

# Germany to give Czechs tanks so it could provide more weapons to Ukraine — as it happened

The Czech Republic will receive tanks donated by Germany as the country passes its stocks of Soviet weaponry to Ukraine. Meanwhile, a Russian soldier pleaded guilty to killing an unarmed civilian.

- Turkey blocks NATO accession talks for Finland and Sweden
- Russian soldier pleads guilty at murder trial in Ukraine
- Ukrainian and Russian officials say peace negotiations have stagnated
- Finland and Sweden submit NATO membership applications
- This article was last updated at 22:25 UTC/GMT

This live updates article has been closed. For the latest on the war in Ukraine, please click [here](#).

## **Zelenskyy says the war will be long in nightly address**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky sought to prepare the Ukrainian public for a long war in their country during his nightly video address late Wednesday.

He told the Ukrainian people, “Kherson, Melitopol, Berdyansk, Enerhodar, Mariupol and all our cities and towns that are under occupation, under temporary occupation, should know that Ukraine will return.”

He said however the length of time that would take is dependent on battlefield conditions.

“We are trying to do it as soon as possible. We are committed to driving out the occupiers and guaranteeing Ukraine real security,” Zelenskyy said from Kyiv.

Ukraine extended martial law and the mass mobilization by 90 days until August 23.

## **UN chief hopeful about talks on Ukraine, Russia grain and fertilizer exports**

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was in “intense contact” with Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, the United States and the European Union to try and restore Ukrainian grain shipments and revive Russian fertilizer exports.

“I am hopeful, but there is still a way to go,” he told a food security meeting at the UN hosted by US Secretary of State Antony Blinken. “The complex security, economic and financial implications require goodwill on all sides.”

The war in Ukraine has further fueled already-soaring global prices for grains, cooking oils, fuel, and fertilizer.

At a separate meeting earlier, German Development Minister Svenja Schulze accused Russian President Vladimir Putin of “using hunger as a weapon.”

She announced plans to launch a global food security alliance. “The terrible consequences of Russia’s war go far beyond Ukraine,” Schulze warned.

On Wednesday, the World Bank also announced an additional \$12 billion (€11.5 billion) in funding for projects to address the global food security crisis, bringing the total to \$30 billion.

### **Russia closing Canada’s CBC Moscow bureau**

Russia has withdrawn the visas and press credentials of Canada’s CBC and Radio Canada journalists and is shutting the organization’s Moscow bureau.

“With regret, we continue to notice open attacks on the Russian media from the countries of the so-called collective West who call themselves civilized,” Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said.

The move comes after Ottawa banned Russian state TV station Russia Today (RT).

In a statement, the CBC and its French-language unit Radio Canada said they had operated a bureau in Moscow for 44 years and were “deeply disappointed” by the decision.

Several other news outlets have lost their credentials and accreditation since the start of the war, while DW was told to clear out its Moscow bureau shortly before the invasion of Ukraine.

### **US reopens embassy in Kyiv**

The United States reopened its embassy in Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

In February, the embassy was closed, and diplomatic personnel "temporarily relocated" to Lviv in western Ukraine.

"The Ukrainian people, with our security assistance, have defended their homeland in the face of Russia's unconscionable invasion, and, as a result, the Stars and Stripes are flying over the embassy once again," Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a statement.

Secretary Antony Blinken@SecBlinken

United States government official

The Stars and Stripes fly again over Embassy Kyiv. I can announce that we have officially resumed Embassy operations in Ukraine's capital. We stand proudly with the government and people of Ukraine as they bravely defend their country from Putin's brutal invasion. Slava Ukraini!

Many western countries, including Germany, France and the United Kingdom have reopened their embassies in Kyiv over the past month, after Russian troops pulled back from the city to focus on an offensive in the east of the country.

### **Prominent Austrians call for national debate on country's neutrality**

A group of prominent Austrians has written an open letter urging the country to engage in a "serious, nationwide discussion about the future of Austria's security and defense policy."

