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Inside C2

# Southern DAILY

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## NATO rejects Ukraine no-fly zone, unhappy Zelenskiy says this means more bombing

BRUSSELS, March 4 (Reuters) - NATO on Friday rejected Ukrainian calls to help it protect its skies from Russian missiles and warplanes, wary of being dragged into Moscow's war on its neighbour, but Europe promised more sanctions to punish Russian President Vladimir Putin.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy strongly criticised the decision, saying the alliance had given Russia the green light to continue its bombing campaign.

He had earlier appealed to NATO to set up a no-fly zone over Ukraine, which Russia invaded by land, sea and air on Feb. 24.

"We are not part of this conflict," NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said in denying Ukraine's request.

"We have a responsibility as NATO allies to prevent this war from escalating beyond Ukraine because that would be even more dangerous, more devastating and would cause even more human suffering," he said following a NATO meeting in Brussels.

Ukraine, a former Soviet republic, wants to join the European Union and NATO, moves which Moscow says threaten its security and influence. Russia has shelled residential areas and civilian infrastructure, as well as capturing two nuclear sites. [read more](#)

"Today there was a NATO summit, a weak summit, a confused summit, a summit where it was clear that not everyone considers the battle for Europe's freedom to be the number one goal," Zelenskiy said at a televised address late on Friday.

"Today, the leadership of the alliance gave the green light for further bombing of Ukrainian cities and villages, having refused to set up a no-fly zone."

While the West condemned Putin, members of the 30-strong NATO are bound to defend each other in case of attack and wary of sinking into a war with nuclear-armed Russia. The EU threatened more sanctions but it was not clear what it could do.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the alliance would defend "every inch" of NATO territory and that Moscow should not doubt Washington's resolve.



"Ours is a defensive alliance. We seek no conflict. But if conflict comes to us, we are ready," he said.

"We'll continue to raise the cost for President Putin. Unless the Kremlin changes course, it will continue down the road of increasing isolation and economic pain."

NATO meeting of foreign ministers, in Brussels  
National flags of members of the NATO are seen, on the day of a foreign ministers meeting amid Russia's invasion of Ukraine, at the Alliance's headquarters in Brussels, Belgium March 4, 2022. REUTERS/Yves Herman  
But the alliance - in which the United States, Britain and France are also nuclear powers - dashed Ukraine's hopes of immediate help Kyiv says could turn the tables in the war.

"We should not have NATO planes operating over Ukrainian airspace or NATO troops operating in Ukrainian territory," Stoltenberg said.

MORE DEATHS, MORE SANCTIONS

Support for Ukraine so far has come in the form of the heaviest international economic sanctions against Russia to date, as well as arms supplies from NATO states.

On Friday, the West promised Ukraine more humanitarian aid, essential supplies and military support short of going to war.

In a day of intense diplomacy - if no obvious immediate results - the G7 countries said they would hold accountable those responsible for war crimes and refuse to recognise any Russian territorial gains.

EU countries said more punishment was coming, after the bloc already cut several Russian lenders from the SWIFT banking system, curbed trade with Moscow and targeted some of the wealth held by Russian oligarchs in the West.

The EU was looking at curbing Russia's access to the International Monetary Fund, officials said. [read more](#)

"It's Putin's war, and only Putin can end it," the top EU diplomat, Josep Borrell, said. "If someone expects that sanctions can stop the war tomorrow, they don't know what they're talking about."

Ukraine called on the West to freeze out all Russian banks. But it was not clear when and what more sanctions the EU could agree, given its reliance on Russian energy supplies, which think tank Eurointelligence said amount to \$700 million daily.

Stoltenberg said the worst was yet to come as Russia was rolling out more heavy arms.

"The days to come are likely to be worse, with more deaths, more suffering and more destruction," he said.

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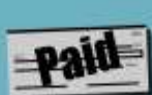
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# BBC halts reporting in Russia after new law passes

LONDON, March 4 (Reuters) - The BBC said on Friday it had stopped reporting in Russia after parliament passed a law there imposing a jail term of up to 15 years for anyone found to be intentionally spreading “fake” news. Russian officials have said that false information has been spread by Russia’s enemies such as the United States and its Western European allies in an attempt to sow discord among the Russian people.

Lawmakers passed amendments to the criminal code making the spread of “fake” information an offence punishable with fines or jail terms. They also imposed fines for anyone calling for sanctions against Russia following the invasion of Ukraine.

The Kremlin did not immediately respond to a Reuters’ request for comment on the BBC move.

BBC Director General Tim Davie said the new legislation appeared to criminalise the process of independent journalism.

“It leaves us no other option than to temporarily suspend the work of all BBC News journalists and their support staff within the Russian Federation while we assess the full implications of this unwelcome development,” he said in a statement.

He added that the BBC News Service in Russian would continue to operate from outside Russia. Jonathan Munro, an interim director of BBC News, said the corporation was not “pulling out” journalists from Moscow but assessing the impact of the new law.

By ordering his forces into Ukraine, President Vladimir Putin has sparked the worst crisis between Russia and the West since the end of the Cold War, battering financial and commodity markets, sending the rouble into a tailspin and triggering an economic isolation never before visited on such a large economy.

Western governments and tech platforms have also banned the Russian news network RT, with the European Union accusing it of systematic disinformation over Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

## MEDIA FREEDOM

Russia’s Foreign Ministry says that the Western media offer a partial -



and often anti-Russian - view of the world while failing to hold their own leaders to account for corruption or devastating foreign wars like Iraq.

Western leaders including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and former U.S. President Barack Obama have long raised concerns about the dominance of state media in Russia and say the freedoms won when the Soviet Union collapsed have been rolled back by Putin.

The new legislation was passed by parliament and will become law when Putin signs it, as he is widely expect-

ed to do. It was not clear when Putin would sign the measure.

It appeared to give the Russian state much stronger powers to crack down, by making it a criminal offence to spread fake information, with a jail term. [read more](#)

“If the fakes lead to serious consequences, then imprisonment of up to 15 years threatens,” the lower house of parliament, known as the Duma in Russian, said in a statement.

Russia had earlier cut access to several foreign news organisations’ websites,

including the BBC, Voice of America and Deutsche Welle, for spreading what it said was false information about its war in Ukraine.

Voice of America said in a statement that audiences in Russia deserved access to factual news content and it would continue to support tools that allow them to bypass any blocking efforts.

Deutsche Welle posted a letter to Russians on its German website, saying it regretted the decision and urged readers to bypass the internet blockade.

## Editor’s Choice



People board an evacuation train from Kyiv to Lviv at Kyiv central train station, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich



People board an evacuation train from Kyiv to Lviv at Kyiv central train station amid Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, in Kyiv, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich



A child looks out from an evacuation train at Kyiv central train station, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich



People board an evacuation train from Kyiv to Lviv at Kyiv central train station, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich



A woman says goodbye to her relatives as an evacuation train leaves from Kyiv central train station, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich



People board an evacuation train from Kyiv to Lviv at Kyiv central train station, March 4. REUTERS/Gleb Garanich

