

PM statement on the situation in Ukraine: 22 February 2022

PM statement in the House Of Commons

Thank you Mr Speaker,

With permission I will make a statement about the situation in Ukraine.

Last night, President Putin flagrantly violated the Minsk peace agreements by recognising the supposed independence of the so-called “People’s Republics” of Donetsk and Luhansk in eastern Ukraine.

In a single inflammatory speech, he denied that Ukraine had any “tradition of genuine statehood”, claimed that it posed a “direct threat to the security of Russia”, and hurled numerous other false accusations and aspersions.

Soon afterwards, the Kremlin announced that Russian troops would enter the breakaway regions under the guise of “peacekeepers”, and Russian tanks and armoured personnel carriers have since been spotted.

The House should be in no doubt that the deployment of these forces in sovereign Ukrainian territory amounts to a renewed invasion of that country.

And by denying Ukraine’s legitimacy as a state – and presenting its very existence as a mortal threat to Russia – Putin is establishing the pretext for a full-scale offensive.

I think Honourable Members will struggle to understand how or to contemplate, how in the year 2022, a national leader might calmly and deliberately plot the destruction of a peaceful neighbour, yet the evidence of his own words suggests that is exactly what President Putin is doing.

When I said on Saturday that his scheme to subvert and invade Ukraine was already in motion before our eyes, the events of the last 24 hours have, sadly, shown this to be true.

We must now brace ourselves for the next possible stages of Putin’s plan: the violent subversion of areas of eastern Ukraine by Russian operatives and their hirelings, followed by a general offensive by the nearly 200,000 Russian troops gathered on the frontiers, at peak readiness to attack.

If the worst happens, then a European nation of 44 million men, women and children would become the target of a full-scale war of aggression, waged without a shred of justification, for the absurd and even mystical reasons that Putin described last night.

Unless the situation changes, the best efforts of the United States, of this country, France, Germany, and other allies to avoid conflict through patient diplomacy may be in vain.

From the beginning, we have all tried our utmost, we've all tried, to find a peaceful way through this crisis.

On 11th February, my Right Honourable Friend the Defence Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Staff, Admiral Radakin, paid the first joint visit to Moscow by the holders of their offices since Churchill – who was also defence minister at the time – travelled to Russia with General Alanbrooke in 1944.

They held over three hours of frank discussions with the Russian defence minister, General Shoigu, and the chief of staff, General Gerasimov, demonstrating how seriously we take Russia's security concerns, how much we respect her history, and how hard we are prepared to work to ensure peaceful co-existence.

My Right Honourable Friend the Foreign Secretary delivered the same messages when she met her Russian counterpart in Moscow on the 10th of February.

I have spoken on a number of occasions to President Putin since this crisis began and so has President Biden, while President Macron and Chancellor Scholz have both visited Moscow.

Together we have explored every avenue and given Putin every opportunity to pursue his aims by negotiation and diplomacy.

And I will tell the house, we will not give up: we will continue to seek a diplomatic solution until the last possible second, but we have to face the possibility that none of our messages has been heeded and Putin is implacably determined to go further in subjugating and tormenting Ukraine.

And it is because we suspected as much that the UK and our allies repeatedly sounded the alarm about a possible new invasion, and we disclosed much of what we knew about Russia's military build-up.

Britain has done everything possible to help Ukraine to prepare for another onslaught, training 22,000 soldiers, supplying 2,000 anti-tank missiles, and providing £100 million for economic reform and energy independence, and we will now guarantee up to \$500 million of Development Bank financing.

I travelled to Kyiv to meet President Zelenskyy on the 1st February, and I saw him again in Munich on Saturday. I spoke to him last night, soon after Putin's speech, to assure him, as I'm sure the whole House would agree was the right thing to do, I assured him of Britain's unwavering support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

And now the UK and our allies will begin to impose the sanctions on Russia that we have already prepared, using the new and unprecedented powers granted by this House to sanction Russian individuals and entities of strategic importance to the Kremlin.

