

Army Taipan helicopters stripped, but Ukraine undeterred



[Pictures have emerged of gutted MRH-90 Taipan helicopters. Picture: X](#)

BEN PACKHAM, The Australian, JANUARY 28, 2024

Pictures have emerged online of the dismantled remains of some of [the Australian Army's MRH-90 Taipan helicopters](#), in a further blow to Ukraine which had hoped to take the aircraft.

Posted by Kyiv's supporters, they show several of the gutted airframes, which appear to have been entirely stripped of parts.

The Albanese government has [pushed ahead](#) with helicopters' destruction following a fatal crash last year, despite a formal request from Ukraine for the aircraft to be donated to its war effort against Russia.

Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations' co-chair Stefan Romaniw said the images were disappointing, but Kyiv believed they could still be reassembled.

"We know that some of them have been dismantled, but that's not the end of the road," Mr Romaniw said.

"What we're hoping is that there will be a reconsideration, given that some things are now more clear."



[One of the](#)

[MRH-90 helicopters Kyiv has asked for. Picture: Defence](#)

He said there had been a lack of clarity earlier over Kyiv’s willingness to maintain the helicopters, and that Ukraine was willing to assist with transporting the aircraft from Australia.

“What’s happened has happened. But let’s move forward. And given the new facts that are on the table on this, there’s a win-win for everybody here,” Mr Romaniw said.

The Australian revealed earlier this month that [Ukraine](#) wrote to Defence Minister Richard Marles in December, pleading for the helicopters to be donated to help “save Ukrainian lives”.



[One of the](#)

[MHR-90 Taipan helicopter pictures on the back of a truck in Queensland. Picture: Bryan Lynch](#)

The official December 17 request, by Ukraine’s Defence Intelligence chief Lieutenant General Kyrylo Budanov, said the helicopters would provide a much-needed medevac capability and “dramatically increase the survivability of our frontline defenders”.

Anthony Albanese has pushed back on suggestions the helicopters should have gone to Ukraine, saying the government agreed to their destruction on the advice of Defence.

Defence said it began to pull apart the helicopters for spare parts before receiving Ukraine's request.

Defence industry figures said if the aircraft had been disassembled by qualified technicians, it would be possible to put them back together.

BEN PACKHAM

FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

Ben Packham is The Australian's foreign affairs and defence correspondent. To contact him securely use the Signal App. See his Twitter bio for details.... [Read more](#)