

# Russia's war on Ukraine: International reactions

International condemnation of Moscow's war on Ukraine has reached far beyond Europe, as evidenced by overwhelming support for a United Nations (UN) resolution condemning the invasion. Several countries have gone further and joined the EU in adopting sanctions against Russia or sending military aid to Ukraine.

## Broad international condemnation of Russia's invasion at the UN

On 2 March 2022, the UN General Assembly (UNGA) convened in a special session and adopted, with a broad majority (141 votes in favour, to 5 against, with 35 abstentions and 12 absentees), [resolution](#) ES-11/1 reaffirming Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and calling for the unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from Ukraine. The text largely resembles the [draft resolution](#) vetoed earlier by Russia in the UN Security Council (UNSC). Unlike UNSC resolutions, UNGA resolutions cannot be vetoed, but are non-binding. Besides Russia and Belarus, the world's least democratic [regimes](#) – Eritrea, North Korea and Syria – also voted against the UNGA resolution. Several [countries](#) that abstained (in particular [China](#) and Pakistan, but also [South Africa](#)) emphasised the need to address the security interests of both parties to the conflict. In Africa, [17 countries](#) abstained, including those importing Russian arms, those where the Russian [Wagner Group](#) is active, and two of the continent's most stable democracies, [Senegal](#) and [South Africa](#). In Latin America, unsurprisingly, authoritarian regimes with traditional strong ties with Russia – Cuba and Nicaragua – abstained, along with Bolivia and El Salvador. In [Asia](#), India and Vietnam, both importers of Russian arms, also abstained. Some countries have called for fair treatment of third countries' nationals at Ukraine's borders in light of [reported](#) incidents of discrimination.

## Sanctions adopted against Russia

Both the [EU](#) and the [United States](#) (US) had promised before the war that Russia would pay a steep financial price for any attack on Ukraine, and have since coordinated their restrictive measures against Russia. In four rounds of sanctions, adopted on [23 February](#) after Russia's recognition of the two so-called 'People's Republics' of Donetsk and Luhansk, and on [25 February](#), [28 February](#) and [2 March](#) after the start of the war, the EU imposed restrictions on individuals, including Vladimir Putin and senior Russian ministers; on financial transactions with all state-controlled banks; and on trade with the energy and aviation sectors, among others. Russian aeroplanes are banned from EU airspace and EU airports. [US sanctions](#) imposed from 21 February to 3 March include restrictions on Russian state banks; full blocking sanctions on numerous Russian financial institutions and businesses, including the parent company of Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline project and senior Russian and Belarussian political and business figures; and export controls on US technology. Moreover, EU countries, the US and others agreed to cut out certain Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunication ([SWIFT](#)) financial transactions service. [Discussions](#) are ongoing in the US and the EU on a full ban on Russian oil imports.