They called for this discussion to take place without blinkers. Acknowledging that they themselves were of different opinions on specific issues like neutrality and non-alignment, a deeper EU defense policy or Austria joining NATO, they said they agreed on one thing: "We are united in the conviction that the status quo of our security policy is not only unsustainable but dangerous for our country," they wrote.

The group includes military and economic experts, as well as former ambassadors.

"We are now unprepared, and this is the worst security crisis in Europe since

1945,” they wrote.

Since the start of the war, Chancellor Karl Nehammer has struck a delicate balance with regard to Austria’s position. He has maintained that the country has no plans to change its security status, while at the same time declaring that military neutrality doesn’t necessarily mean moral neutrality.

Austria has strongly condemned Russia’s actions in Ukraine.

### **European Commission starts work on joint defense spending**

The European Commission urged member countries to replace stockpiles of arms sent to Ukraine.

The Commission is offering €500 million (\$526 million) over two years to countries willing to work in groups to replenish their stocks.

It is part of a new plan under which the EU would play a more significant role in coordinating increased military spending amongst its members.

“We need to spend more on defense, and we need to do it in a coordinated way,” European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said.

A joint procurement taskforce would coordinate spending to replace stockpiles of arms sent to Ukraine in the short term. It would also help countries phase out Soviet-era equipment and improve air and missile defense systems.

The commission eventually wants the task force to lay the groundwork for a bigger joint procurement program in the future.

### **Czechs to get German tanks as it arms Ukraine**

Germany would donate 15 tanks to the Czech armed forces.

It is part of a program under which Berlin aimed to help countries pass their stocks of Soviet weaponry to Ukraine.

“The exchange is another good example of how we are helping Ukraine in its brave fight against Russian aggression,” Defense Minister Christine Lambrecht said.

Czech Defense Minister Jana Cernochova said the move showed Germany's appreciation of her country's military help to Ukraine.

The Czechs have given Ukraine Soviet-era heavy weapons worth at least \$130 million (€124 million). Prague has not disclosed the exact equipment, though local media reports suggest it had sent Soviet-made T-72 tanks and other heavy technology to Ukraine.

The Czech Republic also talked to Germany about purchasing up to 50 more new Leopard A7+ tanks.

### **Ukrainian refugees employed to help with Oktoberfest preparations**

Ukrainian refugees have been pictured making and decorating gingerbread hearts at the 'Zuckersucht' bakery in Aschheim near Munich in Germany, for Oktoberfest.

Maria, a refugee from Mykolaiv in Ukraine, decorates gingerbread Oktoberfest hearts

Over the weekend, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser wrote on Twitter that around 2,000 refugees were arriving in Germany each day, down from 15, 000 at the start of the war.

She added that many more were returning to their country across the Polish-Ukrainian border.

Refugees from Ukraine will be able to receive basic welfare benefits in Germany as of June 1.

### **US and Russia contradict each other over sanctions impact**

The US Treasury Secretary said sanctions against Russia had an enormous impact, but Russia said its economy was showing resilience.

"Russia is experiencing recession, high inflation, acute challenges in their financial system, and (an) inability to procure the material and products they need to support their war or their economy," US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen told reporters ahead of a meeting of G7 finance ministers in Bonn, Germany.

Russia Economy Minister Maxim Reshetnikov, though, was confident that

inflation in Russia would slow down further.

Without directly commenting on Yellen's remarks, Reshetnikov said Russia had withstood the first hit from sanctions, and it is impossible to isolate the country from abroad.

### **Turkey blocks NATO accession talks for Finland and Sweden — sources**

Turkey has blocked the start of NATO accession talks for Finland and Sweden, diplomatic sources told DW on condition of anonymity.

Sources told DW's Teri Schultz, currently on assignment in Stockholm, that NATO's governing body could not decide as planned to start the accession process for the two candidate members as Turkey objected.

