Council.

What has happened to Ukraine is completely indefensible. Its territorial integrity has been violated and the aspirations of its people to chart their own future are being frustrated.

This European Council sent a clear and united message to Russia that its actions are in flagrant breach of international law and will incur consequences. We agreed on a three-phase approach to stand up to this aggression and uphold international law: first, some immediate steps to respond to what Russia has done; secondly, urgent work on a set of measures that will follow if Russia refuses to enter dialogue with the Ukrainian Government; and thirdly, a set of further, far-reaching consequences should Russia take further steps to destabilise the situation in Ukraine.

Let me say a word on each of those steps. First, as a response to what Russia has already done, we agreed on some immediate steps. We have suspended preparations for the G8 in Sochi indefinitely. As I told the House last week, my view is that it would be completely wrong for a G8 summit to go ahead at all under current circumstances. We decided to stop work on a comprehensive new agreement on relations between Russia and the European Union, and we immediately suspended the talks that were under way on a more liberal visa regime in the Schengen area—the thing that Russian Ministers and business delegations have pushed for more than anything else.

Here in Britain, I have ordered an urgent review of all Government business with Russia. We have already announced that no Ministers or members of the royal family will visit the Sochi Paralympics. Many other planned ministerial-level contacts will be cancelled in current circumstances. All bilateral military co-operation is under review, with the presumption that we will suspend it, except for work carried out to fulfil international treaty obligations, such as European arms control inspections. I have ordered a review of licences for arms exports to Russia. It is hard to see how anything that could be used in Ukraine could be justified. As with other measures, it is best if possible to take these decisions in concert with our European allies.

There has been intense work to persuade Russia to come to the negotiating table with the Government of Ukraine and to discuss its stated concerns face to face. The idea of such a contact group, including other countries and organisations, was one I first proposed to the Polish Prime Minister back in January. The European Council agreed it was essential for such talks to start within the next few days and for them to deliver progress quickly. We also agreed that if Russia did not co-operate there would need to be further measures—the so-called second phase—which would need to start rapidly.

Therefore, at my instigation, the Council tasked the European Commission to begin work on additional measures which could be taken against Russia if these talks do not get going or do not start producing results. These will include asset freezes and travel bans. We are working closely with our American, European and other international partners to prepare a list of names, and these sanctions, plus the measures already agreed against Yanukovich and his circle, will be the focus of a meeting here in London tomorrow with key international partners.

There is an urgent need to de-escalate tension in Crimea. We are all clear that any referendum vote in Crimea this week will be illegal, illegitimate and will not be recognised by the international community. In addition, I have to say that any campaign would be completely impractical as well as illegal. There is no proper register or proper campaign, and the territory is covered with troops. It is completely impossible for a proper referendum campaign to be carried out. As I discussed with Chancellor Merkel last night in Hanover, Russia can choose the path of de-escalation by signalling it understands that the outcome cannot be acted on as legitimate. Chancellor Merkel and I were clear that any attempt by Russia to legitimise an illegal referendum would require us to respond by ratcheting up the pressure further.

Thirdly, and most significantly, we agreed that it was essential to stop Russia taking further unacceptable steps in Ukraine. The Council agreed that if further steps are taken by Russia to destabilise Ukraine, there will be additional and far-reaching consequences for the relationship between the Russian Federation on the one hand and the European Union and its member states on the other. The Council conclusions state that these consequences would

“include a broad range of economic areas.”

Britain played a leading role in helping to reach this agreement, including through a meeting I convened with fellow leaders from France, Germany, Italy and Poland on the morning of the Council. Such sanctions would have consequences for many EU member states, including Britain, but as I argued at the meeting, the costs of not standing up to aggression are far greater. Britain's own security and prosperity would be at risk if we allow a situation where countries can just flout international rules without incurring consequences.

Finally, we decided to send a political message of support to the Ukrainian Government and people. The interim Ukrainian President spoke at the European Council with great power and force. The Ukrainian people want the freedom to be able to choose their own future and strengthen their ties with Europe, and they want a future free from the awful corruption that they have endured for far too long.

