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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Ali Ehsassi (Willowdale, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 117 of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Development.

Today's meeting is taking place in a hybrid format, pursuant to the Standing Orders. All witnesses have completed the required audio tests in advance of our meeting.

I'd like to remind the participants, whether they be members or witnesses, to please wait until I recognize them by name before they speak. All comments should be addressed to the chair.

Also, we have the list of members who'd like to ask questions.

Pursuant to Standing Order 108(2), the committee will continue its study of the war in Ukraine.

I'd like to remind members that the officials will be with us today until noon. Unfortunately, no additional witnesses could confirm their appearance for today's meeting.

I'd now like to take this opportunity to welcome our distinguished witnesses.

From the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development, we have Mr. Alexandre Lévêque, the assistant deputy minister for the Europe, Middle East and Arctic branch.

We have Ms. Alison Grant, the director general of international security policy and strategic affairs bureau. We also have Ms. Marie-Josée Langlois, the director general of the sanctions bureau.

Mr. Lévêque, I understand your opening remarks are for 10 minutes. The floor is yours, after which we will open it up to the members for questions. Please do look at me every once in a while. Once you see this signal, it means you should be wrapping it up within 15 seconds.

All of that having been explained, Mr. Lévêque, the floor is yours, and you have 10 minutes.

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque (Assistant Deputy Minister, Europe, Middle East and Arctic Branch, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development) : Thanks very much, Mr. Chair.

You'll be glad to hear that I'll be well under 10 minutes for my opening remarks.

[Translation]

Mr. Chair, esteemed members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to speak today about the situation in Ukraine.

My remarks will focus on Canada's key diplomatic measures and response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

[English]

From the onset, and in the 950 days since the invasion, Canada has unequivocally condemned Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

We remain firmly committed to the fundamental principles of Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognized borders, including its territorial waters.

Accordingly, Canada will continue to support Ukraine both bilaterally and through international co-operation within the G7, NATO, the OSCE and the United Nations, and in any other forums where we can exercise influence. We remain steadfast in this commitment.

[Translation]

Canada is actively working to implement the 10-Point Peace Formula developed by the Ukrainian government, a plan that upholds Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the UN charter and international law. Through this initiative, Ukraine has mobilized support from the international community, including emerging and developing economies. All of these efforts seek to provide a framework for a potential peace settlement on Ukraine's terms.

Canada's commitment to this initiative has included co-chairing the Peace Formula's Working Group No. 4 alongside Ukraine and Norway, focusing on the return of prisoners of war, unlawfully detained civilians and deported children. At the Summit on Peace in Ukraine held on June 15 and 16, 2024 in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, the Prime Minister chaired a discussion session on this human aspect of the war and announced that Canada would host a ministerial conference on the issue in Canada at the end of October.

[English]

Canada also co-chairs, with Ukraine, the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children, which now includes 40 member states. Launched in Kyiv on February 2 of this year, during Minister Joly's most recent visit to Ukraine, the coalition coordinates efforts and co-operation between Ukraine and partner states to address the illegal deportation and transfer of Ukrainian children by the Russian Federation.

The issue of Ukrainian children who have been illegally deported, forcibly transferred or displaced in other ways is complex and requires greater global attention. Experts agree that thousands of children have been deported to Russia or transferred to temporarily occupied territories.

• (1110)

[Translation]

Canada and Ukraine have signed a number of important bilateral agreements that reflect a growing collaboration, especially in the context of the war in Ukraine. For example, Canada has signed a historic bilateral security co-operation agreement with Ukraine to establish a strategic security partnership. This agreement builds on the G7 Joint Declaration of Support for Ukraine and outlines Canada's key long-term security commitments to continue supporting Ukraine in defending its sovereignty and territorial integrity, protecting its people and pursuing Euro-Atlantic integration.

Another example is the Canada-Ukraine Free Trade Agreement, which was signed in 2017. An updated version was signed in 2023 and came into force on July 1 of this year. This agreement aims to boost economic trade between the two countries by covering sectors such as agriculture, industrial production and services, while focusing on long-term economic development and rebuilding of Ukraine after the war.

