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Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine

European Parliament resolution of 6 October 2022 on Russia's escalation of its war of aggression against Ukraine (2022/2851(RSP))

(2023/C 132/12)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on Ukraine and Russia,
 - having regard to the UN Charter,
 - having regard to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975,
 - having regard to the statements by the Members of the European Council and the G7 foreign ministers of 30 September 2022 on Ukraine,
 - having regard to the declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union of 28 September 2022 on the illegal sham 'referendums' by Russia in the Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia regions,
 - having regard to the press statement by the President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, of 28 September 2022 on a new package of restrictive measures against Russia and the message by the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, of 30 September 2022 on Russia's illegal annexation of Ukrainian regions,
 - having regard to the declarations by the High Representative on behalf of the European Union of 22 September 2022 on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and of 28 September 2022 on the leaks in the Nord Stream gas pipelines,
 - having regard to Rule 132(2) and (4) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas, in line with the UN Charter and the principles of international law, all states enjoy equal sovereignty and must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state; whereas any annexation of a state's territory by another state resulting from the threat or use of force constitutes a violation of the UN Charter and the principles of international law; whereas this principle was recently reaffirmed by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres;
- B. whereas the Russian Federation, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, bears special political responsibility for maintaining peace and security in the world, but has persistently been violating the principles of the UN Charter through its aggressive actions against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and has been openly defying the international community by announcing its illegal acts in breach of the UN Charter while the UN General Assembly has been in session;
- C. whereas the Russian Federation has continued its illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine over recent months; whereas a successful Ukrainian counteroffensive launched in early September 2022 led to Russia losing a significant part of the territories it had occupied in Ukraine's Kharkiv region and other regions of eastern and southern Ukraine; whereas this liberation has led to the discovery of new evidence of the serious human rights violations and war crimes committed by Russian forces and their proxies, such as mass graves with more than 440 bodies in Izyum;
- D. whereas thousands of civilians have already been murdered and many more tortured, harassed, sexually assaulted, kidnapped or forcibly displaced; whereas this inhumane conduct by the Russian forces and their proxies is in total disregard for international humanitarian law;
- E. whereas the Russian forces have suffered the losses of tens of thousands of personnel, either killed in action or missing since the beginning of the invasion, and the destruction of their military hardware;
- F. whereas the international community continues to support Ukraine with modern equipment, ammunition, training and intelligence sharing, the latest being the US Congress recently passing a bill which will provide more than USD 12,3 billion in assistance;

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- G. whereas according to Ukrainian officials, the Ukrainian army needs modern main battle tanks, more surface-to-air and surface-to surface systems, armoured personnel carriers as well as additional training centres and further contributions in the form of ammunition;
- H. whereas from 9 to 11 September 2022, regional and local elections were held in Russia and also in the illegally annexed Ukrainian Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol, which the EU does not recognise;
- I. whereas hastily-organised sham ‘referendums’ took place between 23 and 27 September 2022 in the partly Russian-occupied areas of Ukraine in the oblasts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia and among forcibly deported Ukrainians in Russia, with the Russian authorities announcing pre-ordained and unrealistically high percentages of voter turnout and approval ratings for annexation by Russia; whereas the voting process included systemic abuses of human rights and intimidation, notably the presence of armed Russian soldiers; whereas the sham referendums mirrored the referendum organised by Russia in Crimea after it occupied the peninsula in early 2014; whereas Russia announced the formal illegal annexation of these territories on 30 September 2022, which was followed by unanimous approval by the State Duma and Federation Council;
- J. whereas on 21 September 2022, Vladimir Putin announced Russia’s first mobilisation since the Second World War; whereas according to media reports, the mobilisation involves between 300 000 and 1,2 million military reservists being called up to the armed forces; whereas contrary to the official announcement that the authorities would draft citizens who had recently served in the army and had combat experience, reports suggest that some people are also being drafted without having had any military experience, particularly from poorer and remote regions and ethnic minorities, and that people are being drafted as a repressive measure, such as in occupied Crimea, where over 1 500 Crimean Tartars are being called up; whereas there are also reports of forced mobilisation from the newly illegally annexed oblasts of Ukraine; whereas there are reports of new recruits being sent to the front almost immediately;
- K. whereas the announcement of Russia’s mobilisation led to protests, with the Russian authorities arresting more than 2 400 demonstrators so far; whereas since the announcement of mobilisation, several hundreds of thousands of Russians have fled Russia in order to avoid the draft; whereas the Russian authorities have set up conscription centres at several border crossing points in order to serve call-up notices on the spot and discourage citizens from leaving the country;
- L. whereas Russian forces continue to occupy the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP); whereas Ihor Murashov, the Director General of the ZNPP, was abducted by Russian forces on 30 September 2022 and later released; whereas the ZNPP is the largest nuclear power plant in Europe and its last reactor was powered down in early September 2022 due to fighting in and around the plant; whereas the risk of a nuclear catastrophe remains, however;
- M. whereas in a televised address on 21 September 2022, Vladimir Putin warned that if the territorial integrity of Russia was threatened, meaning the illegally annexed territories of Ukraine, it would ‘certainly use all the means at our disposal to protect Russia and our people’; whereas the words ‘all the means at our disposal’ are thinly veiled nuclear blackmail;
- N. whereas on 26 and 27 September 2022, a dramatic drop in pressure was observed in the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines due to leaks that were suspected to be the result of deliberate underwater explosions likely engineered by a state actor; whereas although the exact volume of methane escaping into the atmosphere is hard to measure, the amount is likely to be significant and will have a detrimental impact on the environment;
- O. whereas on 30 September 2022, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy announced that Ukraine had officially applied for membership of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO);

