

# **Sanctions will not be lifted until Russia signs peace deal with Ukraine -Germany's Scholz**

BERLIN (Reuters) - The sanctions imposed on Russia in response to its invasion of Ukraine will not be lifted until Moscow reaches a peace agreement with Ukraine, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said, adding that it was for Ukraine to determine the peace terms.

Scholz, in an interview broadcast Monday on ZDF public television, said Russian President Vladimir Putin had miscalculated if he had anticipated he might be able to gain territory from Ukraine, declare an end to hostilities, and see Western countries drop sanctions.

"He didn't think his entire Ukraine operation through," Scholz said. "He didn't think Ukraine would resist like that. He didn't think we would support them to hold out for so long. ... We won't withdraw the sanctions unless he reaches an agreement with Ukraine, and he won't get that with a dictated peace."

He also said Germany would not accept Russia's annexation of Crimea. "That was a breach of international law ... that remains true," he said.

Scholz added that he had no plans to visit Kyiv after a planned trip by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier was dropped due to Ukraine's objections.

Scholz rejected criticism that he was at first too hesitant to send Ukraine heavy weapons, followed by criticism from pacifists after Germany last week announced the delivery of "Gepard" anti-aircraft tanks to Ukraine.

"There's no point in doing something just because someone is shouting or not doing something because someone is shouting," Scholz said, adding that protecting the country and keeping peace was his duty as chancellor.

Scholz is under pressure both at home and abroad to supply Ukraine with heavy arms such as tanks and howitzers and support an immediate EU embargo on Russian energy imports to strip Putin of hard currency that helps him finance the war.

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(Reporting by Thomas Escritt and Riham Alkousaa; Editing by Leslie Adler)

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