[English]

In total, Canada has committed over \$19.5 billion in financial, military, humanitarian, development, security, stabilization and immigration assistance in response to Russia's full-scale invasion on February 24, 2022.

Canada's response also includes sanctions. Since 2014, Canada has imposed sanctions on more than 3,000 individuals and entities in Russia and Belarus, as well as in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and Moldova, for their complicity in violating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of these countries, as well as for gross and systematic human rights abuses.

[Translation]

It is first and foremost up to Ukraine to decide how it defends itself and its people. Canada supports increased co-operation between the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, or NATO, and Ukraine, through platforms such as the NATO-Ukraine Commission and enhanced NATO assistance measures.

We will continue to advocate for Ukraine's accession to the alliance as soon as conditions permit.

[English]

Canada supports the stability, security and sovereignty of Ukraine as it resists Russia's war of aggression. We are committed to contributing to Ukraine's recovery and reconstruction.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Lévêque.

We will now open it to questions from the members.

For the first round, each member will have five minutes. We'll start with Mr. Hoback.

Mr. Hoback, the floor is yours.

Mr. Randy Hoback (Prince Albert, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

Thank you, witnesses, for being here this morning.

We've seen a lot of financial commitments to Ukraine from this government. I'm just going to drive down to see exactly how much has actually been delivered.

I'll start off with the \$5 billion for the G7 extraordinary revenue acceleration loans.

Can you tell me how much of that \$5 billion has actually now hit the ground and what sectors that money has gone to, roughly?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: Thank you for the question.

I believe all of it has been disbursed. I would have to double-check, so I can come back to you.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Can you provide us a list of the first two—how it's been disbursed and the amount that's been disbursed? Can you give us that?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: That I can answer, because this goes toward the support of Ukraine's balance sheet. Through various organizations like the IMF and the World Bank, we support the daily operations of the Ukrainian government. That's what that money is dedicated to.

Mr. Randy Hoback: It would be great if you can get us that.

We announced \$15 million for support of vulnerable children and youth at risk, improved access to justice, increased family and civil society awareness for missing persons and support for male survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

Can you give us a breakdown of percentages of how much of that \$15 million is going to each of those categories? Is the majority going into one category versus the others?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: I don't have the breakdown with me.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Can you get us that breakdown, please?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: Of course, sir.

Mr. Randy Hoback: We committed \$20 million to their electricity grid and their infrastructure.

How much of that has hit the ground, and where is that going?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: That is going essentially to multilateral funds. Basically, we pool these resources. The EU in particular has set up a large fund.

For maximum efficiency, we contribute to that fund so that it can be disbursed directly into the energy infrastructure relief structure.

• (1115)

Mr. Randy Hoback: How do you find accountability in that massive fund? If it's a big fund, how does Canada make sure that the \$20 million actually hits the ground?

Again, has that \$20 million actually flowed out of the Canadian coffers into the fund?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: On that last question on where the money stands in the cycle, I'm going to have to come back and provide the answer in writing.

In terms of accountability, the first thing we do is work with very trusted partners. We have control mechanisms in our financial sector or financial—

Mr. Randy Hoback: Is there a Canadian overseeing their part of the fund?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Do you mean on the ground?

Mr. Randy Hoback: No. As you said, you've created this bigger fund. Is a Canadian part of the decision-making process of how the money is being spent?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: It depends on each fund. We do have, for example, for the Ukraine donor platform, a Canadian dedicated and seconded to the secretariat. We have direct eyes on this. A lot of the clearance, the control measures, happens in Ottawa before the money even gets disbursed.

As I said, when you deal with the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union, you're dealing with trusted interlocutors, trusted partners, who also have their own internal mechanisms in place.

Mr. Randy Hoback: We look at \$15.4 million for IMF for Ukraine's capacity to safely clear the territory of mines and the Government of Canada's technical assistance to Ukraine's government in justice and energy sectors. To me, it sounds similar to what we just committed the other \$15 million for and what you described as funds going to the IMF or bigger organizations or trusted partners.

