

Lord Ahmad sets out the UK's support for Ukraine to the UN General Assembly

Mr President, Secretary-General, Your Excellencies,

The United Kingdom is unwavering in its support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

We stand with the people of Ukraine. We stand with their right to determine their own future.

President Putin's decision to recognise the so-called 'Donetsk People's Republic' and 'Luhansk People's Republic' as independent states, proves beyond doubt that Russia has chosen the path of confrontation over the path of diplomacy and dialogue.

Mr Putin has ordered his troops into Ukrainian territory. This amounts to a further invasion of Ukraine.

At every step, Russia has rebuffed offers of diplomacy and discarded its international commitments – commitments it has agreed and signed up to – rather it has decided to pursue a campaign to redraw Ukraine's internationally-recognised borders by force.

It is vital that we, the international community, respond.

We must understand the grave nature of where we are today.

Together, we must call on Russia to uphold the very founding principles of the United Nations, established precisely, as you said yourself Mr President, to end the scourge of war. Peace must prevail.

We must highlight the human cost and respond to the humanitarian consequences of any further Russian military action.

We know this would take a terrible toll on Ukrainians and Russians alike – both victims of an unnecessary war of the Kremlin's choosing.

And it is therefore essential that we must meet Russia's aggressive acts with solidarity, with strength, including co-ordinated sanctions, to impose a severe cost on Russia's interests and their economy.

Yesterday, the UK announced new sanctions targeting billions of Russian assets. This is the largest sanctions package against Russia in British history, and it is part of our coordinated sanctions effort, alongside our allies.

But Mr President we are clear, acting together with our allies, that this is just the start. If Russia continues its campaign of aggression, we have a further package of sanctions ready to go.

We urge the wider international community to join us in this effort. The Kremlin must understand the strength of the world's condemnation of President Putin's war of choice.

Let us pause for a moment to reflect that this very week marks 8 years since Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol.

It also marks 8 years since Russia forcibly seized 10,000 square miles of sovereign Ukrainian territory, in flagrant violation of international law and Russia's own international commitments.

And it's also 8 years since we, the General Assembly, recalled through resolution 68/262 the obligations of all States under Article 2 of the UN Charter, to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State of the United Nations.

Yet 8 years on, tragically, here we are again. Confronted by Russian aggression against the sovereignty of Ukraine.

As the Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has made clear, Russia's unilateral measures conflict directly with the principles of the UN Charter.

Their actions are a fundamental challenge to global peace and security, and a challenge to the international order on which we all rely – and equally important, it is for all of us to protect.

We must condemn unequivocally this aggression together and stop President Putin's expansionist ambitions.

We must hold Russia to its commitments under the UN Charter, and say to Russia pull back – choose peace, not war – whilst also sending a clear message to the people of Ukraine that in your hour of need, we the international community, we the United Nations, stand with you.

Thank you.