Teri Schultz@terischultz

Not yet, Nordics.

#NATO ambassadors discussed the Finnish and Swedish membership bids this morning and could have approved opening negotiations, but #Turkey blocked the decision.

Finland and Sweden submitted their bids to join the military alliance earlier on Wednesday.

Turkey claims that both Sweden and Finland have provided a refuge for Kurdish groups it labels "terrorists," and President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said Ankara will not approve the expansion.

Erdogan reiterated his objections on Wednesday, during a speech to lawmakers from his party, saying that "we cannot say yes" to Finland and Sweden's bid until they return "terrorists" to Turkey.

### **Russian soldier pleads guilty of murder at Kyiv trial**

Vadim S., a 21-year-old Russian tank commander held in Ukraine, pleaded guilty on Tuesday to killing an unarmed civilian.

After his convoy was hit, the defendant and four other fleeing soldiers are alleged to have stole a car from outside the village of Chupakhivka in the early days of the invasion.

He is accused of attacking the 62-year-old, who was riding past them on a bicycle, to prevent him from reporting their presence.

“One of the military servicemen ordered the accused to kill a civilian so that he would not report them. The man died on the spot just a few dozen meters from his home,” Ukrainian prosecutors said.

The soldier is charged with war crimes and premeditated murder and could face a life sentence.

The Kremlin said on Wednesday that it had not been informed about the case.

“We still have no information. And the ability to provide assistance due to the lack of our diplomatic mission there is also very limited,” Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

The Russian Foreign Ministry says it is expelling scores of diplomats from several European countries in a retaliatory move to their expulsions of Russian diplomatic personnel.

Moscow said it was expelling 34 “employees of French diplomatic missions” in a tit-for-tat move.

In a statement, the Russian Foreign Ministry said 27 employees of the Spanish embassy in Moscow and the Spanish Consulate General in Saint Petersburg “have been declared *personae non-gratae*.” Meanwhile, ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova told Russian news agencies that 24 Italian diplomats had also been expelled, also in an apparent retaliatory move.

A diplomatic source told the AFP news agency the French diplomats had been given two weeks to leave the country. The announcement comes in response to France kicking out 35 Russians with diplomatic status in April.

The French Foreign Office said the step had “no legitimate basis.” In a statement, it said that “the work of the diplomats and staff at [France’s] embassy in Russia... takes place fully within the framework of the Vienna Convention on diplomatic and consular relations.” Paris expelled the Russian staff in April on suspicion of being spies.

Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi on Wednesday condemned Russia’s

expulsions of the various nations' diplomats. "This is clearly a hostile act," he said.

## **EU proposes up to €9 billion in more aid to Ukraine**

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has proposed extra aid to Ukraine this year of up to nine billion euros (\$9.5 billion).

Speaking in a broadcast statement, von der Leyen said the fund would help the country cope with the ravages of war.

The Commission president said it was time to think about rebuilding Ukraine whenever the war ends. She added that the EU had "a strategic interest in leading this reconstruction effort".

Speaking in a broadcast statement, von der Leyen said the EU also intends to mobilize up to €300 billion of investment by 2030 to end the bloc's reliance on Russian oil and gas.

The investments will include €10 billion for gas infrastructure, €2 billion for oil, and the rest for clean energy, von der Leyen told reporters.

## **Ukraine calls for Azovstal fighters to be exchanged**

Ukrainian military officials say they still hope fighters extracted from the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol could be exchanged for Russian prisoners of war.

However, Russian lawmakers plan to take up a resolution that would prevent the exchange of Azov Regiment fighters on Wednesday.

The soldiers held out for months inside the Azovstal steelworks plant while Mariupol was under siege.

According to the Russian Defense Ministry, nearly 1,000 Ukrainian holed up at the works have surrendered this week — many of whom are wounded.

They are reported to have been taken to a reopened former penal colony in Russian-controlled territory.