Are these the same dollars? Are these new dollars? How do we know, for example, that they will be used for mine clearing? How do we know the funds actually went to that commitment?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: I can assure you that there's no double-counting there. There have been multiple rounds, multiple decisions, to constantly come up with new ways, new monies, to support Ukraine in various ways. These announcements are made cumulatively. They're not the same amounts that have been reannounced.

On where the disbursement stands exactly, we can come back to you in writing.

Mr. Randy Hoback: It's kind of deceiving to say the Canadian government has committed this money to Ukraine; actually, we committed it to a fund that's helping Ukraine. Canada by itself is not administering any of these funds; we're just giving to a bigger fund made up of other countries that are then contributing.

Is that fair to say?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Actually, the vast majority of the support to Ukraine has been in macroeconomic support. It is administered by large, trusted organizations, like the IMF, to lower the cost of administration. They're basically the ones ensuring the controls on how the Ukrainian government spends it. It's not like there's a percentage that comes off the top. The money goes directly to help the Ukrainian government.

Mr. Randy Hoback: The perception is that it's going directly to Ukraine. The perception given by the Prime Minister to Canadians is that this money is actually going directly to Ukraine. In reality, it's something totally different. It's going to an EU bureaucracy that's administering the fund.

Is that fair to say?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: I would have to disagree with this statement, Mr. Chair. It does go to Ukraine. It is administered through other international organizations for the sake of efficiency and to ensure transparency and accountability.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Yes, but you told me you have no accountability or assurances from those organizations. You don't have any oversight.

The Chair: Your time is over.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Why do we have five minutes, if we have two hours? The first round should be seven minutes.

The Chair: I've done the math and I have been informed that they're only here till noon.

Mr. Randy Hoback: If we had started at 11 o'clock, would we all have had seven minutes?

The Chair: Potentially, yes.

Next we go to MP Zuberi for five minutes, please.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses for being here for this important update on Ukraine and the war of aggression.

I want to ask a handful of questions around the sanctions and other items, but my first question is around sanctions.

You mentioned in your opening statement that we have levelled 3,900 sanctions on individuals and entities. Of those 3,900 sanctions, how do those align with our international partners, and what impact do those sanctions have due to the alignment? Can you talk a bit about that?

• (1120)

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: There's a high percentage of alignment between the individuals in the entities that Canada has sanctioned and that some of our largest partners, mainly the United States, the European Union, and the U.K., have sanctioned. This is not by accident; it is by design.

Of course, we have different mechanisms for doing our own assessment and finding the open source information that we need to justify the sanctioning of individuals, but we do coordinate and we do exchange information to reinforce the lists.

The whole point of sanctions is to tighten the net. It's to prevent openings in any given jurisdiction for individuals to be able to funnel funds and do business with citizens of that country or region.

As for the impact this has, I think it has maximal impact when we have as much coordination as possible and when the announcement of sanctions towards entities is made as closely as possible at the same time.

For the reasons I just stated, if an individual Russian oligarch, for example, is sanctioned in Canada but not in the U.S. and not in the U.K., it creates an opening to funnel funds and therefore to continue what we consider to be feeding the war machine. Importance of coordination and tightening the net is top of mind when we identify potential targets.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: Thank you.

You also mentioned in your opening statement the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children. There are 40 member countries, and Canada co-chairs this. Can you speak about the impacts on children and about what is happening? There has been some media attention on this, but what has been happening to these children? What age ranges are we talking about for children who have been brought into Russia and are held currently in occupied territories in Ukraine?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: It is precisely because of the precarity of these children's situation that Canada has attempted to broaden the coalition so that it is not a political issue but something that should appeal to a majority of countries.

The role that Canada plays in this is mostly to shed some light, to flash a spotlight at the issue so that it is not a forgotten one. That's why we're very pleased with the growing.... It started with about a dozen or 14 countries, and through a lot of diplomatic work, we've now expanded it to 40 co-members.

The work of the coalition is mainly one of advocacy, of—again—shedding some light on the situation, but it's not one of directly getting involved with the return of children. For that, we work discreetly—because these things have to be discreet if they are to be successful—with a number of partners, with some international organizations like UNICEF and the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent, and also with a couple of states.

