

Proactive Release

Date: 9 October 2023

The following Cabinet paper has been proactively released by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

Title	Reference
Report of the Cabinet Legislation Committee: Period Ended 25 August 2023	CAB-23-MIN-0406
Government Response to the Petition of Roman Kashpir, on behalf of Friends of Ukraine, on expelling the Ambassador of the Russian Federation.	LEG-23-MIN-0166
Government response to the petition of Roman Kashpir, on behalf of Friends of Ukraine, on expelling the Ambassador of the Russian Federation	

There is a Cabinet Minute associated with this Cabinet Paper. This paper was approved by Ministers with Powers to Act outside the Cabinet schedule.

The following link is the published 'Petition of Roman Kashpir on behalf of Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation':
<https://petitions.parliament.nz/29b0900c-a454-488d-9fe4-48b2f4aa8060>



Cabinet

Minute of Decision

This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.

Report of the Cabinet Legislation Committee: Period Ended 25 August 2023

On 28 August 2023, Cabinet made the following decisions on the work of the Cabinet Legislation Committee for the period ended 25 August 2023:

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by the Minister of Foreign Affairs

LEG-23-MIN-0166

Government Response to the Petition of Roman Kashpir, on Behalf of Friends of Ukraine, on Expelling the Ambassador of the Russian Federation
Portfolio: Foreign Affairs

CONFIRMED

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Rachel Hayward
Secretary of the Cabinet

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Cabinet Legislation Committee

Minute of Decision

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Government Response to the Petition of Roman Kashpir, on behalf of Friends of Ukraine, on expelling the Ambassador of the Russian Federation

Portfolio **Foreign Affairs**

On 24 August 2023, the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

- 1 **noted** that on 11 August 2022, the petition entitled “Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation” was presented to the Petitions Committee;
- 2 **noted** that on 10 March 2023, the petition entitled “Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation” was referred to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for response;
- 3 **noted** that the Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that the government not expel the Russian Ambassador;
- 4 **approved** the government response, attached to this submission, to the Report of the Petitions Committee entitled “Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation”.
- 5 **noted** that the government response was due to be presented to the House by 8 June 2023;
- 6 **invited** the Minister of Foreign Affairs to present the government response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380;
- 7 **invited** the Minister of Foreign Affairs to write to the petitioner enclosing a copy of the government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition, after the response has been presented to the House.

Rebecca Davies
Committee Secretary

Present:

Hon Grant Robertson (Chair)
Hon Damien O'Connor
Hon Andrew Little
Hon David Parker
Hon Barbara Edmonds
Hon Rachel Brooking
Hon Jo Luxton

Officials present from:

Office of the Prime Minister
Officials Committee for LEG

~~Restricted~~

Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs
Chair, Cabinet Legislation Committee

Government response to the petition of Roman Kashpir, on behalf of Friends of Ukraine, on expelling the Ambassador of the Russian Federation

Proposal

- 1 This paper seeks approval of the government's response to the Petitions Committee referral of the petition entitled "*Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation*".

Background

- 2 On 10 March 2023, the Petitions Committee referred the Petition of Roman Kashpir to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for response under the Standing Order 380.
- 3 The petition requests that the New Zealand Government expel the Russian Ambassador to New Zealand on the basis that it is a matter of "dignity, safety and adherence to the New Zealand state-founding principles."

Comment on the government response

- 4 The Ambassador's continued presence in New Zealand provides the New Zealand Government the ability to express our strong condemnation directly to Russia of its illegal invasion of Ukraine; act in New Zealand's interests on multilateral issues where Russia is also engaged; and provide consular assistance to New Zealanders in Russia and in the countries to which our embassy in Moscow is accredited. If we expel Russian diplomatic staff, we would anticipate that Russia would respond in-kind.
- 5 New Zealand officials have directly met with the Russian Ambassador to New Zealand eight times since Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Officials met with the Ambassador most recently in May 2023 to express New Zealand's disappointment over the Russian Embassy sharing a propaganda video targeting New Zealand Defence Force personnel targeting Ukrainians in the United Kingdom. We instructed the Russian Ambassador to pass on our views to the Russian authorities.
- 6 New Zealand also works closely with a full range of partners in continuing to condemn Russia's actions. Maintaining a presence in Moscow with partners adds to the international voice and reminds Russia of its actions. The Russian Ambassador's presence in New Zealand also enables visibility of New Zealand's ongoing support for Ukraine.
- 7 While expelling Russian diplomatic staff in response to Russia's aggression in

Ukraine remains an option for New Zealand, it is one of the least effective measures available to us. We continue to prioritise sanctions and providing direct assistance to Ukraine, which we know is having a real impact. Since the enactment of the Russia Sanctions Act 2022, New Zealand has sanctioned over 1500 individuals and entities. The collective effort of countries around the world to sanction Russia has had a significant impact: over \$300 billion worth of Russian assets are currently frozen offshore, there has been a significant reduction in Russia's oil and gas revenue, and a significant reduction in trade interests with Russia overall. New Zealand exports have dropped by 80 percent and imports by 99 percent since the imposition of sanctions. Data suggests that sanctions by international partners, supported by New Zealand are squeezing the Russian economy and directly stifling its ability to fund the illegal war against Ukraine.

Timing of the government response

8 The government response will be presented to the House by Friday, 25 August 2023.

Consultation

9 The Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet has been informed. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade has been consulted.

Financial implications

10 There are no financial implications for New Zealand.

Publicity

11 There is no publicity planned.

Proactive Release

12 This paper is proposed for proactive release, subject to redaction as appropriate under the Official Information Act 1982.

Recommendations

The Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that the Cabinet Legislation Committee:

1. Note that on 11 August 2022, the petition entitled "*Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation*" was presented to the Petitions Committee.
2. Note that on 10 March 2023, the petition entitled "*Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation*" was referred to the Minister of Foreign Affairs for response.
3. Note that the Minister of Foreign Affairs recommends that the government not expel the Russian Ambassador.

4. Approve the government response, attached to this submission, to the Report of the Petitions Committee entitled “*Friends of Ukraine: Expel the ambassador of the Russian Federation*”.
5. Note that the government response will be presented to the House by 25 August 2023.
6. Invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to present the government response to the House in accordance with Standing Order 380
7. Invite the Minister of Foreign Affairs to write to the petitioner enclosing a copy of the government response to the report of the Petitions Committee on the petition, after the response has been presented to the House.

Authorised for lodgement

Hon Nanaia Mahuta

Minister of Foreign Affairs

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