



News Brief Update 23

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Russia's war with Ukraine

The war in Ukraine is now turning into a long war of attrition in which each side tries to wear the other down. Russian forces now hold large areas of territory in eastern Ukraine's Donbas region and in recent days heavy fighting was reported in frontline towns near the eastern city of Donetsk, where Ukrainian officials said Russian troops were launching waves of attacks. In southern areas Russia has been strengthening its forces in [readiness](#) either for a Ukrainian counteroffensive or in preparation for a new attack. According to British intelligence, the war is about to enter a new phase, "The heaviest fighting [will shift] to a roughly 350km frontline stretching south-west from near Zaporizhzhia to Kherson, paralleling the Dnieper river," the UK Ministry of Defence [said](#) on 6 August. Ukrainian forces are focusing their targeting on bridges, ammunition depots and rail links to affect Russia's ability to resupply in Ukraine's southern regions, the Ministry added.

Attacks on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power station

Ukraine and Russia [blamed](#) each other for shelling of Europe's largest nuclear power plant, the Zaporizhzhia, on 6-7 August, in the south-east of Ukraine. The plant, located not far from the Crimean peninsula, has six of Ukraine's 15 reactors, and is capable of supplying power to four million homes. President Zelenskiy called for new international sanctions on Moscow for "nuclear terror". Rafael Mariano Grossi, Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), [said](#) he was "extremely concerned" by reports of damage at the plant

and called for IAEA experts to be allowed to inspect the damage. The shelling caused one of the reactors to shut down and according to Grossi created a "very real risk of a nuclear disaster". In an earlier [interview](#) with the Associated Press on 2 August, he said the situation at the plant was "completely out of control", adding "every principle of nuclear safety has been violated [at the plant]. ... What is at stake is extremely serious and extremely grave and dangerous".

In recent weeks, the Russian military [reportedly](#) deployed heavy artillery batteries and laid anti-personnel landmines at the plant, which it has been controlling since March. Ukrainian officials said Russia is using the nuclear plant as a base for its artillery, knowing that Ukraine cannot attack it without risking a nuclear disaster. Similarly, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [warned](#) on 1 August that Russian forces were using the Zaporizhzhia plant as a "nuclear shield" from which to launch attacks on surrounding Ukrainian forces. Shaun Burnie, senior nuclear specialist with Greenpeace, [said](#) "Nuclear plants are extremely vulnerable to external attack in the context of a war zone," and that something as simple as the loss of power could unleash "massive releases of radioactivity" at rates worse than the Cheronobyl disaster of 1986. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres [said](#) "any attack to a nuclear plant is a suicidal thing," in response to news of the shelling while visiting Hiroshima to commemorate the 77th anniversary of the city being bombed with a US nuclear weapon.

The head of Ukraine's state nuclear power company Energoatom [called](#) for the plant to be made a military-free zone and said there should be a team of peacekeepers present at the site. Deputy Foreign Minister Mykola Tochytskyi repeated Ukraine's request for the skies over nuclear installations to be closed to prevent a potential accident and their misuse. In a tweet on 3 August he [said](#) "For the first time in history, civil nuclear facilities have been turned into military targets and springboards for the Russian army in breach of the non-proliferation provisions on peaceful use of nuclear energy. The world witnesses how nuclear terrorism, sponsored by the nuclear-weapon state, is arising in reality. The robust joint actions are needed to prevent nuclear disaster at global scale. We ask to close the sky over the nuclear power plants in Ukraine".

According to [reports](#) from Yevgeniy Balitsky, head of the Russian-installed administration of the occupied Zaporizhzhia region, the nuclear power station is continuing to operate normally, despite the shelling. However, Ukrainian officials [claim](#) that Russia is reorienting the plant's electricity production to connect to Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014.

Stalled diplomacy

Negotiations between Ukraine and Russia took place for several months following the invasion, but they did not stop the war, and talks have been stalled for months. Before that, negotiations on Donbas had lasted for more than seven years with French and German participation; but despite signed agreements and a ceasefire, the conflict was never resolved. Each side blames the other for a lack of progress and there appears to be no real prospect for any diplomatic breakthroughs or ceasefires in the near future.

