

EU hits Russia with new sanctions

UK targets Moscow spies over cyber warfare; Kremlin says have built immunity to measures

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The European Union (EU) and Britain on Friday ramped up pressure on Russia over its war on Ukraine, targeting Moscow's energy sector, shadow fleet of aging oil tankers, and military intelligence service with new sanctions.

"The message is clear: Europe will not back down in its support for Ukraine. The EU will keep raising the pressure until Russia ends its war," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said after the bloc agreed its new measures, including a new oil price cap. Kallas said it's "one of its strongest sanctions packages against Russia to date" linked to the war, now in its fourth year. It comes as European countries start to buy US weapons for Ukraine to help the country better defend itself.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy welcomed the new measures, describing them as a "timely and necessary" step amid intensified Russian attacks.

"All infrastructure of Russia's war must be blocked," Zelenskyy said, adding that Ukraine will synchronize its sanctions with the EU and introduce its own additional measures soon.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov brushed off the EU move, saying that "we consider such unilateral restrictions unlawful".



What EU's 18th sanctions package entails

- A moving price cap on Russian crude at 15% below its average market price
- Imposed sanctions on more than 400 shadow fleet ships
- Stopping import any petroleum products made from Russian crude
- Ban all transactions with Russian financial institutions
- Blacklisting 26 new entities for circumventing sanctions

"At the same time, we have acquired certain immunity from sanctions. We have adapted to living under sanctions," Peskov said in a conference call with reporters. "We will need to analyse the new package in order to minimise negative consequences from it."

The UK, meanwhile, imposed

sanctions on units of Russia's military intelligence service, GRU. Also added to the list were 18 officers the UK said helped to plan a bomb attack on a theatre in southern Ukraine in 2022 and to target the family of a former Russian spy who was later poisoned with a nerve agent. Nato also condemned Russia's cyberattacks.

Rosneft's India oil refinery also hit

The European Union on Friday imposed sanctions on the Indian oil refinery of Russian energy giant Rosneft and lowered the oil price cap, as part of a new raft of measures against Russia over its war in Ukraine.

The lowered oil price cap — currently set at \$60 per barrel — means Russia will be forced to sell its crude at reduced rates to buyers like India. As the second-largest purchaser of Russian oil, India stands to benefit from this move. Russian crude currently accounts for nearly 40 per cent of India's total oil imports.

"For the first time, we're designating a flag registry and the biggest Rosneft refinery in India," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. Rosneft owns 49.13 per cent stake in Nayara Energy, formerly Essar Oil. Nayara owns and operates a 20 million tonne a year oil refinery at Vadinar in Gujarat. An investment consortium SPV, Kesani Enterprises Company holds 49.13 per cent stake in Nayara. Kesani is owned by Russia's United Capital Partners and Hara Capital Sarl, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Mareterra Group Holding. EU sanctions means Nayara cannot export fuel such as petrol and diesel to European countries.