Today, the UK is sanctioning the following five Russian banks: Rossiya, IS Bank, General Bank, promsvyazbank and the Black Sea Bank. And we are sanctioning three very high net worth individuals: Gennady Timchenko, Boris Rotenberg, and Igor Rotenberg.

Any assets they hold in the UK will be frozen, the individuals concerned will be banned from travelling here, and we will prohibit all UK individuals and entities from having any dealings with them.

This is the first tranche, the first barrage, of what we are prepared to do: we will hold further sanctions at readiness, to be deployed alongside the United States and the European Union if the situation escalates still further.

Last night, our diplomats joined an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council, and we will raise the situation in the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

And let me emphasise what I believe unites every member of this House with equal determination: the resolve of the United Kingdom to defend our NATO allies is absolute and immovable.

We have already doubled the size of our deployment in Estonia, where the British Army leads NATO's battlegroup, and when I met President Levits of Latvia and Prime Minister Kallas of Estonia in Munich on Saturday, I told them that we would be willing to send more British forces to help protect our allies if NATO makes such a request.

We cannot tell what will happen in the days ahead, but, Mr Speaker, we should steel ourselves for a protracted crisis.

The United Kingdom will meet this challenge side-by-side with our allies, determined that we will not allow Putin to drag our continent back into a Hobbesian state of nature, where aggression pays and might is right.

And it is precisely because the stakes are so high that Putin's venture in Ukraine must fail, must ultimately fail and be seen to fail. That will require the perseverance, the unity and the resolve of the entire Western alliance, and Britain will do everything possible to ensure that that unity is maintained.

And now our thoughts should turn to our valiant Ukrainian friends, who threaten no-one, and ask for nothing except to live in peace and freedom.

We will keep faith with them in the critical days that lie ahead and whatever happens, Mr Speaker, Britain will not waver in our resolve and I commend this statement to the House.

[Opportunities to inform the](#)

Independent State Pension age review

We are seeking academics and experts to support the independent [State Pension age review](#). This will provide an opportunity to inform assessments on the relevant factors, metrics and relative effectiveness of these in determining our recommendations on future State Pension age changes. The experts will provide advice to Baroness Neville-Rolfe, the Independent Reviewer, at key stages throughout the development of the Independent Report.

The successful candidates will not receive remuneration, but travel expenses will be met. A forward look of scheduled meetings will provide notice and timings. Physical attendance may be required.

Background

The government is required by the Pensions Act 2014 to conduct a review of State Pension age every 6 years. This helps to ensure the way that the State Pension age is set is robust, transparent and provides fairness to both taxpayers and pensioners. The independent report on other specified factors will provide evidence to inform the government review and is led by Baroness Neville-Rolfe. Read the [terms of reference](#).

Expectation of advisers

Advisers are sought from academia, institutions, think tanks and elsewhere. They should have the requisite knowledge and experience on the subject matters of the review and standing in their field of expertise.

We may be sharing information in confidence which will inform the government review. Advisers will be expected to abide to the principles, that they cannot share, duplicate, or quote from unpublished work in any respect. Terms of reference will be drawn up to reinforce the confidentiality rule.

Advisers will be invited to participate in periodic meetings on dates to be agreed. We anticipate input may be required until the end of August. Specific tasks may include:

- in reference to factors on determining State Pension age, provide advice on:
 - which factors could be taken into consideration when considering how to set entitlement to State Pension age in the future
 - identification of relevant sources of evidence and expert assessment of its strengths
 - any other factors to be addressed by the independent report and the selection of evidence
- provide advice on emerging recommendations and share opinions with Baroness Neville-Rolfe and her representatives
- read and assess drafts of sections of the independent report
- participate in meetings to discuss policy development and provide expert

and technical advice

Time commitment

We estimate that the adviser will spend an hour per month in discussion with Baroness Neville-Rolfe up to August 2022 and a further 5 hours reading or writing over that period. This is a guide as the actual requirement is difficult to predict without having a conversation between the parties.

