

In support of Ukraine's territorial integrity: restoring economic and political stability

The Government of Canada has always stood with those who defend freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law, Prime Minister **Stephen Harper said on a recent visit to Kiev**

In recent months, the whole world has witnessed the courage of the Ukrainian people. You have driven back a regime that pointed its guns at your people and killed Ukrainians. Through such dark days, you have provided inspiration and a new chapter in humanity's ongoing struggle for the freedom, democracy and justice of its citizens.

Now you face an even greater test.

President Vladimir Putin's actions in Crimea are a clear violation of international law, a campaign of armed aggression widely condemned by the international community.

Canada and its G7 partners have spoken with one voice: we do not accept what has happened in Crimea, a parody of a referendum that violates the constitution, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine, and the results of which only reveal the brutality of Putin's military occupation.

In coordination with our allies, Canada has already taken action in response to the events in Crimea, including suspension of our preparations for the G8 in Sochi, suspension of the Canada-Russia Intergovernmental Economic Commission, cancellation of joint military operations, and an array of travel bans and sanctions on members of the Russian Government and of the former Yanukovich regime.

For Ukraine, the consequences of the actions of the Putin regime are obvious and can only be remedied by their complete reversal.

Furthermore, all of us who desire peace and stability in the world must recognise that the consequences of these actions will be felt far beyond the borders of Ukraine or even the European continent itself ...

By his open repudiation of the Budapest Memorandum, President Putin has undermined international confidence in the protection afforded by such agreements.

Ukraine relinquished its nuclear weapons, the nuclear weapons it inherited from the former Soviet Union, on the basis of an explicit Russian guarantee of its territorial integrity. By breaching that guarantee, President Putin has provided a rationale for those elsewhere who needed little more encouragement than that already furnished by pride or grievance to arm themselves to the teeth. However, the effect of President Putin's attempt to impose the law

of the jungle ought to be to redouble the free world's unwavering fervour and to reinforce the growing diplomatic and economic isolation of the regime in place in Moscow.

The Government of Canada has always stood with those who defend freedom, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

We have also been proud that we were the first Western country to recognise Ukraine's independence in 1991.

We are here today to reiterate our commitment to your independence. I am here today to reiterate our support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, and to support your efforts, Prime Minister Yatseniuk, to restore economic and political stability.

Canadians are impressed by the restraint shown by the Ukrainian Government and people in the face of obvious provocations

To that end, Canada has already announced loan guarantees as part of a broader package under consideration by the International Monetary Fund. These guarantees must be accompanied by the restoration of Ukrainian institutions after the damage inflicted by the corruption of the Yanukovich regime.

Canada stands ready to help Ukraine in this necessary work.

Prime Minister Yatseniuk and I talked today about a number of additional ways Canada can assist and work with the government here. In particular, Prime Minister Yatseniuk and I agreed to establish a basis to restart our suspended free trade negotiations at the earliest possible opportunity.

Canadians, I should mention ... are also impressed by the restraint shown by your government and the Ukrainian people in the face of obvious provocations, and we commend your commitment to respect regional and linguistic differences within your own country, and to seek good relationships with your neighbours, both east and west.

Let me conclude with this: it is for Ukrainians and Ukrainians only to decide their future. In this principle, Canada will not waiver. And to help the Ukrainian people peacefully secure a bright future of freedom, we shall spare no effort. This courageous people deserves no less. *Slava Ukraina.* ■

Taken from remarks delivered by Canadian prime minister Stephen Harper at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk of Ukraine, Kiev, 22 March 2014

Canada's prime minister Stephen Harper reiterated his country's commitment to Ukraine's independence and sovereignty



GLEB GARANICH/REUTERS