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EU slams 'war crimes' in Ukraine but new sanctions unlikely

By LORNE COOK 19 minutes ago



BRUSSELS (AP) — European Union countries on Monday accused Russia's military of committing war crimes in Ukraine, but appeared unlikely to impose new sanctions on Moscow despite a clamor across Europe for those responsible for attacks on civilians to

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With civilian deaths mounting in the besieged Ukrainian port city of Mariupol, German Foreign

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The “courts will have to decide, but for me these are clearly war crimes,” Baerbock said.

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said before he chaired a meeting of the 27-nation bloc’s foreign ministers in Brussels that “what’s happening in Mariupol is a massive war crime. Destroying everything, bombarding and killing everybody in an indiscriminate manner. This is something awful.”

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The encircled southern city on the Sea of Azov has seen some of the worst horrors of the war. City officials said at least 2,300 people have died in the siege, with some buried in mass graves. City authorities say about 10% of the city’s population of 430,000 have fled and reported that some residents were forced to go into Russia against their will.

Borrell underlined that “war also has law.” The International Criminal Court in the Netherlands is gathering evidence about any possible war crimes in Ukraine, but Russia, like the United States, doesn’t recognize the tribunal’s jurisdiction.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney said his country is “certainly open to other mechanisms for accountability in terms of the atrocities that are taking

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Zelenskyy's shirt featured Ukraine military emblem, not hate symbol

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Coveney said Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is probably the first “war being played out on social media, where

“This is driving a fury across the European Union within the public as to why can’t we stop this,” he told reporters. “They want people held to account for the decisions taken and the brutality that we have seen.”

Still, the imposition of a new round of EU sanctions on Russia — asset freezes and travel bans — appears unlikely for now.

Notorious for their often slow response to fast-moving international events, EU nations have rallied in just over three weeks since the invasion began on Feb. 24 to slap [sanctions](#) on hundreds of people. They include Russian President Vladimir Putin, senior ministers and pro-Kremlin oligarchs.

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Several “entities” – companies, banks, airlines and ship builders – have also been hit in near record time. But the issue of imposing restrictive measures on Russian energy remains extremely sensitive, given the dependence of many EU countries on Russian natural gas.

A group of countries led by Germany wants a pause on new sanctions for now, amid concerns about high energy prices and fears that Russia might halt gas exports to Europe. Some also want to save sanction ammunition for any new and major war atrocity, like the use of chemical weapons.

“We are doing everything to close loopholes in the sanctions” that have already been agreed, Baerbock said.

But Lithuanian Foreign Minister Gabrielius Landsbergis, whose country borders Russia and

Belarus, warned against “sanctions fatigue.”

“We cannot get tired imposing sanctions. We cannot

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a major source of revenue for Russia .

He said the EU must start thinking about what kind of

he said, doesn't appear to be enough to persuade some member countries "but somewhere there, there has to be one."

Landsbergis also said that the Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia need their defenses bolstered by partner countries.

"I think we need to see more equipment, and first of all the actual defense plans (for) the Baltic countries that would reflect the changed strategic reality of the region," he told reporters.

The ministers were expected to endorse a second tranche of 500 million euros (\$552 million) to help fund the purchase of weapons and other aid for Ukraine, diplomats said ahead of the meeting.

U.S. President Joe Biden will travel to Brussels on Thursday for talks at NATO and EU headquarters in an effort to put on a fresh display of trans-Atlantic unity in the face of Russia's war on Ukraine.

Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's coverage of the war at <https://apnews.com/hub/russia-ukraine>

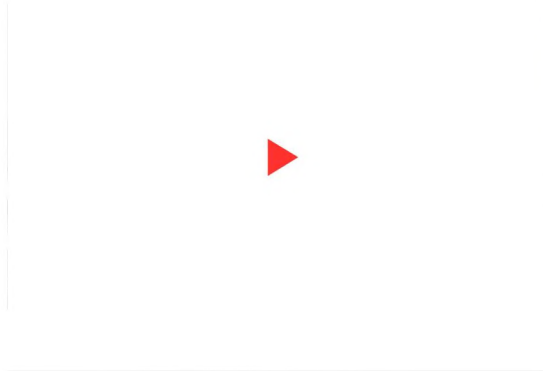
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