Positions between the two sides remain incompatible: Ukraine insists on full sovereignty over all Ukrainian territory as it existed when Ukraine became independent in 1991, while Russia claims sovereignty over Crimea and recognition of independence of the Donbas separatist republics. Moreover, Russia has recognized the independence of the

Donbas republics on the whole administrative territory of the Donbas, even though some of that territory remains in Ukrainian hands and is the focus of current fighting.

France and Germany lead a NATO bloc favouring negotiations, while the US and UK lead a bloc that favour continuing to send more advanced weapons. One of the potential frameworks for a negotiated settlement is a four-point Italian proposal, calling for Ukraine committing to neutrality and not joining NATO, security guarantees for Ukraine, and negotiations between Ukraine and Russia on Crimea and the Donbas (see [NATO Watch Update 16](#)).

For options of what a possible settlement for Ukraine might look like, see Cambridge University's [Ukraine Peace Settlement Project](#).

There had been hopes that last month's grain agreement (see below) could be a model for wider dialogue aimed at ending the war. Gerhard Schroeder, a former German chancellor and friend of Vladimir Putin, [said](#) on 3 August, for example, that the Russian president wanted a negotiated solution and last month's agreement on grain shipments might offer a way forward. However, Schroeder was heavily [criticised](#) for going on holiday to Moscow and having a private meeting with Putin. Moreover, the Kremlin [said](#) on 8 August that there was no basis for a meeting between the Russian and Ukrainian presidents at the moment.

Russian-Turkish talks

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin [held talks](#) in the Black Sea resort town of Sochi on 5 August to discuss energy, Syria, drone technology and grain transport. The meeting took place only 17 days after a trilateral meeting with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran in July. After the four-hour meeting the two leaders apparently agreed to boost cooperation in the transport, agriculture, finance and construction industries, according to a [joint statement](#). Russian Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak [said](#) that the two leaders

intend to act in “solidarity in the fight against all terrorist organizations” in Syria.

Military and financial assistance to Ukraine

Ukraine continues to rely heavily on international military and financial support from Western states. In the five months since Russia launched its war in Ukraine, the United States has [pledged](#) about \$24 billion in military aid to Ukraine—more than four times Ukraine’s 2021 defence budget. America’s partners in Europe and beyond have [pledged](#) an additional \$12 billion, according to the Kiel Institute for the World Economy.

In a [speech](#) to the Norwegian Labour Party youth wing (AUF) summer camp in Utøya, Norway, on 4 August, NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg said that the war in Ukraine is the most dangerous moment for Europe since World War II, and Russia must not be allowed to win. He added that NATO has two tasks in the conflict: to support Ukraine and to prevent the conflict from spreading into a full-scale war between NATO and Russia. Hence, NATO members are [working closely with defence companies](#) to ensure Ukraine gets more supplies of weapons and equipment to be prepared for an anticipated drawn-out war with Russia.

The US [announced](#) on 1 August a new tranche of weapons for Ukraine’s forces fighting Russia, including ammunition for increasingly important rocket launchers and artillery guns. The \$550m package will “include more ammunition for the high mobility advanced rocket systems otherwise known as Himars, as well as ammunition” for artillery, national security council spokesman John Kirby told reporters. A week later, the Pentagon [announced](#) an additional \$1 billion in military aid to Ukraine, the largest such package to date. In addition, the US State Department [approved](#) \$89m worth of assistance on 9 August to help Ukraine equip and train 100 teams to clear landmines and unexploded ordnance for a year.

Russia has [accused](#) the US of being “directly involved” in the war by supplying targeting

information for Ukraine’s long-range missile strikes. Vadym Skibitsky, Ukraine’s acting deputy head of military intelligence, denied US officials were providing direct targeting information but acknowledged there was consultation.

UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace [welcomed](#) a decision by Sweden to join countries contributing to the UK-led [programme to train Ukrainian personnel](#) in Britain. Canada is also sending up to 225 soldiers to the UK to recommence the training of Ukrainian military recruits, the Canadian Defence Minister [announced](#) on 4 August. Since 2015, Canada has trained 33,000 Ukrainian military and security personnel but in February paused aspects of the training.

