



Weekly Briefing

**Poland external relations briefing:
The Polish President together with the
Presidents of the Baltic States in Ukraine**
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Summary

The Polish President Andrzej Duda along with the presidents of the Baltic countries visited the Ukrainian liberated towns near Kyiv and met with President Volodymyr Zelensky. He called for war crimes committed by Russians in Ukraine to be tried by international courts, calling Russian crimes against civilians terrorism. President Duda also visited London, where he met with Prime Minister Boris Johnson. During the visit, they agreed to deepen Polish-British military cooperation, especially in the context of supporting Ukraine. In turn, Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki met with his Ukrainian counterpart in Krakow, where an agreement was signed on railroad cooperation between the two countries to facilitate the export of Ukrainian goods. The Prime Minister also visited Ukraine's Lviv, where Poland is funding the construction of temporary homes for refugees.

Introduction

President Andrzej Duda travelled to Ukraine with Gitanas Nausėda of Lithuania and the presidents of Latvia and Estonia, Egils Levits and Alar Karis in mid-April to meet Volodymyr Zelenski in a demonstration of support for the Ukrainian president and his country. Prior to meeting Zelensky, the four heads of state visited the town of Borodyanka, near Kyiv, to inspect the damage inflicted on Ukraine by Russia's armed forces. The Polish president said after meeting Zelensky that the perpetrators of war crimes must be held to account at every level, from individual soldiers to their commanders, and tried by international courts.

Duda: It's not war, it's terrorism

Andrzej Duda said prosecutors were gathering evidence where mass murder had been committed and that it was „unthinkable that such things happen in the modern world.” „It's not war, it's terrorism, when soldiers are sent to murder civilians,” Duda said, adding that it was a face of war that could not be accepted. „All the time, from Kyiv, from the places that have experienced Russian aggression, must come an appeal to the international community that the

opposition be decisive,” Duda continued. „There can be no dialogue with those who break all the rules.”

The Polish president said Russia's mentality had not changed and that he and his peers could not accept that. „We deeply believe that the decent part of the contemporary world also doesn't agree (to it) and will express that,” he said. Andrzej Duda also said he hoped Ukraine would soon become part of the European Union as a free and sovereign state taking its own decisions.

It was the first visit to Ukraine by heads of state since the outbreak of war. Presidents Duda and Nauseda last visited Zelensky the day before Russia invaded.ⁱ

President Duda in London to discuss cooperation towards Ukraine

At the invitation of British Prime Minister Boris Johnson President Andrzej Duda paid a visit to London. Among the topics of the leaders' talks were Russian aggression against Ukraine and military cooperation between Poland and the UK.

During the meeting, the Polish President and the British Prime Minister adopted a joint statement. - At a time when Europe is facing its greatest security crisis in decades and a brotherly European democracy has come under attack, Poland and the United Kingdom stand by each other. We consider ourselves among Europe's closest partners and are determined to meet the challenges of the future together, Andrzej Duda and Boris Johnson wrote.

"Our cooperation has grown significantly, demonstrating both sides' commitment to helping the Ukrainian people and each other. With both of our countries increasing defense budgets to record levels, today we announce a joint commitment to deepen cooperation between our armed forces and intelligence structures and to pursue mutually beneficial projects under the new Defense Industrial Cooperation Program," the statement read.ⁱⁱ

We agreed to propose the establishment of a Poland-UK Joint Commission to support Ukraine in the long-term coordination of arms supplies and training, as well as to assist Ukraine in identifying needs and modernizing the army, the statement stressed. The document also notes that the UK will "triple its support to Poland to £30 million to provide humanitarian assistance to Ukrainian refugees temporarily residing in Poland."

The parties also pointed out that: "Russia's disregard for international law, humanitarian law and human decency is shameful. We are taken aback by reports of war crimes committed

by Russian forces against the Ukrainian people." - We pledge to hold those responsible for these crimes accountable and will work together, including using Poland's role as Chair of the OSCE, to gather evidence and support the war crimes investigation by the International Criminal Court," the statement read.

