

As Putin bombards Kyiv, Ukraine fears being forgotten by Australia



Matthew Knott, Sydney Morning Herald, September 2, 2025

Australia has not pledged any new military equipment for Ukraine in almost a year, prompting urgent calls for help from Ukrainian military leaders as Russian President Vladimir Putin ramps up bombardments on Kyiv and other major cities.

Ukraine is also urging Australia to join an international coalition helping clear the nation of [landmines](#), a move that would capitalise on Australia's world-leading expertise in demining technology.

Russian missile and drone attacks on Kyiv last week killed 25 people, including four children, in the [second-biggest aerial assault on the capital since the war began](#), according to Ukrainian officials.



Colonel Mykola Fedkalov and Lieutenant-Colonel Andrii Berezovsky visited Parliament House in Canberra to request more military assistance for Ukraine. *Credit: Dominic Lorrimer*

The Albanese government has not announced the donation of any military hardware to Ukraine since October, when it revealed it would [send 49 M1A1 Abrams tanks](#) to the battlefield.

Ukrainian Lieutenant Colonel Andriy Berezhovsky said his country was grateful for Australia's \$1.5 billion in total assistance but feared his nation was being overlooked as the war continues despite US President Donald Trump's desire to broker a ceasefire.

"Ukraine has been fighting for 11 years now and very often we hear from different countries that people are not interested in what's happening in Ukraine, that they're tired of it," the decorated commander said, referring to Russia's seizure of Crimea in 2014 ahead of the full-scale invasion of February 2022.

"Ukraine, like Australia, wants to be a free, independent and democratic country."

Speaking during a visit to Canberra for meetings with Australian politicians and military leaders, Berezhovsky said additional supplies of M113 armoured personnel carriers and Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles would help his fellow soldiers survive.

He said Ukraine continued to [request a shipment of Hawkei lightweight protected mobility vehicles](#) despite previous entreaties being rebuffed.

Berezhovsky, who played a key role in the liberation of the southern Ukrainian city of Kherson, said the impression that the war had reached a stalemate belied the daily suffering of Ukrainian civilians.

"Every day, really terrible fighting is taking place, and lots of people from our side and the enemy's side are dying," he said.

"Horrific things are happening on the battlefield and everyone is exhausted to the maximum level."

Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations chairwoman Kateryna Argyrou said: "It breaks our hearts that there has been such a long delay in providing substantial assistance. Australia must act decisively, keeping pace with its allies, and ensure Ukraine is not forgotten."

Argyrou, whose cousin Yuri died while serving in the army last month, said extra military aid was a matter of life and death for Ukrainian soldiers.

"I lost my cousin on the front line because he had to go and perform his mission to evacuate a wounded soldier on foot when he should have been doing it in an armoured vehicle," she said.

Australia deployed a surveillance aircraft to Poland in August to help protect the delivery of supplies to Ukraine and it increased [the number of Australian troops training Ukrainian soldiers](#) in Britain.

Defence Minister Richard Marles last month said “we are very much engaged with Ukraine, and we continue to work closely with them, and we do so on the basis that we will stand with Ukraine for as long as it takes for this conflict to be resolved on Ukraine’s terms”.

Colonel Mykola Fedkalov, head of emergency services in the Ukrainian port city of Odesa, said his colleagues faced the daily risk of being blown up by explosives as they rescued civilians injured in Russian attacks.

“We have a lot of need for demining equipment ... metal detectors, demining kits, protective equipment,” he said.

“We have the people and the capability, but we need the equipment.”

Asked about his hopes for post-war Ukraine, the trained firefighter said: “My biggest dream is Ukraine without war, with children who can play without shelling, who can go to school safely and don’t have to hide in shelters all the time. I want them to see clear and bright skies.”

Around 30 per cent of Ukraine’s land mass is believed to be contaminated with unexploded ordnance.

A bipartisan Senate inquiry last year called for Australia to urgently join 22 nations in the Demining Capability Coalition, a Lithuania and Iceland-led initiative that aims to develop Ukraine’s capability to clear landmines.

Demining non-profit International Action Alliance told the inquiry that Australia “is a world leader in the landmine clearance equipment manufacturing industry” and that it has “almost unrivalled capability in the field”.

Adelaide company Minelab has said it is ready to provide its advanced metal detectors to Ukraine as soon as it receives a government order.

Opposition defence spokesman Angus Taylor said: “The Coalition has grave concerns about the lack of Australian military aid since last year.

“If Australia leaves our allies to carry the burden, we risk signalling weakness to allies and adversaries alike.”