For further details on arms transfers to Ukraine, see, the [Forum on the Arms Trade](#)

The US Agency for International Development [announced](#) that the United States will provide an additional \$4.5 billion to Ukraine’s government, bringing its total budgetary support since Russia’s February invasion to \$8.5 billion. The funding, coordinated with the US Treasury Department through the World Bank, will go to Ukraine’s government in tranches, beginning with a \$3 billion disbursement in August. Meanwhile, on 10 August Ukraine’s overseas creditors [backed](#) a request from Kyiv for a two-year freeze on payments on almost \$20 billion in international bonds, allowing it to avoid a debt default. Ukraine’s prime minister said it will save the country almost \$6 billion, while helping to stabilise its economy and strengthen its army.

Humanitarian and environmental consequences of the war

Exact figures for the number of war fatalities, both military and civilian, are difficult to verify and confirm. [Undercounting and manipulation](#) of the data is common in war. Ukraine [claims](#) to have killed more than 42,000 Russian soldiers in the war to date, while the US [believes](#) Russia has suffered between 70,000 and 80,000 casualties, either killed or wounded. Ukraine has given no official total of

soldiers killed during the war, but in early June, a senior Ukrainian presidential aide [told](#) BBC News 100-200 Ukrainian soldiers were dying in the Donbas region every day. In April, Russia [said](#) it had killed about 23,000 Ukrainian troops.

UN figures [revealed](#) that, as at 8 August, 5,401 civilians have died since Russia invaded Ukraine in February, including 355 children. The actual figures are likely to be considerably higher, as the receipt of information from some locations where intense hostilities have been going on has been delayed and many reports are still pending corroboration. According to [Action on Armed Violence](#) (AOAV) the number of casualties from explosive violence in the Ukrainian conflict reached 6,003 people by 10 August. From this number, 2,490 were killed and 3,513 were injured across 806 incidents. Ninety-four per cent (5,659) of civilian casualties have occurred in populated areas.

The war continues to be marked by [alleged atrocities](#) and war crimes (see below). It is also highly likely Russia is deploying anti-personnel mines to protect and deter freedom of movement along its defensive lines in Donetsk and Kramatorsk in the Donbas region, [according](#) to the UK Ministry of Defence. The ministry called the PFM-1 and PFM-1S mines – also known as “butterfly mines” – “deeply controversial and indiscriminate weapons” with the potential to inflict widespread casualties among both the military and the local civilian population. Meanwhile, Amnesty International [apologised](#) for the “distress and anger” caused by a [report](#) that accused Ukrainian forces of endangering civilians by using some schools and hospitals as bases, firing near houses and sometimes living in residential flats. The apology came after the head of Amnesty’s Ukraine office, Oksana Pokalchuk, resigned having opposed the report’s publication, on the grounds that it unwittingly “created material that sounded like support for Russian narratives of the invasion”. Ukraine’s Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Maliar accused Amnesty of “distorting the real picture” and of failing to understand the situation on the ground.

The UN [said](#) that there have been over 10 million border crossings into and out of Ukraine since Russia launched its invasion of the country on 24 February. Data gathered by the UNHCR states that 6,180,345 individual refugees from Ukraine are now recorded across Europe. Ukraine’s neighbours have taken the largest individual numbers. Poland has 1.25 million refugees. Finland has [registered](#) a record number of 37,000 Ukrainian asylum seekers, beating a previous high set during the 2015 migrant crisis. However, Ukrainian refugees are likely to become victims of rising tensions and disinformation campaigns in their host countries, a [report](#) by the charity World Vision has warned.

Treatments of POWs

The UN is conducting a [fact-finding mission](#) in response to requests from both Russia and Ukraine after 53 Ukrainian prisoners of war were killed in an explosion at a barracks in separatist-controlled Olenivka on 29 July. Both sides have accused each other of carrying out the attack. Ukraine claims it was a special operation plotted in advance by the Kremlin, and carried out by Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Group. Russia’s Defence Ministry, however, claims the Ukrainian military used US-supplied rockets to strike the prison.