Skills

The skills and attributes that are necessary for the adviser to have are:

1. established expertise in the field of one or more of the following:
 - longevity and ageing (including life expectancies and inequalities)
 - health and disability-free and healthy life expectancies
 - older people and the labour market
 - intergenerational fairness
 - UK pensions
 - fiscal challenges especially those associated with an ageing population
2. understanding of the social and economic context and the range of views of prospective stakeholders
3. the ability to explain complex subjects to a non-expert audience orally and in writing
4. the ability to offer the Independent Reviewer impartial advice
5. maintain confidentiality until the final report is published

The adviser will be expected to declare potential conflicts of interest and offer Baroness Neville-Rolfe impartial advice, regardless of any personal or professional interest.

Applications

Expression of Interest:

Interested candidates should send a CV and covering letter (no longer than 2 sides) setting out their suitability for the post to:

ind.statepensionagereview@dpw.gov.uk.

Closing date: midnight on 11 March 2022.

We expect informal interviews will be conducted remotely and likely to take place in late March. The appointment is subject to agreement to abide by the confidentiality rules and approval by Baroness Neville-Rolfe.

About the State Pension Age Independent Review

The Independent Report will be published its finding later this year

For more information please contact: ind.statepensionagereview@dpw.gov.uk

Ambulance crews urge drivers to respect the Red X

Ambulances on a blue light run need to get to their patients as quickly as possible without the fear of encountering motorists who obstruct their route, delaying crucial time to life-threatening incidents.

Using Red X signals, National Highways can close lanes to allow ambulance crews and other emergency services to have a clear route. Traffic officers can also close lanes to provide ambulance crews with a safe working environment while they are on scene dealing with casualties and saving lives.

National Highways has joined forces with ambulance chiefs to raise awareness of why it is so important to comply with a Red X.

Association of Ambulance Chief Executives (AACE) Managing Director, Martin Flaherty OBE, said:

The Association of Ambulance Chief Executives fully supports the National Highways campaign to improve public understanding of the important role Red X signs over closed motorway lanes play in helping protect drivers and other road users from imminent dangers ahead.

It is important to remember that 999 ambulances on blue lights may be trying to reach critically ill patients on motorway lanes where Red X signs are in force, for example, after a serious road traffic collision. If those lanes are blocked by drivers who should not be there, ambulance crews could be delayed in reaching patients who urgently need our life saving skills.

We want drivers to understand that the Red X lane is closed for the safety of all – and especially to protect the scene of an accident and those emergency and essential services who may be on the carriageway to deal with the aftermath.

National Highways' Road Safety Team Leader, Jamie Hassall, said:

Ambulance crews do an amazing job in saving lives but need space to work safely. Although it may not be immediately obvious why a lane is closed, we will have done so for a good reason so it's important for drivers to respect the X and move out of the closed lane.

A Red X signal is there for the safety of everyone on the road – people in difficulty, traffic officers, recovery and emergency

services helping them, and all other road users besides.

Thankfully, the vast majority of drivers do comply with the signals but those who don't put themselves and others at risk.

In June 2019 there was a change in legislation which meant cameras can now automatically detect vehicles that ignore a Red X so the police can take enforcement action.

It has been an offence for more than two decades to drive in a lane closed by a Red X and can result in a fixed penalty of up to £100 and three points or, in some cases, more severe penalties or a court appearance.

In April 2021 National Highways committed to accelerating the completion of its camera upgrade programme regarding the automatic detection of Red X offences. This means by the end of September this year it will have upgraded all cameras that automatically detect vehicles passing illegally under a Red X or entering the lane beyond a Red X. This is 10 months earlier than previously planned.

The Red X signals are one of a raft of measures to help keep people safe if they break down on motorways. National Highways has this month relaunched a campaign to remind drivers what to do in the event of a breakdown.

The campaign aims to help drivers feel safer, particularly when travelling on busy motorways, and is offering clear and simple advice on what to do in an emergency – go left, get safe, get help.