1. Recalls the European Union’s steadfast support for Ukraine and its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within internationally recognised borders; condemns in the strongest possible terms the unjustified, unprovoked and illegal Russian war of aggression against Ukraine; recalls that Russia bears full responsibility for the war and that it must immediately stop the war and withdraw all its forces and proxy forces from all internationally recognised territories belonging to Ukraine;

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2. Commends the great courage of the Ukrainian people, who are enduring enormous sacrifices to defend their country and European values, such as freedom, dignity and democracy; recalls Ukraine's legitimate right, in line with Article 51 of the UN Charter, to defend itself against Russia's war of aggression so as to regain full control of its entire territory within its internationally recognised borders; commends the bravery of the Ukrainian armed forces and their highly effective actions both in combat and from a moral standpoint, and recognises the significant contribution they are making to European security;
3. Calls on all countries and international organisations to unequivocally condemn Russia's war of aggression and its attempts to acquire territory by force and through its sham referendums; calls for the EU and its Member States to actively engage with the many governments which have adopted a neutral position regarding Russia's aggression against Ukraine in order to build strong international opposition to any changes of Ukraine's borders by force and in defence of international law;
4. Strongly condemns the massive and grave violations of human rights and war crimes committed by the Russian armed forces, its proxies and the occupation authorities installed by Russia in Ukraine; insists that the responsible government officials and military leaders and perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including genocide, must be held accountable;
5. Calls on the Member States and other countries supporting Ukraine to massively increase their military assistance, particularly in the areas where it is requested by the Ukrainian Government, in order to allow Ukraine to regain full control over its entire internationally recognised territory and successfully defend itself against any further aggression by Russia; calls for consideration to be given to the possibility of a lend-lease military assistance facility for Ukraine; calls on hesitant Member States, in particular, to provide their fair share of the military assistance needed to help shorten the war; recalls that hesitation among those who support Ukraine only prolongs the war and costs the lives of innocent Ukrainians; appeals to EU leaders to build lasting unity among Member States and like-minded countries to fully and unconditionally support Ukraine against the Russian war of aggression;
6. Calls on the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy to coordinate weapons deliveries through the clearing house mechanism of the European External Action Service (EEAS), including an EU initiative for the delivery of advanced weapons systems such as Leopard tanks; calls on the Member States to immediately start training Ukrainian soldiers in this regard;
7. Unequivocally condemns as illegal and illegitimate the sham referendums conducted at gunpoint to annex the oblasts of Donetsk, Kherson, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia; recalls that the referendums were conducted in violation of the UN Charter and international law; rejects and does not recognise the fabricated results of the referendums and the subsequent incorporation of these territories into Russia; considers their results null and void; considers that the announced annexation constitutes a dangerous and irresponsible escalation and a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter guaranteeing international peace, security, territorial integrity and the sovereignty of all states, which cannot and will not be left unanswered by the international community;
8. Denounces the Russian presidential decree of 29 September 2022 on the recognition of the 'independence' of the Ukrainian oblasts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, as well as the illegal treaties on integration into the Russian Federation signed on 30 September 2022; states its unwavering support for the EU's policy of non-recognition over Russia's illegal actions against Ukraine, including annexation, and therefore calls on the Council to adopt further severe sanctions in response to these acts;
9. Welcomes the Commission's proposals for an eighth sanctions package against Russia; calls on all the Member States to approve the sanctions package swiftly, avoid any self-interested delays, and thoroughly implement the sanctions; calls for the sanctions to be expanded to new areas, including cutting off Gazprombank, Alfa Bank, Rosbank, Tinkoff Bank, Saint Petersburg Bank, the Russian Regional Development Bank and Far Eastern Bank from SWIFT, while also further strengthening sanctions against crypto assets and cryptocurrencies; calls on the EU institutions and the Member States to maintain EU unity and to increase the pressure on the Kremlin, including through further sanctions packages, including an export ban on any high-tech products and strategic goods and other sanctions aimed at strategically weakening the Russian economy and industrial base, in particular the military-industrial complex; supports the adoption of individual sanctions against persons and entities directly involved in the forced deportation and adoption of Ukrainian children and in the organisation and observation of the illegal sham referendums, as well as all members of Duma parties who hold offices in elected parliaments on all levels, including at regional and municipal levels; calls on the Member States to actively prevent, investigate and prosecute any circumvention of the sanctions; calls on the Commission and the co-legislators to work swiftly to complete the legal regime for the confiscation of assets frozen by the sanctions;

