

U.S. Sen. Johnson: Joins U.S. Sen. Murphy to lead resolution condemning Russian aggression against Ukraine

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WASHINGTON — U.S. Senators Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) and Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), chairman and ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee subcommittee on Europe and Regional Security Cooperation, today introduced a resolution condemning Russia's recent attack on Ukrainian vessels in the Kerch Strait and calling for the immediate release of all Ukrainian sailors. Joining Senators Johnson and Murphy as cosponsors of the resolution are Sens. John Barrasso (R-Wyo.), Jeanne Shaheen (D-N.H.), Rob Portman (R-Ohio), Marco Rubio (R-Fla.) and Tom Cotton (R-Ark.).

Full resolution text can be found [here](#) and below.

Condemning Russia's provocative actions in the Kerch Strait against the Ukrainian navy

Whereas, on November 24, 2018, Ukraine commemorated the 85th anniversary of the Ukrainian Famine of 1932-1933, known as the Holodomor, in which millions of Ukrainians perished under Soviet policies designed to break Ukrainian resistance to Soviet communist rule and forced collectivization;

Whereas, on November 25, 2018, Russian Federation military forces fired on three Ukrainian Navy vessels attempting to transit the Kerch Strait between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov;

Whereas the three Ukrainian ships were seized by Russian Federation forces, and Ukrainian government officials stated that at least six of the 24 captured Ukrainian sailors were wounded in the incident;

Whereas the Russian Federation's seizure of the Ukrainian vessels is a blatant violation of its commitments under international law and a 2003 Agreement between the Russian Federation and Ukraine on cooperation in the use of the sea of Azov and the strait of Kerch;

Whereas, on May 15, 2018, the Government of the Russian Federation completed construction of a road and rail bridge over the Kerch Strait, connecting Russia with Crimea in Ukraine, and has systematically harassed Ukrainian and international shipping transiting between the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov;

Whereas, in March 2014, Russian Federation forces invaded and occupied Ukraine's Crimean peninsula, in full contravention of the Russian Federation's commitments under the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act condemning the threat or use of force as means of altering international borders;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation has increased considerably its military presence in occupied Crimea since 2014, including increasing military personnel to an estimated 28,000-29,000, adding six new submarines and three frigates to the Black Seas Fleet, and deploying S-400 long-range air defense battalions;

Whereas the Government of the Russian Federation continues its efforts to destabilize eastern Ukraine, bears responsibility for the ongoing conflict that has cost the lives of over 10,000 Ukrainians, and recently orchestrated illegitimate leadership elections in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions;

Whereas Section 1234 of Public Law 115-91 authorizes the Secretary of Defense in coordination with the Secretary of State to provide appropriate security assistance to the Ukrainian Armed Forces; and

Whereas, on July 25, 2018, Secretary of State Michael Pompeo issued the Crimea

Declaration, cementing United States nonrecognition of Russian sovereignty over Crimea and calling upon Russia to uphold its commitments under international law regarding the territorial integrity of other states: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

- (1) strongly condemns the provocative actions of the Government of the Russian Federation in the Kerch Strait against the Ukrainian navy;
- (2) calls upon the Government of Russia to immediately release all Ukrainian crew members and vessels and to cease its harassment of Ukrainian and international shipping transiting the Kerch Strait;
- (3) stresses that the behavior of the Government of the Russian Federation is destabilizing for the entire region and invites further escalations;
- (4) urges members of the international community to unite in opposition to the actions of the Government of the Russian Federation in the Kerch Strait, as they infringe upon fundamental principles of international law affecting all nations;
- (5) welcomes and affirms Secretary of State Pompeo's Crimea Declaration announcing United States policy to never recognize Russia's attempted annexation of Crimea; and
- (6) reaffirms the unwavering support of the people and the Government of the United States for the people of Ukraine and Ukraine's territorial integrity.
- 7) calls upon the President and the entire Administration to implement an all of government approach to forcefully express opposition to the Russian Federation's November 25, 2018 attack on Ukrainian forces at every opportunity.