

1 new update

Ukraine crisis latest news: Kyiv urges EU to provide air defences as Russia invades on multiple fronts

LIVE Updated 6m ago **Ukraine also calls for ‘fiercest restrictions’ against Belarus; former Ukraine defence minister says Russian troops trying to get to Kyiv**

Russia invades Ukraine as Putin declares war to ‘demilitarise’ neighbour

Stay or flee? Kyiv comes to terms with disaster of Russian invasion

Russia has invaded Ukraine: what we know so far

UK PM promises massive sanctions to ‘hobble’ Russian economy

Analysis: Moment that Putin thundered to war

Léonie Chao-Fong (*now*), **Jennifer Rankin**, **Oliver Holmes** and **Samantha Lock** (*earlier*)

Thu 24 Feb 2022 12.27 EST

Key events

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1h ago Summary

2h ago EU to sanction Belarus for supporting Putin's invasion – leak

3h ago Ukraine urges EU to provide air-defences, sanction Belarus

4h ago Four killed in hospital attack, says Ukraine

5h ago Johnson says UK and its allies will ‘hobble Russian economy’ with sanctions

5h ago Russia invading on multiple fronts, says former Ukrainian defence minister

6h ago EU vows ‘massive’ sanctions on Russia

Live feed

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Show key events only

From 3h ago

09:49

Ukraine urges EU to provide air-defences, sanction Belarus

Ukraine is calling on the European Union and its member states to urgently provide air-defence and anti-missile systems, as well as use “all means” to jam Russian satellite signals.

In a list of requests sent to the EU leaders ahead of an emergency summit on Thursday night in Brussels, **Ukraine also calls for the “fiercest restriction measures against Belarus, which directly supported [the] Russian full-scale invasion”.**

The paper, drafted by Ukrainian diplomats in Brussels and seen by the Guardian, also calls for:

ending software licenses for military and civilian equipment in Russia and Belarus;
blocking or interfering with Russian satellite navigation systems in the air, over the Black Sea and Sea of Azov;
using all means **to block the Russian satellite navigation system Glonass**, including jamming its signal over the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, Belarus and Ukrainian airspace.
As well as an appeal to **end “business as usual” with Russia**, Kyiv wants the EU to open its emergency aid system (the civil protection mechanism) to Ukrainians.



Military helicopters apparently Russian, fly over the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine Photograph: AP

Updated at 9.57am EST

6m ago 12:27

At least 705 people have been arrested today at anti-war protests that have taken place in 40 Russian cities, the OVD-Info protest monitor said.

The OVD-Info monitor has documented crackdowns on Russia’s opposition for years.

16m ago 12:17

The UK will impose the “largest and most severe” package of economic sanctions Russia “has ever seen”, Boris Johnson says.

The UK prime minister has been addressing the House of Commons, where he said the UK will do its “utmost” to offer support to Ukraine.

All major Russian banks will be excluded from the UK financial system and a full asset freeze is being imposed on VBT, Russia’s second-largest bank.

There will be limits on the amount Russians can have in British bank accounts, with asset freezes extended to around 100 more people.

Airline Aeroflot will be banned from the UK.

Similar measures will be imposed on Belarus, Johnson added.

Describing Vladimir Putin as a “bloodstained aggressor who believes in imperial conquest”, the PM said Putin was “always determined to attack his neighbour, no matter what we did”, adding:

Putin will stand condemned in the eyes of the world and history. He will never be able to cleanse the blood of Ukraine from his hands.



Boris Johnson updating MPs in the House of Commons on the latest situation regarding Ukraine. Photograph: House of Commons/PA

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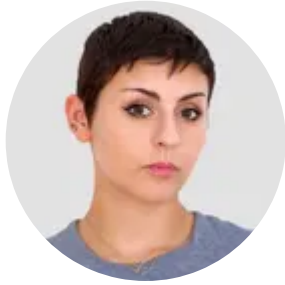


32m ago 12:01

The UK prime minister Boris Johnson is making a statement to MPs about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He is expected to focus on the beefed-up sanctions being imposed by the UK in response.

For more live updates from the UK, here is Andrew Sparrow’s live blog. I will continue here with global Ukraine coverage, and the top lines that emerge in the UK.

Updated at 12.05pm EST

38m ago 11:55

Ruth Michaelson

An errant Russian missile struck a Turkish-owned ship off the coast of the Ukrainian port city of Odesa in the Black Sea, *our reporter Ruth Michaelson writes.*

The ship, Yasa Jupiter, was flying under the flag of the Marshall Islands, and reported no casualties or injuries following the incident.

Pictures from Turkish channel *NTV* showed destruction on board:

The Turkish general directorate of maritime affairs said the ship issued no request for help and was now in transit to Romania.

Turkey is under increasing international pressure, particularly from Ukraine, to prevent Russian warships from passing through the Bosphorus and Dardanelles straits, which provide entry to the Black Sea.

Despite maintaining alliances with both Ukraine and Russia, the conflict in Ukraine is likely to negatively impact the Turkish economy and test Turkey's membership of Nato. Turkey's membership of the alliance was already under pressure following its decision to purchase Russia's S400 missile defence system, leading to sanctions from the US.