Russian activities in occupied parts of Ukraine

The Russian-installed head of the occupied part of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia region [signed a decree](#) on 8 August providing for a referendum on joining Russia, in the latest sign that Moscow is moving ahead with its plans to annex seized Ukrainian territory. President Zelenskiy [said](#) on 7 August that there could be no talks with Russia if it proceeds with referendums in occupied areas of Ukraine on joining Russia

A Russian airbase deep behind the frontline in Crimea was [damaged](#) by several large explosions on 9 August, killing at least one person. Ukraine’s air force said it believed up to a dozen Russian aircraft were destroyed on

the ground in the [attack](#), although it was not immediately clear whether it had been targeted by a long-range Ukrainian missile strike or was the result of sabotage. In his nightly address, President Zelenskiy did not discuss who was behind the attacks but vowed to “liberate” Crimea, saying: “This Russian war against Ukraine and against the entire free Europe began with Crimea and must end with Crimea – with its liberation”. The Russian Defence Ministry [claimed](#) that the explosions were caused by aviation ammunition. UK Defence Secretary Ben Wallace [said](#) he thought the airbase was a “legitimate target” for Ukraine. “First and foremost, Russia has illegally invaded, not just in 2014, but now Ukrainian territory,” he said. “Ukraine, under UN articles, is perfectly entitled to defend its territory and take what action it needs to against an invading force”.

Further reading:

On outcomes and consequences of the war

Hrair Balian, [A window has opened to end the war in Ukraine](#), Responsible Statecraft, 8 August 2022

[Ukraine under pressure in east as NATO chief says Russia must not win](#), Reuters, 5 August 2022

[Canadian military’s special operations members helping train Ukrainians: sources](#), Global News, 5 August 2022

Alina Polyakova and Ilya Timtchenko, [Time for NATO to Take the Lead in Ukraine](#), Foreign Affairs, 4 August 2022

[NATO members working with defence companies to boost weapons supplies to Ukraine](#), Reuters, 4 August 2022

Anatol Lieven, [New clashes over Nagorno-Karabakh signal ripple effects from Ukraine](#), Responsible Statecraft, 4 August 2022

[Zhovkva: NATO to create single trust fund to help Ukraine](#), Ukrinform, 4 August 2022

[Why the U.S. Should Not Designate Russia as a State Sponsor of Terrorism](#), International Crisis Group, 4 August 2022

[NATO Chief: World Will Be a More Dangerous Place if Russia Wins Ukraine War](#), VoA, 4 August 2022

Taras Bilous, [I’m a Ukrainian Socialist. Here’s Why I Resist the Russian Invasion](#), Jacobin, 26 July 2022

Mary Kaldor, [Russia-Ukraine: Old War Logics, New War Realities](#), PeaceRep, 15 July 2022

On investigations of war crimes in Ukraine and other legal processes

The ICC in the Hague opened an investigation into possible war crimes in Ukraine just days after Moscow’s forces invaded and it dispatched dozens of investigators to the country to gather evidence. On 14 July, 45 countries [agreed](#) at a conference in the Hague to coordinate investigations into suspected war crimes in Ukraine. Ukraine is investigating [almost](#) 26,000 suspected war crime cases committed since Russia’s invasion in February and has charged 135 people, its chief war crimes prosecutor told Reuters. Of those charged, approximately 15 are in Ukrainian custody and the remaining 120 remain at large.

Dozens of Ukrainian soldiers were burned to death inside a Russian detention centre outside Donetsk, while many others faced torture under a regime of “absolute evil”, [according](#) to a former prisoner, Anna Vorosheva, who was trying to deliver humanitarian supplies to Mariupol when she was arrested and held on charges of “terrorism”.

On the risk of nuclear war

During a meeting to review the half-century old Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, UN Secretary General António Guterres [warned](#) that “humanity is just one misunderstanding, one miscalculation away from nuclear annihilation”. In his speech he referenced the war in Ukraine and growing tensions and nuclear capabilities in Asia and the Middle East. Meanwhile, in a fresh blow to nuclear arms control, Russia [suspended](#) an arrangement that allowed US and Russian

inspectors to visit each other's nuclear weapons sites under the 2010 New Start treaty. Mutual inspections had been suspended as a health precaution since the start of the Covid pandemic, but a Russian Foreign ministry statement on 8 August added another reason: that Russia is unwilling to restart them. It argued that US sanctions imposed because of the invasion of Ukraine stopped Russian inspectors travelling to the USA.

