

## The Brits ready to die fighting Putin's elite troops: Soldier who battled ISIS with Kurdish militia is among expats on the Ukrainian frontline waiting for war

- Shaun Pinner, 48, is one of at least ten Britons who have travelled to Ukraine
- There they are taking on pro-Moscow separatists as the threat of invasion grows
- He is joined by Aiden Aslin, 28, a former carer who fought Isis in Syria for months

By CHRIS MATTHEWS FOR MAILONLINE

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A soldier who battled **ISIS** with Kurdish militia is among expats on the Ukrainian frontline waiting for war.

Aiden Aslin, 28, is a former carer who previously fought against Isis in **Syria**.

He said being on the frontline in **Ukraine** was 'mentally exhausting'.



Aiden Aslin, 28, (pictured) is a former carer who previously fought against Isis in Syria. Now he is prepared to fight against a Russian invasion of Ukraine

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**Shaun Pinner, 48, (pictured) is one of at least ten UK nationals who have travelled to the country's wartorn eastern region, known as the Donbas, to take on pro-Moscow separatists**

'The threat of danger is constant and something as simple as going to the toilet could end up with you getting injured because drones can drop grenades,' he told Al Jazeera.

Mr Aslin previously spent ten months in **Iraq** fighting **Islamic State**.

On his return home in 2016 he was arrested.

He was held for 30 hours after officers boarded his plane at Heathrow, where members of his family were eagerly awaiting his arrival.

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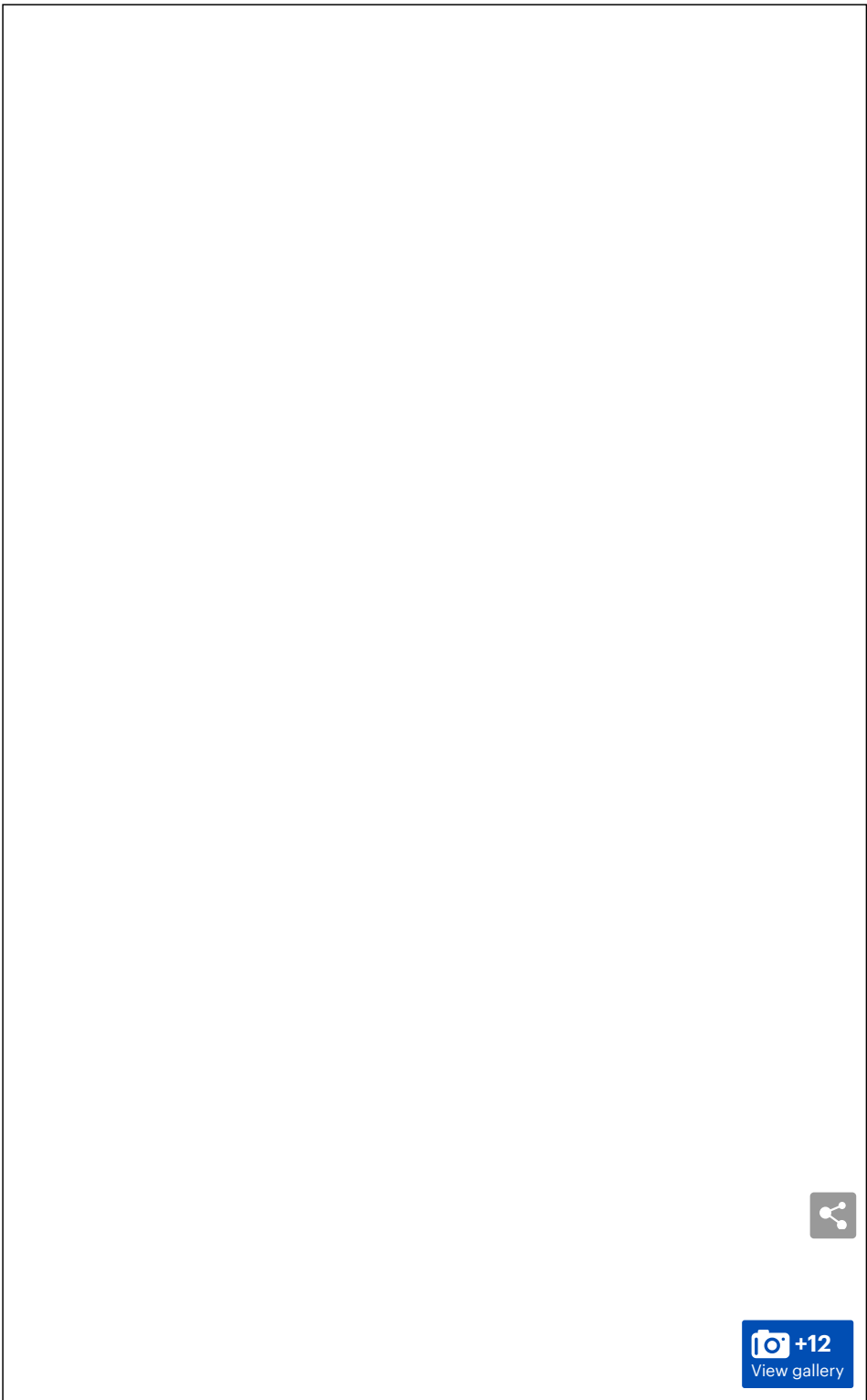
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**Mr Pinner, who previously served in the Royal Anglian Regiment, said he fought with the Ukrainian army as a 'contract soldier**