Earlier today, Turkey's foreign ministry condemned Russian action in Ukraine.

We find the military operation launched unacceptable, and reject it. This attack, beyond destroying the Minsk agreement, is a grave violation of law and a serious threat to the security of our region and the world. The territorial integrity and sovereignty of countries should be respected.

It added:

Our support for the political unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine Updated at 12.07pm EST

45m ago 11:48

Shah Meer Baloch

Pakistan's prime minister, Imran Khan, is the first leader to meet President Putin after Moscow attacked Ukraine this morning, *writes Shah Meer Baloch in Islamabad.*

Khan arrived in Moscow yesterday on a two-day trip when tensions between Kyiv and Moscow were rising but Putin had not ordered a military attack on Ukraine.

Khan was given a guard of honour on his arrival in Moscow. On his arrival to Moscow, Khan said:

What a time I have come here. So much excitement.

The opposition and experts raised concerns over Khan's visit, describing it as "ill-timed". Michael Kugelman of the Wilson Center in the US said:

There is a risk that Khan's visit to Moscow will be perceived by many in the west as an indirect endorsement of Putin's decree on eastern Ukraine - a move that much of the world has condemned and that Pakistan itself likely does not support.

Even though Khan's visit was planned weeks ago and focuses on bilateral relations, the timing will raise eyebrows and present some problems of optics.

Khan was in Moscow during military attacks on Ukraine. Indian media, such as *the Hindu* and a few more media networks shared fake news that Khan had ended his two-day visit to Moscow after the attack on Ukraine. Pakistan denied the news.

Adil Shahzeb, a Pakistani journalist tweeted from Moscow that both Russian and Pakistani officials had denied reports that Khan had ended the visit.

There is no cancellation of the visit, PM Khan will be meeting President Putin as per schedule. Khan's planned interaction with the media has been cancelled.

Pakistan and the US do not enjoy cordial relations and the US blames Pakistan for its dubious role in Afghanistan.

Husain Haqqani, a former ambassador to the US and a scholar, told the Guardian:

Imran Khan has consistently signalled his derision for the US and the west while also seeking economic assistance. The timing of his visit to Russia will only reaffirm his anti-western worldview.

The image of Pakistan's prime minister next to Vladimir Putin soon after Putin's invasion of Ukraine will not endear Pakistan to Americans or western Europeans.



Imran Khan and Vladimir Putin meeting at the Kremlin Palace in Moscow on Thursday. Photograph: Anadolu Agency/Getty Images

Updated at 12.11pm EST

1h ago 11:37

Russia's president Vladimir Putin has 're-introduced war to the European continent', the leaders of the G7 have said.

In a joint statement following a virtual meeting, the leaders of France, Germany, Japan, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada as well as the European Commission president, Ursula von der Leyen, the European Council president, Charles Michel, and the Nato secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg, strongly condemned Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The crisis is a "serious threat to the rules-based international order, with ramifications well beyond Europe", the G7 leaders said, adding that Putin had "put himself on the wrong side of history".

The statement reads:

We condemn President Putin for his consistent refusal to engage in a diplomatic process to address questions pertaining to European security, despite our repeated offers.

We stand united with partners, including Nato, the EU and their member states as well as Ukraine and remain determined to do what is necessary to preserve the integrity of the rules-based international order.

Updated at 12.13pm EST

1h ago 11:28

Russian troops based in Belarus are advancing towards Kyiv, the UK's Ministry of Defence has said.

In its intelligence update posted on Twitter at 4pm UK time, the ministry said Russia had conducted an air assault on an airfield on the outskirts of Kyiv.

Strikes had been delivered through "a combination of Russian ground, air and sea-launched missiles and by artillery bombardment" and had targeted military infrastructure, it said.

Heavy casualties had been suffered on both sides, the ministry said, although exact numbers were currently unclear.

Updated at 12.14pm EST

1h ago 11:21



Luke Harding

At 6pm local time there were huge queues of cars trying to escape Kyiv and to head west, *writes Luke Harding in the Ukrainian capital.*

The main road out of the city was jammed with vehicles including buses and taxis. The queue was stationary for much of the time. Drivers stood next to their vehicles, patiently waiting for the route to clear.

Over at the capital's central train station, Kyiv-Pasazhyrskyi, hundreds of passengers were seeking to leave. There were long queues for tickets and information. Several trains had been cancelled - red on the departure board - but others were functioning as normal. Many milled around with luggage but no tickets.

A group of Pakistani students from the International European university in Kyiv said they had found a taxi to take them to Lviv for \$500. One said:

We've been here for our studies. Maybe we will stay in the west, maybe we will come back.

We can't go to Poland because we don't have visas.

Several families were among those trying to depart including a group with a baby in a pram, and a couple with a pet dachshund.

This vast human exodus seemed out of place in 2022 and more of a throw-back to Europe's dark last century, all caused by the paranoid behaviour of one man.