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10. Reiterates its call for an immediate and full embargo on Russian imports of fossil fuels and uranium, and for the Nord Stream 1 and 2 pipelines to be completely abandoned, in order to stop financing Putin's war machine with EU money; calls for a further ban on the purchase, import and transport of titanium, aluminium, copper, nickel, palladium, rhodium, and raw and processed diamonds from Russia or through Russia to the EU, and on imports of iron and steel products originating in Russia or exported from Russia, including iron ore and semi-finished products, with the aim of reducing Russia's revenues; calls for Russia's access to basic industrial resources, technologies and services to be minimised, especially those needed by the military industry of the aggressor state;
11. Warns Aliaksandr Lukashenka's regime against abetting Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, including in its mobilisation efforts and in hosting conscripts on its soil; calls on the Commission and the Council to include Belarus in the new wave of sanctions linked to mobilisation;
12. Condemns the mobilisation in Russia, and calls for an immediate end to involuntary conscription; condemns the measures compelling residents of the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine to serve in Russia's armed or auxiliary forces, which is forbidden under the Fourth Geneva Convention; strongly appeals to all Russian people to avoid being dragged into this war, which violates international law and was therefore condemned by a large majority of countries, was only waged to assert a non-democratic kleptocratic regime in Russia, and will ultimately destroy the Russian economy and the Russian people's prospects for a safe and prosperous future; urges the Member States to issue humanitarian visas to Russian citizens in need of protection, such as those subjected to political persecution;
13. Calls on the Member States to fully implement the Commission's guidelines on general visa issuance in relation to Russian applicants and controls of Russian citizens at the external borders, in full compliance with EU and international law, and to ensure that every asylum application by *inter alia* dissidents, deserters, draft dodgers and activists is dealt with on an individual basis, taking into account the security concerns of the host Member State and acting in accordance with the EU asylum *acquis*; calls on the Council and the Commission to closely monitor the situation in relation to Russian visas;
14. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for countries in the South Caucasus and Central Asia, which are receiving substantial numbers of Russian citizens, in particular Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, in order to maintain stability in these regions;
15. Denounces the Russian presidential decree of 5 October 2022 designating the Zaporizhzhia NPP 'federal property' and instructing the Russian government to take over its control; demands the immediate withdrawal of Russian military personnel from and around the ZNPP and the creation of a demilitarised zone around it; recalls that the fighting around the plant might lead to a major disaster of unimaginable consequences;
16. Condemns the recent Russian threats to use nuclear weapons as irresponsible and dangerous; calls on the Member States and international partners to prepare a quick and decisive response should Russia conduct a nuclear strike on Ukraine; calls on Russia to immediately cease its threats of a nuclear escalation, given the global consequences of any nuclear catastrophe for human life and the environment for decades to come; recalls that any attempt by Russia to present attacks on occupied territories as an attack on Russia and thus as grounds for a nuclear attack is illegal and baseless and will not deter the European Union from providing further assistance to Ukraine in its self-defence;
17. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to increase support for and cooperation with civil society and the free media in Ukraine and Russia; stresses that Ukraine's resilience and capacity to resist the Russian war of aggression demands increased focus and support for humanitarian actors in Ukraine, including a specific focus on those supporting women; calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to continue to provide temporary shelter in the EU for people fleeing the war, and to help with the issuance of temporary travel documents enabling Ukrainian citizens who are trapped in Russia without their identity or travel documents to leave the country if they wish to; condemns systematic attempts on the Russian side to slow down the entry of Ukrainian refugees to the EU on the Estonian and Latvian borders, which could soon lead to a major humanitarian crisis; calls on the Member States and their border control not to hinder such refugees from entering the EU;
18. Calls on the Commission to work on a comprehensive recovery package for Ukraine, which should be focused on the country's immediate, medium- and long-term relief, reconstruction and recovery and further help to strengthen the growth of the economy, starting right away where appropriate; recalls that the recovery package should be jointly led by the EU, international financial institutions and like-minded partners; calls for the recovery package to be supported by the necessary EU budget capacity;