He was immediately taken to Nottinghamshire Police headquarters for questioning over a suspected terrorism offence.

Now, in Ukraine, he is not the only Britain ready to fight off a Russian invasion.

The former carer has been joined by ex-soldier Shaun Pinner, 48, from Bedfordshire.

Mr Pinner is married to a Ukrainian woman and has been in Donbas for the past four years.

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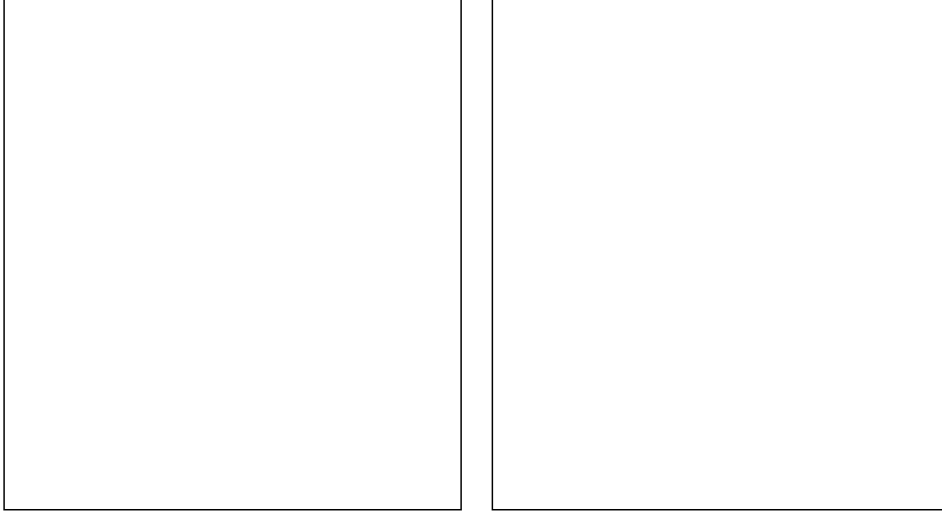
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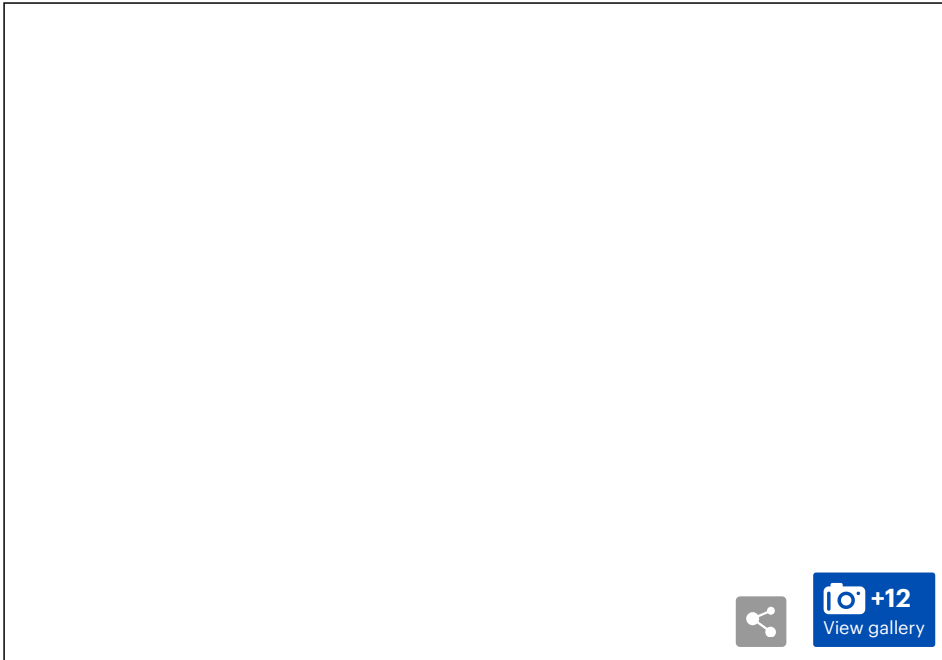
He previously served in the Royal Anglian Regiment and said he fought with the Ukrainian army as a 'contract soldier'.

