

Ukraine calls out Defence reluctance, as ‘guns fall silent’ due to falling support



[Ukrainian Ambassador to Australia, Vasyl Myroshnychenko, and co-chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, Kateryna Argyrou.](#)

- By [RHIANNON DOWN](#), The Australian, FEBRUARY 28, 2024

Ukraine ambassador to Australia Vasyl Myroshnychenko says international assistance for the war against Russia is “barely enough”, and he is [urging Canberra to increase its support](#), amid accusations that Defence’s reluctance remains the biggest hurdle to increasing military aid.

Mr Myroshnychenko said guns on the frontline were “falling silent for want of ammunition” because of the “dripped out and ad hoc” nature of support provided by Ukraine’s allies. He said Australia’s assistance was appreciated [but ultimately it was not enough](#).

“Ukraine needs an avalanche of international support,” he said. “We need so much international support, we can barely absorb it. We need push logistics, not pull logistics.”

As Ukraine prepares to ramp up its counter-offensive after Russia gained ground in the country’s east this month, Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations co-chair Kateryna Argyrou has called on the government to include military support for Ukraine in the upcoming federal budget.

In a joint speech at the National Press Club in Canberra on Wednesday, Ms Argyrou said Australia had slipped from being the largest non-NATO donor to Ukraine's defence to the sixth since the beginning of the war two years ago.

"From my last two years advocating for more military aid for Ukraine, it is evident that the biggest hand brake is hesitancy in the Department of Defence," she said. "Support for Ukraine comes out of the existing Defence budget, which leads to reluctance in providing more military aid to Ukraine, and I understand that.

"So that's why, as a community, we are asking and hoping that the budget this year will include a line item for military support for Ukraine, so the current hesitancy can come to an end."

Ms Argyrou urged Defence to donate decommissioned or surplus military equipment such as M1-Abrams tanks and Tiger helicopters to the war effort, following the "very sad and unfortunate story" of the Taipan helicopters that were buried despite repeated Ukraine requests to acquire the troubled fleet.

"We have also noticed that the ADF is auctioning off unimogs, altering vehicles and boats on a site called Pickles," she said.

"We would welcome the opportunity to discuss how those items could potentially be transferred to Ukraine, because they would go an extremely long way in saving lives."

She also criticised world leaders for declaring they would support Ukraine for the duration of the war, but two years in the "language of solidarity seems misplaced ... We should not settle for a protracted stalemate but instead partners who want to end the appalling invasion as quickly and efficiently as possible to help bring an end to the incredible human suffering."

Mr Myroshnychenko also called for Ukraine's allies, including Australia, to increase their military aid by shifting from a "calculated drawing down of surplus war stocks" to a "wartime footing".

"We need a wartime ammunition, missile armoured vehicle and drone assembly line tempo," he said. "We need higher rate production, we need high explosive and propellant supply chains and we need them now.

"Australia has a role to play and it can contribute more to the propellant and explosives supply chain effort."