You will have heard that the state of Qatar has played a discreet role. It has the ability and it has the trust of both Ukraine and Russia, and it has been able to negotiate some discreet and quiet deals

between the two countries. The Vatican has been involved with this as well.

The role here is to empower these players to make an effective difference.

To your question on the ages of the children, it has been the full span, from very young four- or five-year-olds to 18-year-olds, and they have ended up across Russia and across occupied territories.

The Chair: I'm afraid you have only three seconds remaining.

Mr. Sameer Zuberi: I'll give it to the committee.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Zuberi.

We next go to Mr. Bergeron.

Mr. Bergeron, since you're joining us virtually today and I was advised by the clerk that she didn't have a chance to do a sound check, could you say a few words just to confirm?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Montarville, BQ): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

I hope the sound quality is adequate for our interpretation services.

[*English*]

The Chair: It's all good. Thank you.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank the officials from Global Affairs Canada for being here. We are very grateful.

Ladies and gentlemen, the subject is so broad that we would have liked to be able to have you here with us for the entire two hours of this meeting, but I understand that unfortunately you are only available for one hour. So we will try to do as much as we can in the short amount of time available to us.

Canada was the first G7 country to pass legislation to seize or freeze the assets of sanctioned individuals and entities, with a view to transferring those assets to Ukraine to support reconstruction efforts. At the last G7 meeting in Italy, Canada hinted at a contribution of up to \$5 billion from frozen Russian assets.

Currently, how many of those frozen assets could be transferred to Ukraine or have already been transferred to Ukraine for reconstruction?

• (1125)

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Mr. Chair, I thank the member for the question.

There are two things that we should be focusing on here. Actually, there are two parts to the question.

Legislation was passed to update our sanction regime. This provided a means to seize assets by following a legal process under the regime, which in turn makes it possible to sell these assets and give the proceeds to the victims of the conflict in Ukraine.

The \$5 billion you're referring is part of a different scheme. This scheme is the result of an agreement between the G7 and European countries to leverage the bank accounts or currency reserves owned by the Russian government in our respective countries. That money is not seized and directly transferred to the victims of the conflict in Ukraine. Instead, we use it collectively as collateral. That money will continue to be frozen for a long period of time to be used as capital for a loan.

Where exactly are we in terms of Canada's commitment to that \$5 billion? To answer that question, I would have to check with my colleagues at the Department of Finance. We'll provide a written response to the committee, if that's okay.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: As for the transfer of frozen funds to Ukraine, do we have an idea of the amounts that have been transferred so far and what is expected to be transferred soon?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: I will ask my colleague Marie-Josée Langlois to give you more details on that.

Ms. Marie-Josée Langlois (Director General, Sanctions Bureau, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): Thank you for the question.

I can provide you with some information.

Legislated sanctions make it possible to freeze funds when they are linked to individuals on a list or when there are government sanctions targeting certain sectors. The legislative amendments that established the seizure and forfeiture regime relate directly to the property of listed individuals. So these are not necessarily frozen assets, for which a different process is followed.

Once the assets of a listed person have been frozen, they can be seized on behalf of the government by order of the Governor in Council. It's a legal process that involves a number of steps and offers a lot of procedural fairness to individuals who may have an interest in the property. There are steps that can be taken by various interested parties to request administrative reviews of the orders.

When the government decides to seize some assets, it makes an application to the court of the province in which the assets are located to have them seized on its behalf. Once the assets have been turned over to the government by the court, they can be transferred according to the provisions set out in the act. It may be for victims, reconstruction efforts in the country or the restoration of peace and security, as you mentioned.

As you know, there have been two seizures. In December 2022, money that belonged to Roman Abramovich was seized. Last summer, a plane located in Toronto was also seized. In that case, the process is ongoing.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: As I understand it, nothing has been transferred to Ukraine at this time.

[English]

The Chair: Mr. Bergeron, you're out of time. It's been five minutes.

We'll go next to MP McPherson. You have five minutes.

● (1130)

Ms. Heather McPherson (Edmonton Strathcona, NDP): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all the officials who are here today to share information with us.