[Sailors, Marines Demonstrate Readiness for Nuclear Attack in NATO Exercise](#), Newsweek, 8 August 2022

Connor Echols, [Can nuclear risk push Russia and the US toward talks?](#) Responsible Statecraft, 5 August 2022

[Warnings Grow over Nuclear Annihilation as Tensions Escalate Between U.S., Russia & China](#), Democracy Now, 4 August 2022

[Greenpeace Warns of Twin Nuclear Crises in Ukraine from Chernobyl to Russian Military Control of Zaporizhzhia Plant](#), Democracy Now, 4 August 2022

On sanctions against Russia and post-war reconstruction in Ukraine

Russia's invasion of Ukraine galvanized the US, UK and EU, and a handful of other Western-aligned countries, to unleash a series of sanctions meant to punish Vladimir Putin's government and pressure him to pull his forces back. While the sanctions lists are sometimes difficult to interpret, the EU has [sanctioned](#) 1,158 individuals and 98 entities—an approximate doubling of its entire sanctions portfolio across the dozens of sanctions regimes it implements; the UK also roughly doubled its portfolio (excluding the UN listings it is obligated to implement) having [imposed](#) sanctions on over 1,000 individuals and over 100 businesses; and the US has [sanctioned](#) more than 1,000 individuals or organizations since the invasion. The numbers, and the pace of the rollout, dwarf the sanctions lists for the likes of Iran, North Korea, Libya, the thematic counterterrorism lists, and all others.

However, rather than dissuading the Kremlin as intended, the penalties appear instead to be exacerbating inflation, worsening food insecurity and punishing ordinary Russians more than Putin or his allies. Moreover, Russia has claimed (see NATO Watch [Update 17](#) and [Update 18](#)) that it is getting more revenue from its fossil fuel sales now than before its invasion of Ukraine, despite (or partly because of) Western sanctions. Moreover, a Reuters [investigation](#) found that despite bans on high-tech exports to Russia by the United States and other Western countries, computer technology from Western companies are still making their way to Russia. AMD, Analog Devices, Infineon, Intel, and Texas Instruments are among the manufacturers whose technology Reuters found arrived in Russia following the country's invasion of Ukraine. Russia is also seeking alternatives to trading with Western states. For example, Russia is [expanding](#) the International North-South Transport Corridor, a network of railroads, highways and maritime routes through Iran to India.

Nonetheless, on 2 August, the US Treasury and State departments [announced](#) additional sanctions on Russian businesses and oligarchs. "The Treasury Department will use every tool at our disposal to make sure that Russian elites and the Kremlin's enablers are held accountable for their complicity in a war that has cost countless lives", Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said. A day later, Switzerland, a leader in gold refining, [announced](#) a ban on Russian gold imports, as well as an assets freeze on Sberbank, a Russian bank that is majority owned by the state. The USA and the EU have also banned gold imports from Russia. In addition, the G7 is [threatening](#) to further deprive Russia of revenue by blocking services that enable the transportation of its oil globally if it doesn't heed a proposed oil price cap. Russia has already stated it will not obey the cap and will ship to nations that do not support the price ceiling.

Finally, the leaders of Estonia and Finland [want](#) fellow European countries to stop issuing tourist visas to Russian citizens, saying they should not be able to take holidays in Europe

while the Russian government carries out a war in Ukraine. The Estonian prime minister, Kaja Kallas, wrote on 9 August on Twitter that “visiting Europe is a privilege, not a human right” and that it was “time to end tourism from Russia now”.

Richard Oscar, [The War in Ukraine: A New Paradigm of Sanctions Practice](#), Lawfare, 1 August 2022

On international food security and Ukrainian grain exports

The [announcement](#) on 22 July of a grain deal between Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and the UN – which could allow Ukraine to export up to 22 million tons of grain stuck in its ports via the Black Sea – was a rare ray of light. The resumption of food exports could prove crucial for Ukraine’s economy as well as global food but will rely on a fragile truce in the Black Sea security (on international food security and Ukrainian grain exports, see NATO Watch [Update 17](#), [Update 18](#), [Update 20](#) and [Update 21](#)). The resumption of grain exports is being overseen by a Joint Coordination Centre (JCC) in Istanbul where Russian, Ukrainian, Turkish and UN personnel are working. The first cargo ship left Ukraine under the agreement on 1 August, and since then another 11 have followed. The two latest ships left on 9 August. Oleksandr Kubrakov, Ukraine’s infrastructure minister, [said](#) he planned “to ensure ports have the ability to handle more than 100 vessels per month”.