Speaking from a trench ten miles outside Mariupol, he said: 'I am here defending my family and adopted city. Russia started this war – it's funded by Russia and driven by Russia. But we will fight them, make no mistake about that.'

Mr Pinner said fighting in the trenches was 'like Hell', with snipers 'less than 600m away'.



**Both Mr Aslin (left) and Mr Pinner (right) are prepared to fight off a Russian invasion in Ukraine as they wait on the frontline**



**Aiden Aslin, 28, was held for 30 hours by Nottinghamshire Police on his return to the UK from Iraq in 2016**

Mr Pinner said there has been tension in Ukraine' for years'.

'It's only new to Europe, who have finally woken up to what's happening here,' he told Al Jazeera.

Mr Pinner is one of the oldest in his unit, which has three Brits and one Croatian as well as Ukrainians.

The team is known as the Marines First Battalion. 'I've always got something to prove,' Mr Pinner added.

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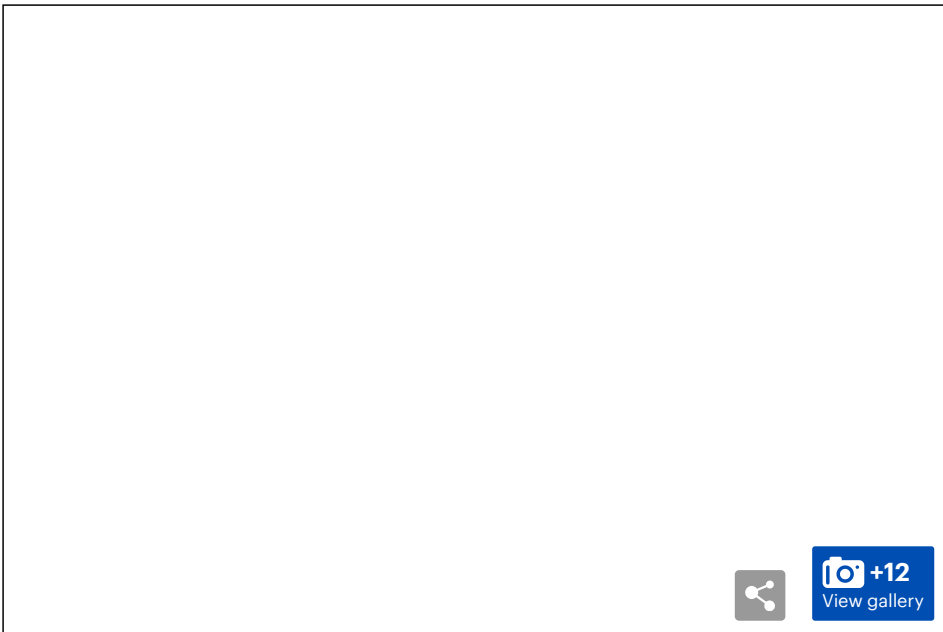
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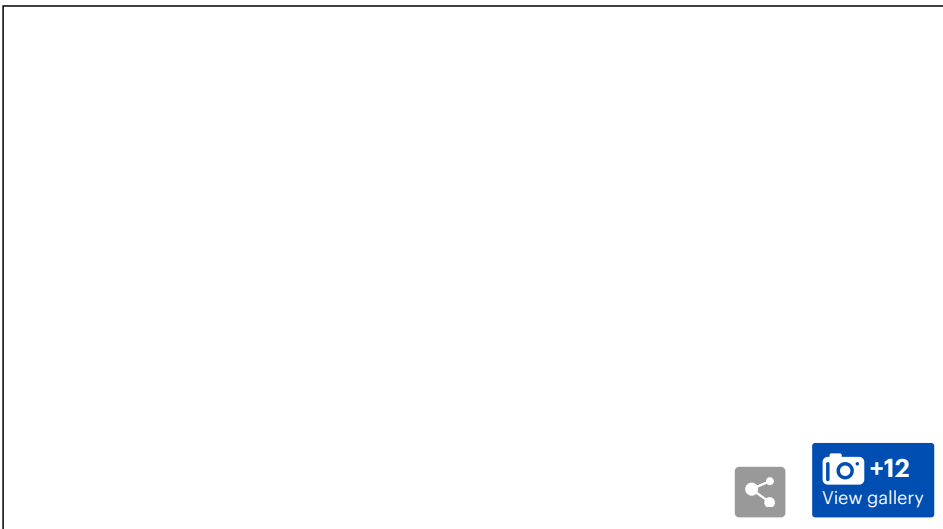
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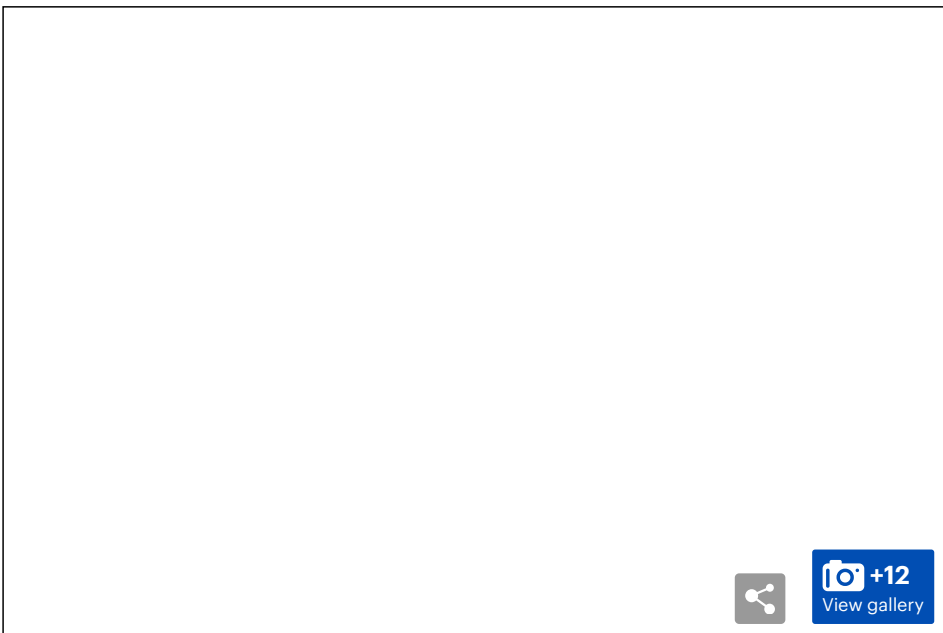
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A photograph shows tanks of the 92nd separate mechanized brigade of Ukrainian Armed Forces parked in their base near Klugino-Bashkirivka village, in the Kharkiv region on January 31



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Putin is now believed to have up to 130,000 troops on Ukraine's borders (military drills pictured in Ivanovo region)