I represent a riding in Edmonton. In Alberta, we have an enormous diaspora of Ukrainian individuals in our community, and they are deeply worried that the world's focus has shifted away from Ukraine. It's very important to hear about the work being done to help Ukraine rebuild and to support Ukrainian children being returned to Ukraine.

I want to get a bit of a sense from you on the geopolitical impacts, though. We are seeing Iran, even today, threatening further violence in the Middle East. We also know Iran is working closely with Russia. We know Russia and China have an agreement to work with each other.

Could you give us a sense of what that looks like and what the threats are there? How do you see that playing out over the next few months?

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: It's not pretty. What you've described is the moment we have been predicting and analyzing for some time, the so-called polycrisis when multiple events—wars, instability and challenge to international law—are happening simultaneously, and it's extraordinarily complicated to navigate.

You speak about the fact that the attention of the world has shifted, and I can attest to that being the case, certainly by way of mainstream media. I spent quite a bit of time over the last week with a number of colleagues and with ministers at the United Nations General Assembly. It was a high-level week. I can confirm that the conflict in the Middle East is much more present on everybody's lips.

Having said that, as someone from a department that looks at the entire world, I can say in all humility that we can think and chew gum at the same time, and our attention is not divided. It is equally on both conflicts, and more, but also on the pursuit of Canada's interests in all of this. We are able to focus on the events in the Middle East and provide policy advice and financial support, but as I said, to date the support of the Government of Canada is nearing \$20 billion to Ukraine, and that's not just stuff that happened two years ago. It's been wave after wave. We have to have this ability to call out abuses whenever we see them.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you.

You speak about the United Nations General Assembly. We all know that Russia was chairing the Security Council at the time they invaded Ukraine. Obviously, this is a challenge. We'd like to see Canada play an important role in the reform of the United Nations, because I think there needs to be much more done there.

You also spoke about our trade agreement and rebuilding Ukraine. When I was in Ukraine a year ago, that was one of the key priorities for the Zelenskyy administration. They were very clear that they needed support in rebuilding so that people can return to civilian areas that had been destroyed by the Russian Federation. One thing they asked is for Canada to help underwrite the rebuilding processes and help with the demining processes.

I'd like your insight into how that is going and how we are supporting Ukraine in that way.

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: You've identified a couple of the top priorities of the Government of Ukraine that are immediate and urgent, although some of them remain in the military domain.

Even at a ministerial conference a week ago in New York among G7 countries and Ukraine, the topic was energy. The number one thing that Ukraine was requesting was not generators or rebuilding the grid, but air defence, because, obviously, if you prevent attacks on the electric grid, you don't have to repair it as much afterward.

There are a number of countries that have the equipment to support this. We have provided money, but I don't have the exact details of the amounts and which organizations it has gone to, but I know that some of it has already been flowing and has been used to demine, particularly in the areas where rebuilding the electric grid is absolutely required.

Other than that, the biggest request for support has been in macroeconomic support, which I addressed earlier. The Government of Ukraine, which is already spending so much on reconstruction and on waging its war, still needs to keep its basic functions.

Last—and I'll just finish on this, Mr. Chair—it's inviting the private sector to invest. The last assessment was last March, and the assessment of the damage and the reconstruction needs was already at \$486 billion, and that was six months ago. No government in the world can fund this kind of reconstruction. It's going to have to come through investment by the private sector.

• (1135)

The Chair: Thank you.

We now proceed to the second round. We will start off with Mr. Majumdar. You have four minutes, sir.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar (Calgary Heritage, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

It's an honour to be in the committee.

Four minutes is not a lot of time, so I'll start with some domestic questions.

What actions has the government taken to assert Canada's jurisdiction over Russian state assets in Canadian correspondent banks and investments via investments like Eurostar, Euroclear or other partnerships?

Ms. Marie-Josée Langlois: In Canada, as you know, a number of entities of the Russian government are listed on our sanctions list, as is its central bank, so those assets are frozen in Canada because they are on the sanctions list.

Canada is working with G7 colleagues on how to leverage those frozen assets to—

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Forgive me, but in the interest of time, may I ask you to table with the committee what actions the government has taken to assert Canadian jurisdiction over Russian assets, including through Euroclear, and the breakdown and total value of those assets? That's a source of information we around the table would benefit from to help us understand to what degree Canada has actually established jurisdiction over assets and Canadian currency through Euroclear and others.