- We agreed with PM Johnson that tighter sanctions are needed that are actually more effective. There is a proposal to impose additional taxes on raw materials imported to the European Union and to aim at stopping supplies," the Polish President said after the meeting. He added that as Poland "we assume that by the end of the year we will stop using Russian sources. We mobilize our partners to look for alternative solutions".ⁱⁱⁱ

The Polish-Ukrainian railroad cooperation

The Polish head of government Mateusz Morawiecki met with Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal in Krakow. The politicians discussed the current war situation in Ukraine, scenarios for its further development, as well as the issues of rebuilding the country from war damage. The Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki informed about current and planned actions taken by Poland and the European Union to support Ukraine against the Russian invasion and its consequences. To date, Poland has donated more than \$1.6 billion worth of military equipment to our eastern neighbor.

The politicians stressed the need to abandon as soon as possible purchases of Russian energy resources, which remain a key source of funding for the Russian regime and its activities. The Ukrainian Prime Minister and I look at these sanctions as clearly insufficient. We look at what is happening to the Russian currency, to Russian bonds, also to Russian inflation. Secondary sanctions are needed. New sanctions are needed that really catch the Russian economy in a corset and prevent it from financing the war. That's where we appeal from together: the Prime Minister of Ukraine and the Prime Minister of Poland. We appeal to the entire free world for the fastest possible sanctions on oil, gas and on coal," said Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki.

At the end of the visit, the prime ministers signed a memorandum between Poland and Ukraine on enhancing cooperation in the railroad sector. This initiative responds to Ukrainian needs for freight transport in the situation of blockade of ports by the Russian aggressor. It will also be an instrument for supporting mutually beneficial economic development of both countries.^{iv}

Poland finances temporary homes for refugees in Lviv

The Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki was on a visit to Lviv, a day after another Russian attack. He visited wounded Ukrainian soldiers and injured civilians. He also went to the construction site of temporary homes for refugees who came to Lviv from the eastern part of Ukraine. The Polish government is involved in the construction of the town. This is another form of Polish aid to its neighbor.

The Polish government, in consultation with the Ukrainian authorities, will build centers for those forced to leave their homes due to the armed conflict in Ukraine. Ultimately, the Polish government will build settlements for 20 thousand people. The first settlement was opened in Lviv. It is used by about a thousand Ukrainians. The head of the Polish government announced further similar initiatives.

The Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki visited Ukrainian soldiers and injured civilians in hospital, wounded in the fight against the Russian aggressor. They are also already receiving treatment in Poland. As the Prime Minister announced, Polish hospitals are ready to receive at least 10 thousand soldiers, if necessary.

- Ukraine defends the most universal and European values. The right to life, the right to freedom and sovereignty - said the Prime Minister during his visit to Lviv. As he stressed - that is why when I talk to the leaders of Western European Union countries, it clearly indicates the need for the strongest possible sanctions. This is the lowest price that we in Europe can pay for what is happening here, in Ukraine, for these terrible crimes. The smallest price to pay to regain freedom. Everyone must realize this," he pointed out. The Prime Minister appealed to the European Commission for new funds under the Solidarity Fund for Ukraine, earmarked directly for people fleeing war.^v

Conclusion

The Polish government has been extremely active on the international stage, advocating in Europe for the strongest possible sanctions against Russia, independence from Russian raw materials, and broad military and economic support for Ukraine. Poland also supports its neighbor economically and militarily, building coalitions of countries opposed to Russia's imperial policies.

ⁱ The Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland <https://www.president.pl/news/presidents-of-poland-baltic-states-visit-kyiv,52353>

ⁱⁱ The Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland <https://www.president.pl/news/joint-leaders-statement-by-andrzej-duda-anf,51865>

ⁱⁱⁱ The Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland <https://www.prezydent.pl/aktualnosci/wizyty-zagraniczne/londyn-spotkanie-andrzej-dudy-i-borisa-johnsona,51852>

^{iv} The Chancellery of the Prime Minister <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-mateusz-morawiecki-nasza-solidarna-postawa-moze-doprowadzic-do-tego-ze-damy-odpor-destruktywnej-polityce-gospodarczej-ze-strony-rosji>

^v The Chancellery of the Prime Minister <https://www.gov.pl/web/premier/premier-we-lwowie-nie-mozemy-zostawic-naszyc-sasiadow-w-osamotnieniu-polska-buduje-domy-modulowe-w-ukrainie>