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A Ukrainian serviceman adjusts the strap of his weapon in a trench at a frontline position in the Donetsk region, eastern Ukraine on Monday, Jan. 31

eating disorder

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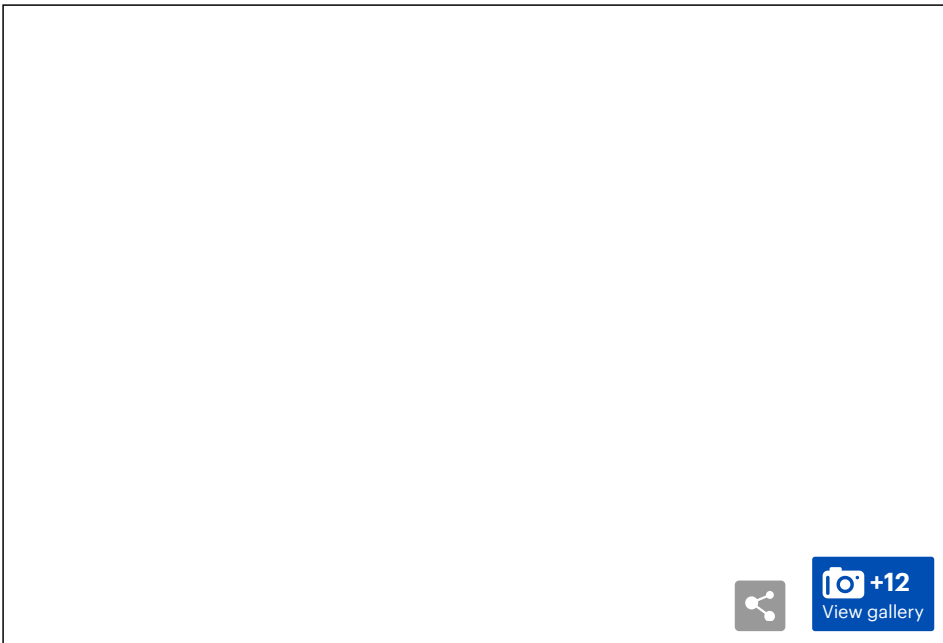
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**EXCLUSIVE** Kirsten Dunst, 40, is seen for the first time since she wed Jesse Plemons, 34, in Jamaica as she flashes a huge diamond wedding ring



**Pictured: An instructor trains members of Ukraine's Territorial Defense Forces, volunteer military units of the Armed Forces, in a city park in Kyiv, Ukraine**

He said: 'Separatists are now using drones to drop bombs and mortars – along with automatic grenade launchers and RPG rockets. Snipers are always present and there's small arms fire almost daily.'

'Ukrainian forces respond if we deem our lives to be threatened whereas separatists seem to shoot whenever they fancy.'

'Sometimes it's very scary no matter how used to it you are. Sometimes you hear it [explosions] start further down the contact line, then it ripples through your position.'

'That's why you get time to dive into cover and sometimes you may get a warning beforehand. Snipers are less than 600m away.'

Mr Pinner added: 'This is my ninth war tour. Death has been a part of my life for so long. You can't go into each day thinking you will be killed or injured.'

'I fear for my life. The Russians will treat us differently if we are captured because we are British. This is always on my mind – that I will be captured.'

**February 1: 'Not just a war junkie' Shaun Pinner joins Ukrainian army**

0:00 / 0:26

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'I'm not just another war junkie. I have excelled better than most Ukrainians. I am the first Westerner to complete all aspects of parachute training as a Ukrainian soldier.'

▶ **Dakota Fanning looks relaxed as she displays her toned legs in black leggings while leaving a Pilates class in LA**  
The actress made a low key appearance

▶ **Demi Lovato shares a video from from her rehearsal as she prepares to embark on a new world tour in August**  
Getting ready

▶ **Brendan Fraser's big comeback! Nineties heartthrob famous for George of the Jungle and Encino Man transforms into 600lb recluse for new film**

▶ **Charlotte McKinney shows off her endless legs in a classic white tee and black shorts as she shops in West Hollywood**

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▶ **Ashlee Simpson enjoys quality time with son Bronx Wentz... as ex-husband Pete Wentz hits up the tennis courts**

▶ **A\$AP Rocky puts on a head-turning display as he steps out wearing colorful beanie and pink track pants**

▶ **Supermodel Elle Macpherson, 58, looks ageless in flattering mirror selfies... after being accused of editing her Instagram photos**

▶ **Alessandra Ambrosio flashes abs in a tiny white sports bra and matching leggings as she attends Pilates class with daughter Anja, 13, in LA**

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More than 14,000 people have been killed over the past eight years of conflict since Kremlin-backed forces seized large areas of eastern Ukraine alongside the border with Russia.

