



Statement by Antonio Tajani, Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Italy in his capacity as Chair of the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting at the Munich Security Conference (17 February 2024)

The G7 Foreign Ministers of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States of America and the High Representative of the European Union reaffirmed their strong unity of purpose in their first meeting under the Italian Presidency in 2024.

They renewed their commitment to upholding the rule of law, humanitarian principles, universal human rights and international law, including the UN Charter.

They expressed their outrage at the death in detention of Alexei Navalny, unjustly sentenced for legitimate political activities and his fight against corruption. They demanded Russian Authorities to fully clarify the circumstances of his death. They called on Russia to stop its unacceptable persecution of political dissent, as well as systematic repression of freedom of expression and undue limitation of civil rights.

Unwavering Support to Ukraine

On the eve of the two-year mark of the brutal Russian aggression against Ukraine, they welcomed in their meeting Dmytro Kuleba, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine.

They underscored that Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine constitutes a blatant violation of the very tenets of the UN Charter. They reaffirmed their unwavering resolve to continue to support Ukraine in defending its freedom, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, within its internationally recognized borders and they commended Ukraine's outstanding resistance and endurance. As acknowledged at the G7 Leaders meeting in Vilnius last year, the G7 members confirmed that -together with international partners- they are fast progressing with Ukraine on specific, bilateral, long-term security commitments and arrangements. They expressed their determination to continue to coordinate with partners to provide military, financial, political, humanitarian, economic and development support to Ukraine and its people as well as to strengthen sanctions against Russia and those who materially support its war. They also expressed their intention to step up efforts against evasion and circumvention of their sanctions and export control measures. They called on all countries to take active steps to prevent

the acquisition of military equipment and dual-use items by Russia's defense sector from or through their jurisdictions.

They condemned Russia's continued attacks on Ukrainian civilians and human rights violations. They reiterated their commitment to combat impunity by holding to account, consistent with international law, those responsible for crimes, which are of concern to the international community as a whole.

They emphasized that Russia will have to pay for the damage and devastation it is causing to Ukraine and its people. They commended the work of G7 Finance and Foreign Ministries on this issue to date and supported their future discussions. They reaffirmed their determination to keep Russia's sovereign assets in their jurisdictions immobilized until it pays for the damage it has caused. The G7 members will continue to explore all possible avenues to aid Ukraine in obtaining compensation from Russia, consistent with their respective legal systems and international law. They welcomed the adoption by the European Union of the legal acts concerning extraordinary revenues held by private entities stemming directly from Russia's immobilized assets to support Ukraine.

The G7 members confirmed that they will continue to address -together with international partners- Ukraine's most urgent and long-term recovery needs and coordinate the support through the Multi-agency Donor Coordination Platform. They highlighted the importance of addressing the needs of the most vulnerable, especially women and children. They highlighted the upcoming Japan-Ukraine conference for Promotion of Economic Growth and Reconstruction, the 2024 Ukraine Recovery Conference to be hosted by Germany and the 2025 Ukraine Recovery Conference in Italy.

They welcomed the European Council's decision in December 2023 to open negotiations for Ukraine's accession to the European Union. They underscored the significance of Ukraine continuing to implement reform efforts in line with the Euro-Atlantic path it has embraced.

They strongly condemned North Korea's arms transfers to Russia, which directly violate relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. They also expressed their deep concern about the potential for any transfer of nuclear or ballistic missile-related technology to North Korea or any Russian transfers to North Korea of conventional weapons or other dual-use items in violation of the relevant UNSCRs, which would further threaten peace and stability across the world. They recognized that developments in the Indo-Pacific can directly affect Euro-Atlantic security.

They called upon Iran to stop assisting the Russian military and its war of aggression against Ukraine. They also called for all countries to prevent the supply of components or other items to Iran's UAV programmes, which are intended to support Russia's war effort.

They reiterated their support for Ukraine's efforts – including through the “Peace Formula” process – to promote a comprehensive, just and lasting peace, in line with international law, in particular the UN Charter and through engagement with the widest array of global partners and actors.

They condemned Russia's irresponsible nuclear rhetoric, its posture of strategic intimidation, its announcement that it has deployed nuclear weapons in Belarus, at an increasingly unstable and dangerous moment, and its undermining of arms control regimes.

They reiterated that Russia's seizure and continued control and militarization of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant is unacceptable and they reaffirmed their full support for the International Atomic Energy Agency's efforts.

Situation in the Middle East and in the Red Sea

The G7 members condemned in the strongest possible terms the terrorist attacks by Hamas and other terrorist groups against Israel that began on October 7, 2023. They called on Hamas to cease their ongoing attacks against Israel and emphasized Israel's right to defend itself in accordance with international law. They urged Hamas to release all hostages without preconditions. They expressed their deep sadness for the heavy and unacceptable toll this conflict has taken on civilians.