In the next few minutes, I was hoping to take a step back and look at the geopolitical consequences of the region.

To what extent has Ukraine impacted the Russian navy in the Black Sea?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: I'm sorry, but could you repeat the question?

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: To what degree has Ukraine impacted the Russian naval presence in the Black Sea?

Ms. Alison Grant (Director General, International Security Policy and Strategic Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development): I think we've all seen, through the course of the war, that Ukraine has successfully been able to launch maritime attacks against Russian assets. They've taken a number of vessels out in the Russian Black Sea fleet, and we've seen a re-stationing of many of the Russian vessels outside the area of Crimea, further to the east.

Ukraine has definitely had an effect on the Russian Black Sea fleet and on Russia's ability to launch attacks from that theatre.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Thank you.

Subsequently, Vladimir Putin had sent his foreign minister to Beirut to negotiate with the Lebanese as recently as the last 24 hours.

To what degree do Russia and Hezbollah co-operate in the Mediterranean Sea?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: I cannot say that we have any information or have seen any evidence of co-operation, certainly not security-wise or militarily, in the Mediterranean Sea between Russia and terrorist groups.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Can we verify that is the Mediterranean theatre—Lebanon and Syria?

Ms. Alison Grant: As Alexandre has mentioned, I can't speak to a direct connection between Hezbollah and Russia. We have been tracking very closely the earlier Iranian supply of ballistic missiles and drones to Russia, and that's of deep concern to us. We have taken several actions against that move by Iran.

Mr. Shuvaloy Majumdar: Iran, which backs Hamas and Hezbollah, co-operates with Russia in the Mediterranean theatre as much as Russia collaborates with Iranian equipment in the Ukrainian theatre. These geographies are only separated by about an hour or two. They're not far from each other.

In the last minute, Alison, I'd like to ask you for your perspective.

Do our allied interests understand the common threat the collaboration between Russia and Iran poses, not just to Ukraine but to stability in the wider Middle East region?

The Chair: You can respond very briefly, because we're out of time.

Ms. Alison Grant: In Brussels, our allies do speak about this. We receive briefings on it. There are regular discussions at the North Atlantic Council level about the larger threat that Russia poses in the Euro-Atlantic region, but also outside of it, because threats know no borders. That's well understood in Brussels. These issues are being discussed.

• (1140)

The Chair: We next go to MP Oliphant. You have four minutes.

Hon. Robert Oliphant (Don Valley West, Lib.): Thank you to all of you for the work you do every day, and also for reminding the committee that you can do two things at once, if not 22 things at once. It's appreciated. The world is a messy place, and I know that Ukraine and the people of Ukraine remain very much at the top of your mind.

As I look at the desire we all have for peace as an overarching thing, Canada has supported Ukraine with reform efforts. Right after Crimea, there was significant training of military staff as well as ongoing support to continue democracy, and military support since Russia's illegal invasion, which has been profound, and macroeconomic support such as sovereign loans, etc., for the maintenance of government as usual. We'll continue to do that. I think it's important to continue to assert that. Some of that is done through partners, and some of it's done directly, such as through sovereign loans, etc.

Could you opine on what peace would look like for Russia and what peace would look like for Ukraine, from what they have told us?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Thank you for the question. It is rather a large one, and fundamental. Perhaps I can start with what Canada sees as the just path to peace.

This war was an unprovoked war, a war that violated what every country through international law and the UN charter recognized as legitimate borders of Ukraine. Any just peace is one that must go through the re-establishment of territorial integrity on Ukraine's terms, the withdrawal of Russian troops, and, ultimately, reparation.

We haven't spoken too much today about reparation. We've talked about the costs that collectively we are trying to impose on Russia for its aggression. However, the level of destruction—not to speak about the opportunity costs of the development Ukraine would have pursued had it not been for this horrendous war—is also part of the equation.