It's unclear how many fighters still remain at the sprawling site which became the last bastion of Ukrainian resistance within Mariupol.



Ukraine's Deputy Defense Minister Hanna Maliar has said negotiations for the troops' release are ongoing with some fighters still believed to be inside the mill.

Donetsk separatist leader Denis Pushilin has said a court will decide the fate of the Ukrainian fighters, a local media outlet reported.

### **G7 ministers meet to discuss finance for Ukraine**

The finance ministers of the Group of Seven leading economies are meeting in Germany to discuss short-term aid to stabilize the Ukrainian national budget.

It's believed that the country needs some €5 billion of assistance for an initial period of three months.

The consultations beginning on Wednesday near the western city of Bonn are to be attended by central bank governors and some experts. A joint declaration is planned for Friday.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen on Tuesday said the European Union was likely to make significant financial contributions to keep Ukraine going. Yellen added that she hoped other G7 members like Britain, Canada and Japan would also step up.

Yellen, who was in Brussels on Tuesday, said the US has made a strong commitment to funding Ukraine and that it was clear that the EU was "very serious about wanting to provide the necessary aid as well."

US Treasury officials have also said they plan to propose the idea of European countries imposing tariffs on Russian oil — as a faster alternative to an outright ban on it — at the meeting.

EU officials are now considering a phased embargo on Russian oil, but there are concerns from eastern European countries about supply. A tariff mechanism would be designed to keep Russian oil on the market but limit the amount of revenue that can flow to Moscow from exports, the Treasury officials said.

### **Finland and Sweden formally submit NATO bids**

Finland and Sweden have formally submitted their bids to join NATO , despite Turkey's threat to block the addition of the Nordic nations.

NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said he had received application letters from the two Nordic countries' ambassadors.

"I warmly welcome the requests by Finland and Sweden to join NATO. You are our closest partners," Stoltenberg told reporters.

Finland — which has a 1,300-kilometre (800-mile) border with Russia — and its neighbor Sweden have been disturbed by Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

The two countries' accession would end decades of military neutrality to join the alliance as a defense against feared aggression from Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Monday warned that the expansion of NATO might trigger a response. However, the main obstacle to Finland and Sweden's membership comes from within the alliance.

Turkey claims that both Sweden and Finland have provided a refuge for terrorist groups and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan insists Ankara will not approve the expansion.

Any bid to join NATO must be approved unanimously by all 30 members of the alliance.

### **US sets up conflict monitor on Ukraine**

The United States has set up a new monitoring body to build legal cases against Russia for crimes committed during its war against Ukraine.

The State Department says it aims to contribute to eventual prosecutions in the domestic courts of Ukraine and those of third-party countries, plus US courts and other tribunals. The monitor would also provide information refuting Russian disinformation campaigns.

Announcing the creation of the Conflict Observatory, State Department spokesman Ned Price said it would "ensure that crimes committed by Russia's forces are documented and perpetrators are held accountable."

"The program will capture, analyze, and make publicly available open-source information and evidence of atrocities, human rights abuses, and harm to civilian infrastructure, including Ukraine's cultural heritage," he said.

Reports will be posted on ConflictObservatory.org. Price said the observatory was a collaboration that would involve scientists and the private sector.

### **First war crimes trial against Russian soldier in Kyiv**

The first war crimes trial against a Russian soldier since the start of the invasion is set to start on Wednesday.

A Russian soldier will appear at Kyiv's Solomyansky district court from 2 p.m. local time (1100 GMT) accused of killing a 62-year-old civilian in northeastern Ukraine on February 28. He faces a possible life sentence.

"He understands what he is being accused of," his lawyer Viktor Ovsianikov told the AFP news agency. "This is the first such case in Ukraine with such an indictment. There is no relevant legal practice or verdicts on such cases. We will sort it out."

Ukrainian authorities said the suspect is cooperating with investigators.