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19. Expresses appreciation for the Russian citizens who condemn the war; condemns the arrest by the Russian authorities of thousands of peaceful protesters and calls for their immediate release;
 20. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to start reflecting on how to engage with Russia in the future and how to assist it with a successful transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic country that renounces revisionist and imperialistic policies; consider that a first step would be for the EU institutions to engage with Russian democratic leaders and civil society and mobilise support for their agenda for a democratic Russia; supports the creation of a democracy hub for Russia, hosted by the European Parliament;
 21. Recalls that the underwater explosions of the Nord Stream pipelines took place as the new Baltic Pipe linking Norway with Poland via Denmark was inaugurated; believes that the underwater explosions of the Nord Stream pipelines are not a coincidence and that there is increasing speculation that it was the result of a coordinated and deliberate act by a state actor; believes that the explosions of the Nord Stream pipelines show how dangerous the policy of increasing dependence on Russian fossil fuels was and that the weaponisation of energy has been taken to a new level; calls on Member States to step up and treat as a priority the protection of critical European infrastructure, including off-shore pipelines and cables, and to increase its resilience against external attacks and further support the resilience of the EU's partners in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans; calls on the Member States to conduct an investigation into the sabotaging of the Nord Stream gas pipelines; considers that the deliberate underwater explosions constitute an environmental attack on the EU;
 22. Calls for the EU and its Member States to work with international bodies to collect evidence and to support the International Criminal Court's investigation of the war crimes committed within the territory of Ukraine since 20 February 2014 onwards;
 23. Calls for the establishment of an ad hoc international tribunal for the crime of aggression against Ukraine, where Putin and all Russian civilian and military officials and their proxies responsible for masterminding, launching and conducting the war in Ukraine would be prosecuted;
 24. Condemns Russia's multi-layered strategy to introduce, amplify and spread false and distorted narratives and the neo-imperialistic ideology of Russkiy Mir around the world; calls for the EU and its Member States to sanction the Russian entities, individuals and other proxies spreading Russian disinformation and to take additional measures to deal with Russia's weaponisation of information;
 25. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Council of Europe, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the International Organization for Migration, the International Committee of the Red Cross, the International Criminal Court, the President, Government and Parliament of Ukraine, the President, Government and Parliament of the Russian Federation, and the Belarusian authorities.
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