

President Zourabichvili Calls Sanctions Against Russia 'Symbolic'



► President Zourabichvili: Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions against Ukraine are worrying and a threat to Europe's security

BY KHATIA BZHALAVA

President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili stated on Tuesday that Russian President Vladimir Putin's actions against Ukraine are worrying and a threat to Europe's security. While talking with international media outlets, the president also echoed the sanctions imposed by Western countries against Russia after the recognition of two breakaway regions of Ukraine, noting that "the whole range of sanctions can provide some form of result". Zourabichvili stated that imposing sanctions is the right answer from the side of democratic countries, stressing that "you do not answer war by war". She noted that sanctions being imposed now are more symbolic, however, "it is a signal of things to come". The President said that Western partners did not use all the possibility they had in 2008 in the case of Georgia and 2014 in the case of Ukraine, hoping that this time the sanctions will be different.

"So I think today the challenge is exactly that - what is that the united West can do to make Russia feel the moral, political and financial costs, without war and major escalation," Zourabichvili noted.

She stressed that the Russian aggression against Ukraine feels like 2008, recalling the Russia-Georgia war. However, she also highlighted the differences in Russia's approach this time, namely the fact that Russia is moving directly to the annexation, without the pretext of war. The President noted that Putin's recent speech is something that everyone has to worry about, noting that not only Georgia or Ukraine but all of Europe is at stake.

When asked about the solution to the problem of Georgia's territorial integrity, the President noted that such a problem could not be solved with force, noting that the only alternative is diplomacy. According to her, Georgia needs to see signs of de-escalation of the situation at the occupation line, however, the president notes that she does not see these signs yet.

"Unfortunately, we have on the other side, the government of Russia that does not seem to be prone to diplomacy and we are seeing what is happening today... Georgia today does not have the means to bring Russia to real dialogue and to de-escalation," the president noted, adding that if there were signs of de-escalation, she would take all the risks for dialogue.



► President of Georgia Salome Zourabichvili and representatives of international media outlets.

EXCHANGE RATES: US DOLLAR - 3.0030 | EURO - 3.4063 | GBP - 4.0745 | 100 RUSSIAN RUBLE - 3.8131 | SWISS FRANC - 3.2680 |

EU, Britain, US, Canada, Australia and Japan Impose Sanctions on Russia Amidst Putin's Recognition of Ukrainian Occupied Regions of Donetsk and Luhansk

BY NATALIA KOCHIASHVILI

Following Russia's recognition of the Ukrainian-occupied Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine, the European Union imposed sanctions on members of the Russian Duma, 27 individuals and organizations, including banks that have been sponsoring separatist activities in eastern Ukraine.

According to Reuters, the sanctions, which typically include travel bans and asset freezes, will apply to all members of Russia's lower house of the Duma. Euronews informed that the sanction will be imposed on all Duma deputies (351) who supported the recognition of Donetsk and Luhansk.

German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has decided to suspend certification for the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. Scholz noted that the resumption of the certification process depends on Russia's actions.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline is to supply Russian natural gas to Germany bypassing Ukrainian territory. The US president has repeatedly said that if Russia attacks Ukraine, then Nord Stream 2 will not work.

US President Joe Biden has held a briefing on Ukraine and announced the imposition of sanctions on Russia as well. According to Biden, the sanctions were imposed on 2 major



Leaders of the EU, Canada, Japan and the US say this is the first stage of sanctions, and if Russia continues to act, the sanctions will be tightened.

financial institutions, VEB and Promsvyazbank, known as the Bank of the Russian Military. The first wave of sanctions will also include Russian financial institutions, the sanction will affect Russia's foreign debt, after which Russia will no longer receive funding from the Western financial market. Measure will also target the Russian elite and their families.

According to Biden, Putin's last actions were to launch an invasion of Ukraine, so the United States also launched retaliatory actions. In response to the military escalation initiated by Russia, it was decided

that a part of the American military will be deployed from the European contingent to the Baltic states.

"Today, in response to Russia's decision not to withdraw its troops from Belarus, I have ordered the transfer of American troops and armaments to Europe to strengthen the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania," Biden said adding that this move is defensive in nature and they do not want to confront Russia, although it is a clear signal to emphasize that the US will protect every inch of NATO territory.

Britain is imposing sanctions

on Gennady Timchenko and 2 other billionaires, brothers Igor and Boris Rothenberg. These individuals have close ties to Putin. Shares of billionaires in the UK will be frozen and travel will also be banned. Sanctions will also be imposed on 5 banks - Rossiya, Genbank, Promsvyazbank and Black Sea Bank.

Canada imposes sanctions on Russia's sovereign debt. PM Trudeau noted that the government will impose sanctions on Russian lawmakers who have supported recognizing the independence of Ukraine's breakaway regions. According to him, Canada will apply additional sanctions

against the two Russian banks, which are backed by the Russian state and will cut off all financial relations with them.

Australia announced travel and financial sanctions against 8 members of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. Strict economic sanctions will also be imposed on the Luhansk and Donetsk regions. Australia will also impose sanctions on Russian banks.

Japanese sanctions include a ban on Russian stocks; Also, the assets of some Russian citizens will be frozen and they will be banned from traveling to Japan.

Meanwhile, the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine, declared a state of emergency on the entire territory of Ukraine except the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which will be approved by the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine. Regulations will vary by region. According to Security Council Secretary Oleksay Danilov, due to the situation in Donetsk and Luhansk, a state of emergency can not be declared there.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine, Minister of Digital Transformation, Mikhail Fedorov, cyber-attacks on Ukrainian state agencies started again on February 23. The websites of the Ministry of Defense of Ukraine, the Armed Forces and banks were also shut down on 15 February.

Russia Foreign Affairs: US Sanctions Will Inevitably Receive a Strong Response

BY THE MESSENGER STAFF

The Russian Foreign Ministry says that the sanctions imposed by the United States will definitely be answered.

According to the agency, the package of sanctions, which is already the 101st in a row, is ineffective in hindering the Russian economy. At the same time, according to Moscow, it is coun-

terproductive for the American interests themselves.

"The package of sanctions announced by the United States (already 101st), which expands the list of persons against whom personal restrictions are imposed, is part of Washington's constant efforts to change the course of Russia."

While years of efforts to stave off our economic development

have been in vain, the United States continues to reflexively use restraining instruments that are ineffective and counterproductive to American interests.

Russia has proven that, in parallel with sanctions, it can reduce the damage to a minimum. Moreover, the pressure of sanctions can not influence our decision to firmly defend our interests.

We declare that in the arsenal of American foreign policy, which is a prisoner of stereotypes of the unipolar world and has the idea that it still has the right to impose its own rules of world order, only blackmail, intimidation and threats remain. It does not work for world powers, first and foremost Russia, and other major international players.

The U.S. calls, let it be, for their satellites, which have completely lost their independence. We are open to diplomacy based on mutual respect, equality, and consideration of each other's interests. There is no doubt that sanctions will be given a strong response. "Not necessarily symmetrical, but for the sensitive American side," the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

THURSDAY FEBRUARY 24

Day Sunny
High: 18°C

Night Partly cloudy
Low: 6°C

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 25

Day Cloudy
High: 15°C

Night Light rain
Low: 6°C

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