Prosecutors say the suspect was commanding a unit in a tank division when his convoy came under attack. According to prosecutors, he and four other soldiers stole a car and as they were traveling near the northeastern village of Shupakhivka, they encountered a 62-year-old man on a bicycle.

"One of the soldiers ordered the accused to kill the civilian so that he would not denounce them," the prosecutor's office said. The suspect then shot the man from the window of the vehicle, prosecutors say.

The trial is likely to be followed by other cases. Two Russian soldiers are due to go on trial on Thursday for allegedly firing rockets at civilian infrastructure in the Kharkiv region.

On Tuesday, the office of the Ukrainian chief prosecutor tweeted that it had registered 11,846 cases of "crimes of aggression and war crimes" and 5,644 "crimes against national security" involving 623 suspects.

### **Peace negotiations have stagnated — Ukrainian, Russian officials**

Ukrainian and Russian officials have said that negotiations between the two countries have stagnated.

Moscow has accused Ukraine of hardening its stance. Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Rudenko that Kyiv has “practically withdrawn from the negotiation process.”

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said that Western countries want to use Ukraine to their strategic advantage. He argued that no peace deal can be made if negotiators focus on the West’s concerns rather than the immediate situation in Ukraine.

“We always say that we are ready for negotiations ... but we were given no other choice,” Lavrov said.

Ukrainian presidential adviser Mykhailo Podolyak said that talks are “on hold” as Russia is not willing to accept it “will not achieve any goals.”

“Russia does not demonstrate a key understanding of today’s processes in the world,” Podolyak said, according to Ukrainian media. “And its extremely negative role.”

### **Russia’s Lavrov says NATO accession for Finland, Sweden makes ‘no big difference’**

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said that Finland and Sweden joining NATO would not make “much difference.”

“Finland and Sweden, as well as other neutral countries, have been participating in NATO military exercises for many years,” Lavrov said.

“NATO takes their territory into account when planning military advances to the East. So in this sense there is probably not much difference. Let’s see how their territory is used in practice in the North Atlantic alliance.”

### **Russian deputy PM visits Kherson region**

Russian Deputy Prime Minister Marat Khusnullin has visited the Ukraine’s southern Kherson region.

RIA Novosti reported that Khusnullin said that the region would take a “worthy place in our Russian family.” Kherson is under Russian occupation.

On May 1, Moscow introduced the Russian ruble as official currency in the region.

A few days ago, the Russian-installed local government in Kherson said it plans to appeal to Moscow for the right to become part of the Russian Federation.

## **EU to unveil plan to end reliance on Russian fossil fuels**

The European Commission will unveil a €210 billion plan (\$222 billion) to end Europe's reliance on Russian fossil fuels by 2027 and accelerate the shift to green energy.

Russia supplies 40% of the EU's gas and 27% of its imported oil.

According to draft documents cited by Reuters, Brussels plans to import more non-Russian gas, implement a faster rollout of renewable energy and make efforts to save energy.

## **Summary of events in Ukraine-Russia crisis on Tuesday**

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a surprise video address at the opening ceremony of the Cannes Film Festival. The former actor turned statesman asked for the cinema world's solidarity with his people in the face of the Russian invasion.

The International Criminal Court sent war crimes investigators to Ukraine in what it called the largest deployment of its kind in the ICC's history.

Eight people were killed and 12 wounded in a Russian airstrike on the village of Desna in the northern Ukrainian region of Chernihiv, the regional emergency service said.

Finland's parliament overwhelmingly approved a proposal to join NATO.

Ukraine's military said it was working to evacuate all remaining troops from the Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol.

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said Turkish concerns over Finland and Sweden's possible membership in the alliance need to be addressed.

The western Ukrainian city of Lviv was reportedly hit by at least eight explosions.

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Catch up on yesterday's events by clicking here

[si,rc/jsi \(AP, AFP, Reuters, dpa\)](#)

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