At the request of the Ukrainian Prime Minister, we therefore agreed to bring forward the signing of the political part of the EU's association agreement with Ukraine, and we agreed to help Ukraine tackle corruption. The EU has now frozen the assets of 18 people linked to the former regime, and Britain has deployed a team to Kiev from our

National Crime Agency to help the new Ukrainian Government go after ill-gotten funds and return them to the Ukrainian people.

It is now vital that Ukraine proceeds towards free and fair elections that enable all Ukrainians, including Russian speakers and minorities, to choose their leaders freely, so Britain is now providing substantial and immediate technical assistance to Ukraine to support elections and assist with reforms on public finance management, debt management and energy pricing. Ukraine also needs support to stabilise and repair its economy. The EU agreed unilaterally to lower trade tariffs, and to work with the International Monetary Fund on a package of financial assistance to the Ukrainian Government.

As I agreed with President Obama during our call this weekend, there is still an opportunity for Russia to resolve this situation diplomatically. It should engage in direct talks with the Ukrainians, return Russian troops to their bases in Crimea, withdraw its support for this illegal and unconstitutional referendum in Crimea, and work with the rest of the international community to support free and fair elections in Ukraine in May. No one should be interested in a tug of war. Ukraine should be able to choose its own future and act as a bridge between Russia and Europe.

Britain's own future depends on a world where countries obey the rules. In Europe, we have spent the past 70 years working to keep the peace, and we know from history that turning a blind eye when nations are trampled over stores up greater problems for the longer term. We must stand up to aggression, uphold international law and support the Ukrainian Government and the Ukrainian people, who want the freedom to choose their own future. That is right for Ukraine, right for Europe, right for Britain. I commend this statement to the House.

This statement was repeated and debated in the House of Lords
[\[752 cc1579-1590\]](#)

5.3 Early Day Motions

THE ILLEGAL ORGANISATION OF THE RUSSIAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION IN UKRAINE

EDM 1067 (session 2017-19)

13 March 2018

John Grogan

That this House welcomes the address of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine to the International Community regarding the organisation of the Presidential Elections of the Russian Federation in the Temporarily Occupied Areas of the Territory of Ukraine, the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol; notes that on 18 March 2014 the Russian Federation illegally annexed the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol; further notes that over the four years since that time, the Russian Federation has been committing a crime of aggression against Ukraine and occupying parts of its territory and that the Russian authorities are planning to hold elections for the President of the Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territories of the autonomous Republic of Crimea, where they have detained many Crimean Tatar leaders for their opposition to the annexation and the City of Sevastopol on 18 March 2018 in violation of the UN Charter; and concludes that the conduct of the election for the President of Russian Federation in the temporarily occupied territory of Ukraine is illegal.

IMPRISONMENT OF UKRAINIANS BY RUSSIAN AUTHORITIES

EDM 679 (session 2017-19)

12 December 2017

Stephen Gethins

That this House notes with concern the imprisonment of Ukrainians by Russian authorities in Crimea and other parts of Ukraine; is concerned by reports that the UN Human Rights Monitoring Mission in Ukraine continues to be denied access to Crimea; and urges Russian authorities to ensure free access to international human rights monitoring missions as well as other human rights organizations and non-governmental organisations to Crimea.

6. Further reading

Library Briefing Papers

[Cool conflicts in Russia's near neighbourhood](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-8477
21 January 2019

[Ukraine - summary of developments in 2015 and 2016](#)

Commons Briefing Paper CBP-7479
22 January 2016

[Ukraine, Crimea and Russia](#)

Commons Briefing Paper RP14-16
17 March 2014

Committee reports and inquiries

[The EU and Russia: before and beyond the crisis in Ukraine](#)

House of Lords European Union Committee
20 February 2015

- The EU must ratchet up sanctions on Russia if the situation in Ukraine worsens, this Lords report warned. The report also stated that Russia's action in a sovereign territory was unacceptable, but that in the run-up to the crisis, mistakes were made by the EU as well as Russia.

[Russia and Ukraine](#)

House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee
4 September 2014

- This was a one-off oral evidence session on Russia and Ukraine to examine Russian foreign policy in Europe and the UK's policy response so far to the crisis in Ukraine and Russian actions in the region.

United Nations resolution

[Territorial integrity of Ukraine](#)

UN General Assembly Resolution 68/262
27 March 2019

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