They include the Donbas region which is currently run by Vladimir Putin stooges in their own mini-fiefdoms from the cities of Donetsk and Luhansk.

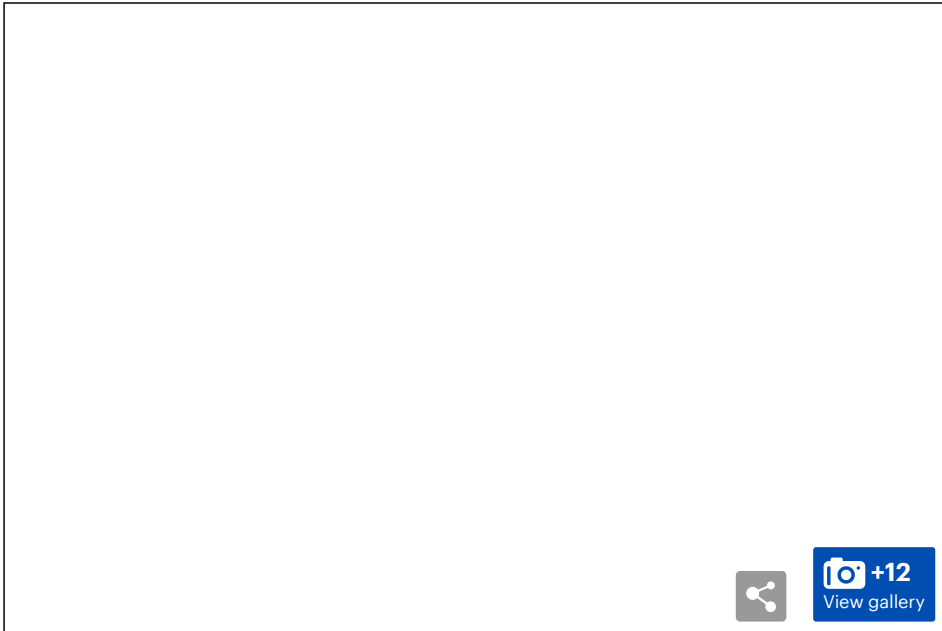
Meanwhile, with more than 100,000 Russian troops camped on Ukraine's northern, eastern and southern borders, the US has sent 90 tons of 'lethal aid' to the country.

The military aid package, worth £147 million, included ammunition for 'front-line defenders'. It arrived a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken warned of a tough US response if Russia invaded.

This weekend, Ukraine's intelligence service accused Russia of sending weapons and fuel to pro-Russian militia on the frontline in Donbas.

The Russians sent 7,000 tons of fuel, several tanks and self-propelled artillery units to the frontline regions, it said.

It came as Boris Johnson arrived in Ukraine today as pro-Kremlin media ruthlessly mocked his **Partygate** woes and marriage - and Vladimir Putin snubbed his phone calls.



Speaking during a joint press conference in Kiev alongside the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, Mr Johnson said the world must face up to the 'grim reality' of more than 100,000 Russian troops massed at the border

