



The UK stands with Ukraine

TORONTO, March 2, 2022—The results of a survey released today by Maru Public Opinion finds a vast majority of the British public (86%) standing with the people of Ukraine in full opposition to Russia’s Vladimir Putin. As a backdrop to that, a majority (63%) believe that Putin’s veiled threat to use nuclear weapons was *real* and not a *bluff*. Perhaps because of this, and what they are absorbing daily, one-quarter (23%) of those in the UK believe we are witnessing the start of World War III— while six-in-ten (58%) say it’s not the case yet it’s possible we could slide into it because of the current conflict.

Overall, almost half (46%) of the British public believe the UK is doing too little to aid Ukrainians, and perhaps with what they are witnessing unfold as Russian forces pour into the country, half (52%) are tilting towards military action if the imposed economic sanctions don't deter the Russian invasion. A healthy majority (71%) also believe that if these sanctions work, it may cause the Russian people to finally revolt against Vladimir Putin successfully because of what he has done in Ukraine.

As for Prime Minister Boris Johnson, a majority (60%) support the Prime Minister in how he is responding to this international event, while lesser majorities believe he is doing a good job in handling this situation (54%) and/or being an assertive leader for the UK right now (52%). And whether this world crisis will help the recently embattled Prime Minister grow his political capital remains somewhat obscure at the moment as just over four-in-ten (43%) say they could see themselves voting him if he handles this situation well.

The rest of the findings cover much ground: from views on NATO, to the United Nations, and even speculation on whether former President Donald Trump would have prevented the invasion if he was still in the Oval Office (spoiler alert: a vast majority reject the premise.)

The pretext

Last Wednesday evening (February 23, 2022) Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered his armed forces to carry out a full-scale invasion of the European country of Ukraine—which was previously part of the old Soviet Union and became an independent country in a 1991 landslide referendum and its adoption by a democratically-elected parliament.

Ukraine has been supported by countries from around the world, especially by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (“NATO”), a multi-country military alliance (including the United States, Great Britain, the UK, France, Germany and 28 other countries). While Ukraine is not a member of NATO, President Putin has viewed such a potential as a political and military challenge, making it an alleged factor for the Russian invasion.



Key findings

Shoulder to shoulder with Ukrainians

A vast majority (86%) of the British public express the view that they stand with the people of Ukraine in full opposition to the tyranny of Russia's Vladimir Putin—and a fulsome majority (76%) wish the UK and they themselves, could do more to support and defend the people of Ukraine.

Notably, one-in-seven (14%) of those living in the UK admit to being of Ukrainian descent, heritage, or directly related to those who are.

The beginning of “World War III”—maybe

One quarter (23%) of Britons believe absolutely that we are witnessing the start of World War III—while six-in-ten (58%) say it's not the case yet but its possible we could slide into it via the current conflict. The remainder (19%) either think this is a fight in a small part of Europe and will likely stay that way (15%) or absolutely reject the premise (4%).

Putin's nuclear weapons threat: no bluff

As his forces were invading, President Putin warned that countries who interfere will face 'consequences you have never seen'. In that regard, two thirds (65%) say Putin was threatening the use of nuclear weapons against those countries **for real** while the remainder (35%) say it was **just a bluff** to give him a tactical advantage.

Britons split on strategic options

The UK has imposed a series of comprehensive financial sanctions covering Russian elites, companies, politicians, and financial institutions, cut off wealthy Russians' access to banks, and terminated trade arrangements. And while none of the UK's military has been sent into Ukraine to confront the Russians, it has sent military personnel and assets to the surrounding countries to bolster its allied NATO forces as a deterrent to the Russians to go further than Ukraine.

Many (52%) *tilt* towards the UK taking military action

Regardless of the apparent consequences, many (52%) Britons have a tilt towards the UK taking military action either now or later: one quarter (24%) believe the UK should **send in its military forces now** to Ukraine with other NATO allies so the citizens there can be protected, and the Russians deterred even if it means casualties to our forces—followed by a larger group (38%) who believe the UK should **use financial/economic sanctions now but possibly escalate to use military force** over the next two weeks to stop the Russians even if it means casualties to our forces.



The other half (48%) have a strong *tilt* away from military action

Over one-third (**36%**) of Britons believe ***the UK should not send any military forces*** to confront the Russians in Ukraine either now or later—we should ***only use other means like imposing financial/economic sanctions*** on the Russians and stay out of direct military contact altogether while the remainder (**12%**) say this is not the UK's conflict and that we should ***stay out of it completely*** and look after ourselves.

Majority believe economic and other sanctions could topple Putin

The UK has imposed a series of comprehensive financial sanctions covering Russian elites, companies, politicians, and financial institutions, cut off wealthy Russians' access to banks, and terminated trade arrangements

Given this, a healthy majority (71%) of Britons believe if these sanctions work, this may cause the Russian people to finally revolt against Vladimir Putin successfully because of what he has done in Ukraine.

NATO, Western governments, and Donald Trump

While none of the UK's military has been sent into Ukraine to confront the Russians, it has sent military personnel and assets to the surrounding countries to bolster its allied NATO forces as a deterrent to the Russians to go further than Ukraine.

A majority (79%) of Britons believe if the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Allies can't deter Russia's takeover of Ukraine it will embolden Vladimir Putin to take over other countries because he will see us as weak. In fact, three-quarters (73%) of Britons say Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine demonstrates a complete failure by Western governments like the UK to stand up to him effectively.

A majority (67%) of Britons also reject any view that if former President Donald Trump were leading the United States right now, the Russian invasion of Ukraine would never have happened.

The United Nations: a potentially useful forum

Two-thirds (62%) of Britons believe the United Nations (UN) is a useful forum to stop this kind of aggression by Russia—but far less (41%) agree that if all the United Nations (UN) does is talk without having any teeth, that's ok because at least it's another place for global dialogue.

British politics and the PM

The vast majority (85%) of Britons believe their political parties need to show a common front right now against President Putin, even if they don't agree with each other. As if to set the bar for the parties, almost as many (78%) say they stand with Prime Minister Boris Johnson in solidarity to reject Russia's Vladimir Putin and all he stands for.

Despite a resolute public standing with the Prime Minister against the likes of Vladimir Putin, most Britons are luke-warm to other aspects of support for Mr. Johnson: two-thirds (60%) support the Prime Minister in how he is responding to this international event, and slim majorities believe he is doing a good job in handling this situation (54%) and is being an assertive leader for the UK right now (52%).

And whether this world crisis will help the recently embattled Prime Minister grow his political capital remains somewhat obscure at the moment as just over four-in-ten (43%) say they could see themselves voting him if he handles this situation well.

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Methodology

These are some of the findings from a study released by [Maru Public Opinion](#) undertaken by its sample and data 1039 UK adults who are Maru Voice UK panelists. The results were weighted by education, age, gender, and region, in order to match the British population according to Census data. For comparison purposes, a probability sample of this size has an estimated margin of error (which measures sampling variability) of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20. [This report and its accompanying detailed tables may be found here: UK Public Opinion Polls | Maru Group](#)

The results have been weighted by education, age, gender, and region to match the population according to Census data which ensures the sample is representative of the entire adult population of the UK. Discrepancies in or between totals when compared to the data tables are due to rounding. Panel and data services provider [Maru Blue](#) is deeply rooted in the Maru/HUB technology platform and offers on-demand, high quality, highly scalable online community samples of deeply engaged, known respondents. Respondents could respond in either English or French.

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Excerpts from this release of findings should be properly attributed, with interpretation subject to clarification or correction.

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