



Starmer announces 'coalition of the willing' to guarantee Ukraine peace



The 18 world leaders gathered around a U-shaped table with their countries' flags behind them in a room with white walls and gold detail. Sir Keir Starmer is sitting in the centre with Emmanuel Macron and Volodymyr Zelenskyy flanking him. UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer has announced a four-point plan to work with Ukraine to end the war and defend the country from Russia.

The UK, France and other countries will step up their efforts in a "coalition of the willing" and seek to involve the US in their support for Ukraine, he said on Sunday - after calling a summit of 18 leaders - mostly from Europe and including Volodymyr Zelenskyy - three days earlier.

"We are at a crossroads in history today," Starmer said after the summit while Zelenskyy said Kyiv felt "strong support" and the gathering showed "European unity at an extremely high level not seen for a long time. We are all working together in Europe in order to find a basis for cooperation with America for a true peace and guaranteed security," Zelenskyy said after the summit.

Meanwhile, French President Emmanuel Macron told Le Figaro newspaper that Paris and London wanted to propose a one-month truce between Russia and Ukraine "in the air, at sea and on energy infrastructure". Speaking at a news conference shortly after the meeting of leaders, Starmer said four points had been agreed: "We have to learn from the mistakes of the past, we cannot accept a weak deal which Russia can breach with ease, instead any deal must be backed by strength," he said.

The prime minister did not state which countries had agreed to join this coalition of the willing, but said that those who had committed would intensify planning with real urgency. The UK, he said, would back its commitment with "boots on the ground, and planes in the air". Europe must do the heavy lifting," he said, before adding that the agreement would need US backing and had to include Russia, but that Moscow could not be allowed to dictate terms. Countries at the summit included France, Poland, Sweden, Turkey, Norway, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Romania, Finland, Italy, Spain and Canada.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said that there was now an urgent need to "re-arm Europe". These sentiments were echoed by Nato Secretary General Mark Rutte, who said the meeting had seen European countries "stepping up" to make sure Ukraine has what it needs to "stay in the fight as long as it has to continue".