[Who are the Winners in the Black Sea Grain Deal?](#)
International Crisis Group, 3 August 2022

Julia Osmolovska, [Black Sea Grain Initiative: Success of International Diplomacy or Package Deal Trick?](#) Globsec, 3 August 2022

[World thanks Turkey after 1st grain ship departs Ukraine](#), Daily Sabah, 1 August 2022

On developments within Ukraine

Ukraine’s state security service is [investigating](#) 752 cases of treason and collaboration. According to the agency, the greatest amount of cases have been documented in the regions

of Luhansk, Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson.

On developments within Russia

Russia [launched](#) an Iranian satellite into orbit from Kazakhstan on 9 August amid concerns it could be used for battlefield surveillance of military targets in Ukraine. Iran has denied that the Khayyam satellite, which was delivered into orbit onboard a Soyuz rocket launched from Baikonur cosmodrome, would ever be under Russian control.

A group of Russian soldiers [accused](#) their commanders of jailing them in eastern Ukraine for refusing to take part in the war. About 140 soldiers were detained and four filed complaints with an investigative committee, said Maxim Grebenyuk, head of Moscow-based group Military Ombudsman. Meanwhile, a leading Russian hypersonics expert, Andrei Shipliyuk, was [arrested](#) on 5 August on suspicion of treason. Shipliyuk heads the hypersonics laboratory at the Novosibirsk Institute of Theoretical and Applied Mechanics and has in recent years coordinated research to support the development of hypersonic missile systems.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov [signalled](#) that they are willing to discuss a prisoner swap, following the conviction and sentencing in Russia of US basketball star Brittney Griner. The basketball player was [sentenced](#) to nine years in prison by a Russian court for drug possession and smuggling. Lavrov said that discussion of the swap must happen through a Russia-US channel previously agreed to by Russian President Vladimir Putin and President Biden.

Meta, formerly named Facebook, [announced](#) on 4 August that it has removed a network of Instagram accounts operated by a troll farm in St Petersburg, Russia. 45 Facebook accounts and 1,037 Instagram accounts were removed after the report found that about \$1,400 had been spent in rubles to pay for ads on Facebook and Instagram.

Alisa Zemlyanskaya, [This train is on fire: how Russian partisans set fire to military registration and enlistment offices and derail trains](#), The Insider, 6 July 2022

On China's position on the war

Ukrainian President Zelenskiy is [reportedly](#) seeking direct talks with China's leader, Xi Jinping, in the hope China can use its influence with Russia to bring the war to an end. So far, China has refused to condemn Russia's invasion and its president, Xi Jinping, told Putin it would support Russia's "sovereignty and security". NATO's new [Strategic Concept](#) asserts that there is a "deepening strategic partnership" between China and Russia. In an interview with the Russian state news agency Tass published on 10 August, China's ambassador to Moscow, Zhang Hanhui, [called](#) the US the "main instigator" of the crisis and accused Washington of backing Russia into a corner with repeated expansion of the NATO defence alliance.

On developments within NATO

Kosovo

Two decades after the withdrawal of Serbian forces, Kosovo's security is still guaranteed by 3,800 NATO troops, known as KFOR. Political tensions have flared again in Kosovo in recent months, and at the beginning of August NATO-led peacekeepers backed by helicopters oversaw the removal of roadblocks protesters had set up in Kosovo. The removal of the barricades in the north of the country allowed two border crossings with Serbia to be reopened. Meanwhile, Ukraine announced that it will start the withdrawal of its 40 peacekeepers from KFOR following President Zelenskiy's March decree ordering all missions to return home to help in the war with Russia.

Climate change

Climate change has created natural disasters in countries worldwide from floods to catastrophic wildfires. This year, again, many NATO countries have been devastated by wildfires in the last few weeks, including forest fires in Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Greece,

Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey, the United States and Canada. Some NATO armed forces are assisting national efforts to fight wildfires and helping protect populations. In Greece, for example, NATO [deployed](#) record numbers of aircraft to help suppress wildfires.