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Struggled with her symptoms

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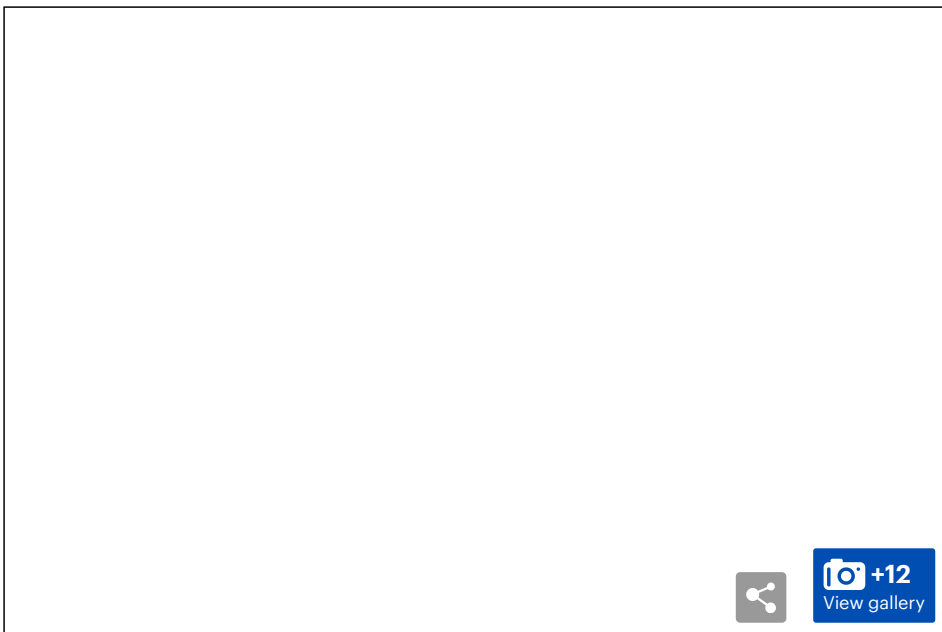
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▶ **Scheana Shay shares a peek into her wedding dress fitting as she prepares to tie the knot with fiancé Brock Davies**  
Big day is coming soon

▶ **Anne-Marie wows in a quirky puff sleeve pink mini dress as she attends Fudge Professional event after being named brand ambassador**

**Kesha showcases her toned legs in athletic shorts and sneakers as she takes a walk through Beverly Hills**  
The singer kept it simple as she went for a walk





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**Boris Johnson today warned Vladimir Putin he will be hit with crippling economic sanctions 'the moment the first Russian toe cap crosses' into Ukraine as the PM cautioned the Kremlin against a potential invasion**

### PM Boris Johnson confirms he is to speak with Putin on Wednesday

Watch the full video

0:00 / 1:09

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Still reeling from news that police are investigating four allegedly lockdown-busting bashes he attended, the PM arrived in Kiev where he was set to meet president Volodymyr Zelensky and hold a press conference against the backdrop of Moscow's menacing military mobilisation.

Posing with Mr Zelensky before their talks, Mr Johnson said: 'I think Kiev is looking good, it's looking fantastic, it's looking strong. Seriously.'

However, his diplomatic mission got off to a rocky start after President Putin refused to reschedule their phone conversation - which had to be delayed last night while Mr Johnson fielded furious questions from MPs.

TV channels in Russia have been revelling in his discomfort, with one branding him 'the most disliked, disrespected and ridiculed character in Britain' who was 'completely under the control and heel of his young wife' Carrie.

They declared that the Partygate report would have ended up in the 'Victorian sewers' of London if it were up to the PM.

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▶ **Kate Winslet set to star in and executive produce the HBO limited series The Palace for director/showrunner Stephen Frears**

▶ **Amelia Hamlin flashes her ripped abs while her mother Lisa Rinna rocks a tank top on an after-lunch walk together in Manhattan Day out**

▶ **Love Island's Jazmine Nichol puts on a busty display in a purple corset minidress during night out in Manchester**  
The 21-year-old sent pulses racing

▶ **Tyler Cameron reveals he 'clashes' with Matt James' girlfriend Rachael Kirkconnell: 'I don't like listening to people sometimes'**

▶ **Addison Rae leans on beau Omer Fedi... after admitting she has been 'struggling to post and get out and do things' amid dad's cheating scandal**

▶ **Binky Felstead slips her enviable frame into a tight red maxi dress as husband Max Fredrik Darnton grabs her bottom after their second wedding**

▶ **'Mummy's happy place': Victoria Beckham relaxes with a vodka tonic during her lavish family holiday - after belting out songs on karaoke**

▶ **Top Chef personality Howard 'Howie' Kleinberg has died at age of 46 following a heart attack**  
Bravo issued a statement on Tuesday

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Deputy PM Dominic Raab tried to shrug off the delay to the call with Mr Putin this morning, saying there are 'always scheduling issues between any two heads of government' and claiming Mr Johnson has been 'leading the transatlantic response' to the crisis.

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The 23-year-old sent pulses racing

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The singer is poised go appear with her old pals

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