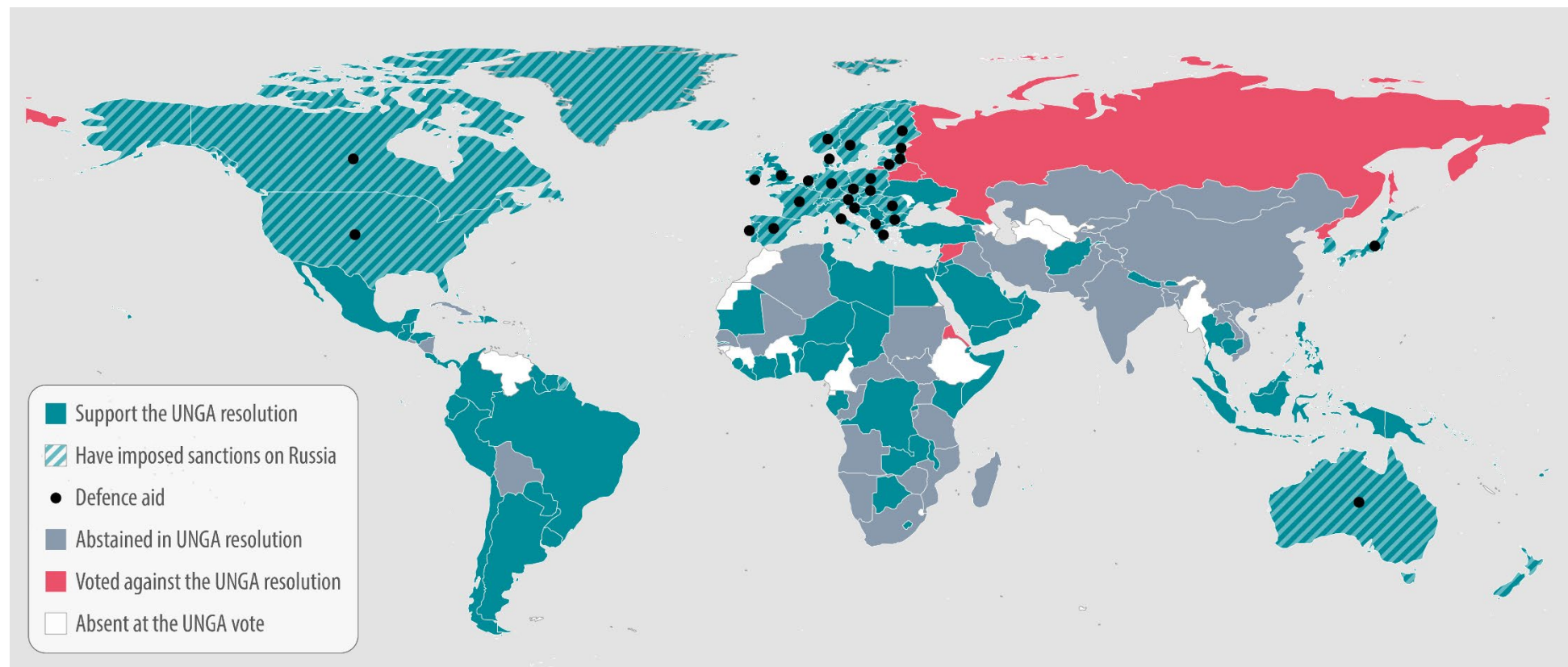
Other countries joined the EU and the US in imposing sanctions. On 28 February, Switzerland [announced](#) a break with its long-standing policy of neutrality to mirror EU financial sanctions on Russia. On 1 and 2 March, the United Kingdom (UK) published [regulations](#) introducing new financial, trade and shipping sanctions against Russia. In addition, several allies or strategic partners of the US in the Asia-Pacific region imposed sanctions, namely [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [Japan](#), [New Zealand](#), [Singapore](#), [South Korea](#) and [Taiwan](#), with Japan's sanctions, while less far-reaching than those imposed by the EU and the US, marking a [departure](#) from previous practice. Some of the countries that voted for the UNGA resolution, such as [Brazil](#) or [Turkey](#), have however criticised the sanctions imposed on Russia, for different reasons.

## Commitment of military aid to Ukraine

Both the [EU](#) (from the off-budget European Peace Facility) and the [US](#) paired sanctions with commitments of military aid to Ukraine in the form of money and weapons (but, so far, have neither sent [combat troops](#) nor made moves to impose a no-fly zone over Ukraine).

Most EU Member States have committed to provide defence aid, including [Germany](#), which prior to the conflict refused to send lethal aid, as well as historically neutral [Ireland](#), [Austria](#), [Finland](#) and [Sweden](#) (albeit non-lethal aid in the case of the former two). These countries have been joined by non-EU countries such as [Australia](#), [Canada](#), [North Macedonia](#) and the [UK](#).

Table 1: International reactions to Russia's war on Ukraine



Data source: [UNGA resolution A/RES/ES-11/1 vote summary](#), government statements for sanctions and commitments of defence aid as reported by the press.

Defence aid includes various items, lethal and non-lethal, such as fuel, helmets and other protective equipment, medical items and medical care for injured Ukrainian soldiers in third countries, as well as lethal weapons, from rifles and ammunition to air defence rockets and anti-tank systems.