Canada is contributing to a number of fora where calculating the reparation and calculating the damage that is imposed on Ukraine will all be part of what we see as a just end to this war. Ultimately, it is up to Ukraine to determine the terms it is prepared to accept as an end to this war. The commitment this government has made is to support Ukraine as long as possible so that it attains this level of satisfaction in finishing the war.

As for Russia, it clearly wants to steal territory. It wants to continue occupying parts of Ukraine and to consider it sovereign Russian territory. We don't have an active dialogue with Russia, as you know. We have extremely limited diplomatic bilateral and multilateral contact. To the best of our assessment, what we can assess is that Russia will want to retain some of the territory it invaded before calling this a win from their point of view.

Hon. Robert Oliphant: Thank you.

Is that it?

The Chair: You have six seconds remaining, so thank you.

We now go to Mr. Bergeron. You have two minutes, sir.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would have liked to talk about other delays in the supply of weapons to Ukraine, but since my time is limited, I will move on to another topic.

In early September, Mongolia became the first state party and signatory of the Rome Statute to welcome Vladimir Putin, even though he is the subject of an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court.

What was Canada's reaction and what message did Canada send to its Mongolian counterparts about Mongolia's failure to comply with its obligations under the Rome Treaty?

• (1145)

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Thank you for the question.

I can reiterate Canada's strong commitment to the International Criminal Court and its expectation that any member, when made aware of an arrest warrant, complies with the principles of the International Criminal Court.

You can imagine that, behind closed doors, messages were conveyed, before and after the fact, to encourage Mongolia to act in accordance with the court's wishes. However, each state obviously follows its own strategy and each sovereign state makes its own decisions.

Mr. Stéphane Bergeron: We seem to have a policy based on geography. Obviously, we understand the geographic situation in Mongolia, which may have led to the decision that was made.

That said, states like Canada are expected to remind all members of the international community of their obligations under international law.

Thank you, Mr. Lévesque.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Bergeron.

We now go to Madame McPherson. You have two minutes.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you again to the witnesses.

I'm going to follow up on some of the questions that Mr. Bergeron was just asking with regard to the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court systems.

My understanding is that Canada has contributed to the ICC and ICJ for the prosecution of those responsible for the thefts of children. That is the predominant case that we are supporting.

Can you explain to me how the funding to the ICC and ICJ works? Are those funds directed specifically to that, or are they directed towards the support of the international justice system writ large?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: Thank you for the question.

I'd say it's a little bit of both. For example, in the case of the ICC, Canada did provide \$2 million of funding to a trust fund to increase the court's capacity to investigate, in particular, sexual and gender-based crimes, and crimes against children. We've both—

Ms. Heather McPherson: Is that in Ukraine or is it anywhere in the world?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: It's in Ukraine, for this particular investigation.

The money, if I understand correctly—and I'm not a legal expert—is for bespoke investigations. Countries that are parties to the Rome statute can provide any dedicated support by providing expertise, such as investigators, legal experts or funds.

I believe that in the case of Canada, it's both funding and some bespoke expertise by way of legal experts.

Ms. Heather McPherson: Of course, from the New Democratic perspective, we should be supporting the international justice system. We should be listening to the ICC and the ICJ in all circumstances and not picking and choosing when we apply it and when we do not.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

We now go to MP Aboultaif. You have four minutes.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif (Edmonton Manning, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I do also have a very large and important Ukrainian community. The Ukrainian cause is always on our minds—all of us in Canada, and specifically myself.

The relationship between Iran and Russia is known. It strengthened with the signing of the INSTC—the international north-south transport corridor—between the two countries. This is something that Russia has waited for about 94 years to achieve. That is a strategic trade line. It's an access for Russia to warm waters and to

international markets through Iran. In return, Iran has been supplying ballistic missiles and drones to Russia.

How significant have those supplies been for the result of the war and for how the war has advanced so far?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: I can't provide a direct equation or an expression of x number of pieces of equipment, whether it's missiles, drones or otherwise, having contributed directly to this.

We know those transactions have taken place. You will have seen G7 members calling this out a couple of weeks ago. This was on the basis of what we, at that point, collectively consider to be solid enough intelligence that suggested an alignment and a support that was material.

