

Ottawa Journal: Liberal Government Inaction on Ukraine

By David Tilson, MP

Dufferin-Caledon

The previous Conservative government took quick and decisive action to support Ukraine when its sovereignty was threatened by Russia's illegal occupation of Crimea.

Canada became a world leader in its strong support of the country in its struggle to restore political and economic stability.

Several of the initiatives our previous Conservative government put in place to support Ukraine are about to expire and we call on the current Liberal government to take immediate action to demonstrate Canada's continued support through a Ukrainian Defence and Aid Package.

The previous Conservative government had a strong record of action on supporting Ukraine by: sanctioning over 270 individuals and entities; providing the country with more than \$600 million in aid; contributing four CF-18 fighter jets to Baltic Air Policing; assigning the HMCS Fredericton to the Baltic Sea and deploying 120 Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) members to Eastern Europe as part of NATO's assurance measures in Eastern Europe; donating 30,000 coats, 30,000 pairs of pants, 70,000 pairs of Gore-Tex boots and 4,500 pairs of gloves, purchasing tactical communications systems, explosive ordnance disposal equipment, tactical medical kits, and both night thermal goggles for the Ukrainian military; providing \$5 million in non-lethal material assistance to the Ukrainian Border Services (helmets, body armour, sleeping bags, etc.); and launching Operation UNIFIER, a military training mission comprised of 200 CAF members deployed to Western Ukraine.

The current Liberal government's record of action on Ukraine has not been nearly as strong, as it: cancelled the supply of life-saving radar-satellite imagery; has yet to extend Operation UNIFIER beyond its March 2017 deadline; failed to sign the Canada-Ukraine Defence Cooperation Agreement; ignored Ukraine's calls for lethal defensive military equipment, while providing the same support to the Kurdish military; backed down from its election promise to adopt Magnitsky sanctions; moved to normalize relations with Russian President Vladimir Putin, despite his ongoing illegal occupation of Crimea.

Russian aggression has continued and Ukraine, therefore, needs the continued support of Canada.

This is why we are proposing a Ukrainian Defence and Aid Package, which calls on the current Liberal government to: extend and expand Operation UNIFIER, Canada's military training mission to Ukraine which is set to expire on March 31, 2017; restore the practice of providing RADARSAT-2 Imagery to the Ukrainian military; add Ukraine to the Automatic Firearms Country Control List and supply the Ukrainian military with lethal defensive equipment; strengthen sanctions to hold corrupt foreign officials to account by implementing our Magnitsky legislation (Bill C-267 in the House of Commons and Bill S-226 in the Senate); sign and implement the Canada-Ukraine Defence Cooperation Agreement; increase the number of OSCE monitors to report on violations of the Minsk Agreements; provide additional humanitarian assistance to support the 1.6 million internally displaced people in Ukraine; and call on Russia to respect Ukraine's sovereign territory and abide by all aspects of the Minsk Agreements.

Canada has and must continue to steadfastly support Ukraine, as its sovereignty remains threatened by Russia.

I join my Conservative colleagues in calling on the current Liberal government to take immediate action on the Ukrainian Defence and Aid Package that will show Ukrainians that Canada will continue to stand united with them.