Anatol Lieven, [Beware of viewing Balkans as new front in Russian-NATO proxy war](#), Responsible Statecraft, 10 August 2022

Tsuruoka Michito, [NATO-Japan Cooperation: A New Opportunity for Building Bridges Between US Allies](#), Nippon.com, 9 August 2022

Binoy Kampmark, [Going Global with NATO](#), International Policy Digest, 7 August 2022

William R. Hawkins, [NATO Navies Send Strategic Signals in the Indo-Pacific](#), US Naval Institute, August 2022

[NATO supports Allies in fighting wildfires](#), NATO News Release, 5 August 2022

Ed Arnold and Tom Sayner, [Political Volatility is Disrupting European Security](#), RUSI Commentary, 4 August 2022

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg's [speech](#) to the AUF summer camp, Utøya, Norway, 4 August 2022

Vijay Prashad, [The World Does Not Want a Global NATO](#), Transnational, 4 August 2022

Chris Hedges, [NATO – The Most Dangerous Military Alliance on the Planet](#), Transnational, 4 August 2022

[Ukraine to start pullout of peacekeepers from Kosovo – report](#), Reuters, 3 August 2022

Cengiz Aktar, [Escaping NATO's Turkey Paradox](#), National Interest, 3 August 2022

[Germany, Hungary, Italy take up NATO's Baltic air policing](#), NATO News Release, 2 August 2022

[Regional Perspectives Report on the Indo-Pacific: Strategic Foresight Analysis](#), NATO Allied Command Transformation, August 2022

[NATO peacekeepers oversee removal of roadblocks in Kosovo](#), Reuters, 1 August 2022

[Summit prepares ground for 'NATOisation of Europe' and continues collision course with China and high levels of military spending](#), NATO Watch Briefing No.96, 6 July 2022

On Finland and Sweden joining NATO

Finland and Sweden were invited to join NATO, after a [trilateral memorandum](#) with Turkey agreed on the eve of the NATO Madrid Summit assuaged Ankara's previous objections. The two Nordic countries will become NATO members after the Accession Protocol is ratified by all 30 member states. The invitation to Finland and Sweden represents a major geopolitical shift in Europe as the two countries move away from neutrality. However, ratification by Turkey is still by no means certain. The trilateral agreement could still falter on implementation, especially regarding Turkish extradition requests.

To date, 23 NATO member states have ratified the decision, with the USA the most recent to do so. Following the Senate [voting](#) 95 to 1 in favour, US President Joe Biden on 9 August [signed](#) documents endorsing Finland and Sweden's accession to NATO.

[Biden signs measures giving U.S. approval to Sweden and Finland's bids to join NATO](#), New York Times, 9 August 2022

Daniel S. Hamilton, [NATO's Nordic opportunity is multidomain](#), Defense News, 8 August 2022

[When will Sweden and Finland join NATO? Tracking the ratification process across the Alliance](#), Atlantic Council, 8 August 2022.

[Senate Overwhelmingly Votes to Add Sweden and Finland to NATO](#), New York Times, 3 August 2022

John R. Deni, [Sweden and Finland are on their way to NATO membership. Here's what needs to happen next](#), Atlantic Council, Issue Brief, 3 August 2022

[Senate votes to ratify NATO membership for Sweden and Finland](#), CNN, 3 August 2022

[Italy's lower house backs NATO membership for Finland and Sweden](#), Reuters, 2 August 2022

Josh Hawley, [Why I Won't Vote to Add Sweden and Finland to NATO](#), National Interest, 1 August 2022

Bridget Moix, [Expanding NATO is Not the Path to Peace in Europe](#), Friends Committee on National Legislation, 1 August 2022

Erik Smith, [Sweden's NATO membership will make America safer](#), Syracuse, 1 August 2022

Jeanne Shaheen and Thom Tillis, [An urgent message to our fellow senators: Support Finland and Sweden's swift accession into NATO](#), Atlantic Council, 1 August 2022

For further details see:

[Murky trilateral agreement results in Turkey lifting objections to Finland and Sweden's NATO application](#), NATO Watch News Brief, 29 June 2022

[Should Finland and Sweden hold a referendum on NATO membership?](#) NATO Watch Briefing no. 93, 6 May 2022

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