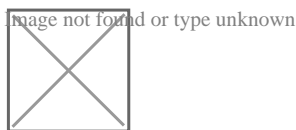


## Who are Russia's supporters?

### Description

ON THE SURFACE it appears quite baffling. In the year since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Russia's diplomatic resilience has left many wringing their hands. Sergei Lavrov, the country's foreign minister, went on a charm offensive across various countries; Vladimir Putin, the president, welcomed China's leader in March. In one sense Russia can rightly boast about strengthening diplomatic ties. Data published in March by EIU, our sister company, showed that the number of countries actively condemning Russia had fallen since its previous analysis a year ago (see map). But these countries are of little real use to Mr Putin and his warmongering.

EIU considers whether and how governments have supported Russia's actions or echoed its narratives—for example by avoiding calling the war an "invasion". It finds that seven countries have moved into the Russia-leaning camp—those which are friendly towards Russia even if they do not openly endorse its war—since last year (see chart). Some, like South Africa, were initially neutral; others, such as Botswana, have strayed from West-leaning. Eight more countries, most prominently Turkey, have gone from supporting the West into the neutral camp. Overall, the number of countries condemning Russia has dropped from 131 to 122 in the past 12 months.



Fortunately, when it comes to international relations, quality trumps quantity. The most powerful country that Russia has managed to keep sweet is China, which remains Russia-leaning by EIU's measures. But Xi Jinping, China's leader, seems primarily focused on poking the West and leveraging the conflict to his advantage, rather than providing meaningful support to the war effort. Mr Xi has so far rebuffed requests from Russia to offer assistance, such as supplying weapons or troops (though the West remains wary of the possibility). Similarly, India, classed as neutral, is more keen on benefiting from trade deals than being forced to choose sides. Turkey, also listed as neutral, has increased trade with Russia while also supplying Ukraine with armaments, from missile-carrying drones to rockets and

artillery shells.

Only Belarus, Iran and North Korea (all classed as supporting Russia) have actually provided the Kremlin with arms (compared with 31 countries that have announced weapon shipments to Ukraine). The rest of Russia's camp is made up mostly of failing states and opportunists that will provide little more than abstentions on UN votes and other symbolic gestures of solidarity.

Together, Russia's side and the neutral camp contain most of the world's population, but they account for just one-third of global GDP. With few exceptions (namely China) Mr Putin's pals are unlikely to be able to match the West's fundraising capacity for Ukraine (see chart). America alone has provided more than \$33bn-worth of training and equipment since Russia's invasion, and some 50 other countries have given or committed more than \$13bn in security assistance as of September. On paper Russia has gained a worrying amount of support over the past year. In practice, however, its friendships look hollow. ?

### **Category**

1. Main
2. Politics-Geopolitics-Gov.-Events

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