



Senator the Hon Penny Wong
Minister for Foreign Affairs

On 24 August 1991, Ukraine declared its independence and affirmed the right of the Ukrainian people to determine their own future.

That moment was the culmination of Ukraine's long struggle for sovereignty, identity and self-determination.

35 years later, Independence Day carries even deeper meaning for the people of Ukraine. It is a day of remembrance, and a moment to honour all those defending Ukraine's freedom today.

On this Independence Day, we honour the extraordinary courage and resolve of the Ukrainian people as they defend against Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression.

The Albanese Government remains steadfast in our support for Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. We continue to support all meaningful efforts towards a just and lasting peace, and stand with the courageous people of Ukraine as they defend their right to determine their own future.

That is why Australia has committed more than \$1.8 billion in support for Ukraine, including \$1.6 billion in military assistance, making Australia Ukraine's largest non-NATO contributor of military support.

We are a member of the Coalition of the Willing, and are working with international partners to support the training of the Armed Forces of Ukraine through Operation Kudu.

The Albanese Government is also acting in coordination with international partners to impose costs on Russia and limit its ability to fund its war.

Since Russia's unprovoked and unjustified invasion of the Ukraine, Australia has imposed financial sanctions and travel bans for more than 1,800 individuals and entities, including more than 260 shadow fleets.

The Australian Government has imposed strict sanctions and other trade measures to restrict the import, purchase and transport of oil coming from, or that originated in, Russia. As a result of these measures, direct Australian imports of Russian energy products have fallen from AUD80 million before Russia's invasion to zero. We have also lowered the Oil Price Cap to USD44.10, working with international partners to further drive down the market value of Russian crude oil globally.

Many Australians feel a deep affinity with Ukraine and a strong sense of injustice at Russia's ongoing illegal war of aggression – but none moreso than our Ukrainian-Australian communities, whose families and loved ones continue to face attacks on their homes, their communities, and the critical infrastructure they rely on every day.

Ukrainian-Australians have a long and proud history in this country, and your contribution to Australian life over generations is something we deeply value. Ties between our communities are at the heart of the strong bond between our two countries. It is through your hard work that Australians are better able to understand Ukraine's story and appreciate what is at stake.

Independence Day is a celebration of Ukraine's culture, identity and hard-won sovereignty. Today's events are a powerful reminder that those traditions continue to endure, and continue to unite Ukrainian communities across the world.

On behalf of the Albanese Government, thank you for everything you do to support Ukraine and sustain the spirit of community we see here today.

Congratulations on your Independence Day, Ukraine.

Slava Ukraini.

PENNY WONG