If drivers have vehicle trouble and cannot leave the motorway the advice is:

Go left:

- put your left indicator on and move into an emergency area, onto a hard shoulder, motorway service area, left-hand verge or A-road lay-by.
- switch your hazard warning lights on, even during the day. If it's dark, use side lights and in poor visibility use fog lights as well.
- on a motorway without a hard shoulder, it should be possible for most vehicles experiencing a problem to reach an emergency area. These are regularly spaced and are marked by a clearly visible orange road surface and blue signs featuring an orange SOS telephone symbol.

Get safe:

- if it is safe to do so, and you can get out with any passengers, exit your vehicle on the side furthest from traffic. If it is not safe to do so, stay in your vehicle and wait for help.
- Keep well away from moving traffic and your own vehicle. Get behind a safety barrier where there is one, and where it is safe to do so. If you're on a verge, be aware of any unseen hazards such as uneven ground or debris.

Get help

- contact National Highways on 0300 123 5000 and then a breakdown recovery provider.
- if you are unable to exit your vehicle and get to a safe place, have stopped in a live traffic lane or feel your life is in danger, stay in your vehicle with your seatbelts and hazard lights on and call 999 immediately.

Drivers should always speak to National Highways before leaving an emergency area as operators can set signals, close a lane and warn approaching traffic that a vehicle is about to exit the area to help them re-join the motorway safely.

Visit our website for advice about [what to do in a breakdown](#).

National Highways has also launched a new [Driving on motorways hub](#). It provides information about the main features of smart motorways, and advice and guidance on safer driving and what to do in an emergency.

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the National Highways customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Journalists should contact the National Highways press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.

[Senior Investigation Support Officer – Southampton](#)

News story

We have an exciting new vacancy at MAIB and are looking for someone to join our investigation support team.



Responsibilities may include but are not limited to

- Line management of three Investigation Support Officers.
- Receiving and processing accident reports accurately and quickly so that they may be assessed by the Principal Inspector of Marine Accidents. This task also involves proactive monitoring of the HM Coastguard live online system for registering and reporting on the progress of search and rescue activities.
- Logistical support to a team of inspectors including making travel and accommodation bookings, and helping to establish contact with key stakeholders at the early stages of an investigation. For one week in four this may be required out of normal office hours.
- Database entry, interrogation, and quality assurance. The postholder will work with the MAIB's Database Administrator to maintain the integrity of the data held and provide support in its retrieval and analysis.

For further information about this position and how to apply see [Civil Service Jobs, MAIB Senior Investigation Support Officer, Ref: 185793](#).

Closing date: Monday 7 March 2022.

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[**UK provides emergency support to**](#)

Madagascar after Cyclone Batsirai

World news story

The UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford has announced £500,000 of UK aid for Madagascar following the devastating impacts of Cyclone Batsirai.



On 15 February, the UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford, has announced £500,000 of UK aid for Madagascar following the devastating impacts of Cyclone Batsirai.

The powerful Category 4 Tropical Cyclone has killed 121, left 230,000 people in need and destroyed essential infrastructure such as roads and schools, with the east coast and southern central highland areas being the hardest hit.

The £500,000 of UK support will go to an International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) Appeal – as a first tranche of aid – to help provide shelter, clean water, food and support livelihoods for around 50,000 people in the most vulnerable regions of Madagascar.

UK Minister for Africa Vicky Ford said:

The cyclone that has hit Madagascar is another blow to a region already made vulnerable by vicious storms across Southern Africa. They have destroyed livelihoods and displaced hundreds of thousands of people.

The UK is providing immediate support to those most in need through our partners on the ground, helping Madagascar recover from such destructive natural disasters.

Tropical Cyclone Batsirai follows Tropical Storm Ana in January, which affected upwards of one million people across Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

The UK continues to monitor the situation closely and is working with local

authorities and partners to assess impacts.

- read [more about the IRFC appeal](#), which also includes an ask for support on the heavy rains which affected Madagascar between 17 to 23 January 2022, and tropical storm Ana on 23 January 2022
- in addition, the UK is also a significant contributor to the Red Cross Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) which has allocated funding of CHF750,000 (approximately £600,000)
- the UK is also a contributor to the Start Network, a multilateral humanitarian fund, which has already set aside nearly £420,000 of assistance through cash transfers to those most in need

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