This is now a new reality that we're conscious of and that we must call out, denounce and act on. As you know, Canada is one of the countries in the world that has been most forward-leaning in condemning, in sanctioning and even in calling parts of the Iranian government—the IRGC in particular—a terrorist entity.

What I can predict is further pressures and measures in the future, especially by way of sanctions, when we are able to identify with higher levels of certainty which parties in Iran are culpable in having facilitated this sort of commercial arrangement and strategic partnership between the two.

• (1150)

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Is there any indication that sanctions against Russia and the listing of the IRGC as a terrorist organization have been already working to somehow impact these two countries' coalition against Ukraine in the course of this war?

How do you believe that Canada has played that role to minimize the impact on the war and on the Ukrainian people and the Ukrainian territory?

Mr. Alexandre Lévesque: This is the existential question when it comes to the effectiveness of sanctions. I've actually testified before this committee before on that very subject.

Sanctions, of course, can work in the short term, but the vast majority of the time, they work in two ways: They work in the long term and they work when they're done in collaboration with as many countries as possible. Sanctions implemented by a single country against an entity or individuals will likely not have a huge impact.

What sanctions have done in the case of Canada versus Iran is that, first of all, they have virtually eliminated all possibilities of large numbers of the Iranian leadership apparatus having any ability to do business and transfer funds to have any economic or financial dealings with Canadian entities.

It has also set a bar. It has sent a message to the world. In that sense, there is an element of leadership and inspiration for other countries that look at it. It may have a bit of a snowball effect, which may encourage others to follow suit.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Does Canada believe that—

The Chair: You're out of time.

Mr. Ziad Aboultaif: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Now we'll go to MP Alhabra. You have four minutes.

Hon. Omar Alhabra (Mississauga Centre, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses.

Mr. Lévêque, if you allow me, I'll take advantage of your presence here and ask you to update this committee on Canada's effort in the evacuations for Canadian citizens in Lebanon.

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: Obviously, it's not a topic I prepared for with regard to today. My colleagues who are in charge of consular affairs and emergency preparedness are more up to speed on the details.

What I can say is that all contingencies are in place. You will have seen over the past couple of days repeated messages to all Canadians living in Lebanon to expedite their exit. Of course, this is something that the government has been saying for 11 months. We are seeing some uptake on the availability of some of the commercially augmented flights. There's been good uptake on this. This is a situation that we are watching very closely, on an hour-by-hour basis.

What I can say is that contingencies are in place, and we are prepared to offer support where and when possible. However, the key message remains that the situation in Lebanon is extraordinarily volatile right now. This is not just because of the exchange of fire that can happen through missiles, drones, and otherwise, but also because of a certain level of lawlessness and fighting between different factions, particularly over the past few days.

I can also add that we have this thing called the ROCA list, the registration of Canadians abroad list. All Canadians who live in

Lebanon and are registered with this get frequent updates by SMS on the status of things. That communication is almost on a daily basis these days.

• (1155)

Hon. Omar Alhabra: Mr. Chair, I think this is an important moment to remind any Canadians who are still in Lebanon to first register with the mission there, with the Canadian embassy, so that they can receive updates. If they need help, they certainly need to reach out to consular affairs and to heed the government's call in finding a way to leave as quickly as possible.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Thank you. With it now being exactly 12:00—

A voice: It's 11:56.

The Chair: I apologize. I was off by a couple of minutes. I do apologize, but I'd be remiss....

First of all, thank you very much. That concludes our second round of questions. Given that we scheduled it for two hours, I'd be remiss if I did not ask our witnesses if they could possibly stay with us a bit longer for a third round of questions.

Mr. Alexandre Lévêque: I apologize, Mr. Chair. Unfortunately, I am chairing a meeting in less than an hour back in my department. Had we known, we might have been able to extend a little bit, but we were scheduled for come for one hour. With apologies, we will need to take our leave.

The Chair: On that note, allow me to thank you, Mr. Lévêque, Ms. Grant and Ms. Langlois. We are very grateful for your appearance.

Mr. Randy Hoback: Is that good enough? Are we adjourning?

The Chair: The meeting stands adjourned.

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