They called for urgent action to address the catastrophic humanitarian crisis in Gaza, particularly the plight of 1.5 million civilians sheltering in Rafah and they expressed deep concern for the potentially devastating consequences on the civilian population of Israel's further full scale military operation in that area. They underscored that securing full, rapid, safe and unhindered humanitarian access in all its forms to the Gaza Strip remains an absolute priority and that all parties must allow unimpeded humanitarian support for civilians, including food, water, medical care, fuel, shelter, telecommunications, and access for humanitarian workers. They underlined the need to establish effective systems for the safety of aid convoys and humanitarian locations and to enable more UN staff, vehicles and equipment to enter and safely distribute aid, as more supply lines are urgently needed and the flow of humanitarian assistance

in Gaza must be increased significantly. They were concerned by the risk of forcible displacement of Palestinian civilians out of Gaza.

The G7 members expressed their intention to work for prolonged and durable pauses in the hostilities leading to a sustainable ceasefire and for the urgent implementation of UNSCR 2712 and 2720, including corridors to facilitate urgently needed assistance, civilian movement, and the release of hostages. They reiterated that foreign nationals must be allowed to continue to depart.

They reiterated in the strongest possible terms the importance for all parties to protect civilians, especially those most vulnerable, particularly women and children, in compliance with international humanitarian law.

They recalled that since the onset of the crisis, the G7 members have been active providers of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations.

The G7 members recognized the crucial role played by UN agencies and other humanitarian actors. They expected that UNRWA provides full transparency on the serious allegations against its staff and takes immediate action. They expected timely results of the announced investigations by the UN.

They expressed their readiness to support the Palestinian Authority as it undertakes the reforms that are indispensable to enable it to take up its responsibilities in the aftermath of the conflict, in both Gaza and the West Bank.

The G7 members confirmed that they are also working, including by imposing sanctions or other measures, to deny Hamas the ability to raise funds to carry out further atrocities. They continued to press for the reports of sexual violence by Hamas and other terrorist groups to be fully investigated and documented and for the perpetrators to be held accountable.

The G7 members underscored that all parties must refrain from unilateral actions that undermine the prospect for a two state solution. They emphasized that the rise in extremist settler violence since the start of the conflict is unjustifiable and threatens prospects for a lasting peace and that extremist settlers responsible for violent acts against Palestinian communities must be brought to account.

They underscored the need for a permanent, sustainable end to the conflict, as Israelis and Palestinians have an equal right to live in safety, dignity, and peace. They also underscored that a viable solution to the conflict can only be the result of a coordinated regional effort. They remained committed to a lasting and sustainable peace based on a two-state solution through reinvigorated efforts in the Middle East Peace Process, which envisions Israel and a viable Palestinian State living side by side

in peace, security and mutual recognition. They underlined the need to engage broadly in charting and implementing a sustainable path towards the implementation of this vision. They appreciated all efforts made to this end.

The G7 members reiterated that they oppose all discrimination based on grounds of religion or belief and they called for effective protection of all religious communities. They strongly rejected antisemitism and Islamophobia in any form.

The G7 members underscored that they are working intensively -along with partners in the region- to prevent the conflict from escalating further and spreading more widely. They expressed particular concern about the situation along the Blue Line and the risk of escalation between Hezbollah and Israel. They highlighted the essential stabilizing role played by the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) in mitigating that risk. They urged all involved to exercise restraint and work towards de-escalation.

They underscored that Iran's continued provision of arms and related materiel to the Houthis in violation of UNSCR 2216 and to other non-state actors in the region has also dangerously increased tensions.

They expressed their condolences regarding the death of three U.S. servicemembers who were killed as the result of a drone attack in Jordan perpetrated by an Iran-aligned militia group on January 28.

The G7 members renewed their strongest condemnation of the attacks perpetrated by the Houthis against commercial vessels transiting the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden and the navy ships protecting them. They underlined that these attacks violate international law, endanger innocent lives and threaten navigational rights and freedoms. In line with UNSCR 2722 they reiterated their support for countries that exercise the right to defend their vessels from attacks, in line with international law.

They welcomed the upcoming launch of the EU maritime operation "Aspides" and the continued efforts of the U.S.-led operation "Prosperity Guardian" along with UK support to protect these crucial shipping lanes, as maritime security and navigational rights and freedoms are critical to ensure free movement of essential commodities to destinations and populations all over the world.

The G7 members also reiterated their clear determination that Iran must never develop a nuclear weapon. They expressed their deep concern about Iran's unabated escalation of its nuclear programme, which has no credible civilian justification and brings it dangerously close to actual weapon-related activities. A diplomatic solution remains the best way to address international concerns.