A woman reacts as she waits for a train trying to leave Kyiv, Ukraine, on Thursday. Photograph: Emilio Morenatti/AP



People stand in front of the train schedule at Central Railway Station as they try to leave Kyiv. Photograph: Volodymyr Petrov/Reuters

Updated at 11.50am EST

1h ago 11:14

The mayor of Kyiv has ordered a curfew in Ukraine’s capital from 10pm to 7am, according to a statement shared on his official Facebook page.

Public transport will not work during curfew, Kyiv’s mayor, Vitali Klitschko, writes. but metro stations will be available as shelters around the clock.

Klitschko writes:

We ask all Kyivites to return home on time. If you need to move around the city during the curfew, in particular, as employees of critical infrastructure companies, you must have identification documents.

1h ago 11:07

Summary

Here is a summary of some key events on the day **Russia launched an all-out invasion of Ukraine, triggering warnings from world leaders of the biggest conflict in Europe since 1945.**

According to Ukrainian officials, the initial wave of strikes appeared to involve cruise missiles, artillery and airstrikes which struck military infrastructure and border positions, including airbases.

Regional authorities in the southern Odessa region of Ukraine **said 18 people were killed in a missile attack**. At least **six people were killed in the town of Brovary, near Kyiv, local authorities said**. **Four people died when a shell hit a hospital** in the city of Vuhledar in Donetsk, Ukrainian officials said. Thousands of Ukrainians are already fleeing the country.

Russia's defence ministry **claimed to have destroyed 74 Ukrainian military ground facilities**, including 11 airfields, three command posts and 18 radar stations for anti-aircraft missile systems.

Western leaders united in condemnation: **US President Joe Biden said Washington and its allies will announce "severe sanctions" later on Thursday**. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to outline a new package of measures to parliament at 1700 GMT.

The EU has also vowed "massive sanctions" ahead of a meeting of leaders in Brussels, but is yet to agree what they should cover. The union has also said it will hit Belarus with sanctions for its role in supporting Putin's invasion.

While Russian state television framed the war as a defensive mission, the Guardian found no support for the war among ordinary people in Moscow.

The **Russian central bank has purchased millions of roubles to prevent the collapse** of the Moscow stock exchange and prop up the currency after it plunged to an all-time low against the dollar.

2h ago 10:47

2h ago 10:37



Helena Smith

Greece says it will begin evacuating members of its expatriate community in Mariupol, the frontline city in eastern Ukraine, Helena Smith reports from Athens.

Athens' deputy minister in charge of diaspora affairs, **Andreas Katsaniotis**, said around 100 ethnic Greeks would be transferred to safety via Romania.

Not many of our community members have as yet requested to leave but a small group, around 100 people, will leave Mariupol.

There is a plan and we are implementing it ... when other countries were withdrawing their diplomats, we were reinforcing our general consulate in Mariupol.

In Odessa, Greece's former honorary consul to Ukraine Panayiotis Bouboulouras told the Greek daily Protothema:

Unfortunately very few of us believed this would happen. The Americans said the fascist Russians had been preparing this attack for a long time but neither us, nor the Europeans, believed them.

Greece, alone among EU states, has a large expatriate community in Ukraine and is closely watching events there. Although spread across the country, most of the estimated 120,000 strong minority live in the coastal city of Mariupol close to the frontline.

Bouboulouras who presides over Ukraine's federation of ethnic Greek businessmen, said many were either trying to flee Kiev or the country. Katerina Svefkenko, who heads the association of Greeks in Kharkiv, in Ukraine's northeast, said inhabitants had heard a barrage of explosions. "In the 40 years that I have lived here I have never experienced anything like it," she said.

Greece traditionally has strong ties with fellow Orthodox Russia but **from the outset has firmly come out on the side of its fellow EU and Nato partners blasting Putin for violating international law by staging the attack.**

In an excoriating statement the Greek foreign ministry said it "unequivocally condemns" the Russian attack which "undermines European peace and security."

Russia's ambassador to Athens had been called in for explanation, diplomats said.

2h ago 10:36



Denis Campbell

Russia's invasion risks a "health emergency" in Ukraine and "a humanitarian catastrophe in Europe", the World Health Organisation has warned, writes the Guardian's health policy editor Denis Campbell.

In a statement the WHO's regional office for Europe also urged combatants to ensure that health workers and hospitals were not targeted, though its plea came after reports that a Russian shell had already struck a hospital in Vuhledar in Donetsk in eastern Ukraine.

Amid the conflict rapidly unfolding in Ukraine, the WHO regional office for Europe reiterates its deepest concern for the safety, health and wellbeing of all civilians impacted by the crisis in the country and possibly beyond.

It added that, through its country office in Ukraine, the WHO's European section "continues to deliver much-needed support on urgent health issues, particularly in the face of an ongoing polio outbreak and the long-running Covid-19 response".

The right to health and access to services must always be protected, not least during times of crises. Health workers, hospitals and other facilities must never be a target and be allowed to continue to serve the health needs of communities.

Separately, the **World Medical Association**, which represents doctors' organisations globally, also demanded that Russia does not attack health facilities.

The World Medical Association deplores the unprecedented aggression in Ukraine by the Russian leadership. It calls on Russian leaders to respect the work of doctors and nurses in the country and the neutrality of health care institutions.

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