



22 April 2022

Minister of Foreign Affairs

For approval by

28 April 2022

## Russia Sanctions – Disinformation and cyber actors

**BRIEFING** Decision Submission

**PURPOSE** To seek approval to authorise the drafting of regulations to amend the Russia Sanctions Regulations 2022 to implement proposed designations of actors involved in Russia's disinformation campaign and malicious cyber activity, and refine the current prohibitions.

## Tukunga tūtohua – Recommended referrals

Prime Minister	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Deputy Prime Minister	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Minister Responsible for the GCSB	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Attorney General	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Minister for Trade and Export Growth	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Minister of Immigration	For concurrence by	28 April 2022
Minister of Defence	For concurrence by	28 April 2022

## Taipitopito whakapā – Contact details

NAME	ROLE	DIVISION	WORK PHONE s9(2)(a)
Andrea Smith s9(2)(g)(iii)	Deputy Secretary Divisional Manager	Russia Sanctions Taskforce Russia Sanctions Taskforce	

## Mā te Tari Minita e whakakī – Minister's Office to complete

- |  |   |                                    |
|--|---|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Approved            | <input type="checkbox"/> Noted                | <input type="checkbox"/> Referred  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Needs amendment     | <input type="checkbox"/> Declined             | <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overtaken by events | <input type="checkbox"/> See Minister's notes |                                    |

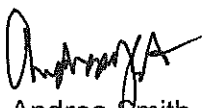
**Comments**

## Russia Sanctions – Disinformation and cyber actors

### Pito matua – Key points

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- President Putin utilises sophisticated disinformation machinery to promote false narratives to justify Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine. Russian media is by and large an extension of Putin's propaganda arm, while its state and state-backed operatives disseminate vast amounts of false information online.
- Russia's disinformation efforts reach beyond a domestic audience. False narratives, including "de-nazifying" Ukraine and purported threats to Russia's own security, are promoted globally, in an attempt to sow doubt, divide the international community, and undermine Ukrainian resolve.
- Russia has also engaged in a campaign of malicious cyber activity designed to undermine Ukraine's democracy and territorial integrity, including by attacking Ukrainian government websites and disrupting key infrastructure.
- This proposed tranche of sanctions builds on our earlier designations of key propagandists, and will expand our sanctions list to include those responsible for malicious cyber activity. It represents Aotearoa New Zealand's clear rejection of Putin's narrative and disinformation efforts, and our condemnation of all Russian actions aimed at undermining Ukraine's sovereignty. Advice will be provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs proposing the specific actors to be considered for designation.
- Advice will also be provided to the Minister of Foreign Affairs proposing amendments to the substantive text of the Regulations. The amendments will:
  - allow for the automatic application of sanctions to relatives of designated individuals, thereby ensuring an avenue often used for circumvention of sanctions is addressed; and
  - refine the 'prohibition on dealing with services' to ensure it is fit for purpose and address matters raised by the Regulatory Review Committee.
- Approval is sought to authorise the drafting of regulations to amend the Russia Sanctions Regulations in order to implement both the proposed designations and refinements to the Regulations.
- We propose the following timeline for action:
  - 28 April: Receive approval to begin work drafting regulations;
  - 5 May: Advice on proposed designations and draft regulations goes to the Minister of Foreign Affairs (copied for information to Ministers with the Power to Act);
  - 9 May: Executive Council;
  - 9 May: Gazetting and public notification;
  - 10 May: Entry into force of regulations.



Andrea Smith  
for Secretary of Foreign Affairs and Trade

## Russia Sanctions – Disinformation and cyber actors

## Tūtohu – Recommendations

It is recommended that you:

- |   |  |          |
|---|--|----------|
| 1 | <b>Note</b> that officials propose Russia's disinformation machinery and malicious cyber activity as the next area of focus for designations by Aotearoa New Zealand;  | Yes / No |
| 2 | <b>Note</b> that officials will provide advice to the Minister of Foreign Affairs proposing designation of a number of key actors involved in such propaganda and cyber activities for her consideration;  | Yes / No |
| 3 | <b>Note</b> that officials will also provide advice proposing amendments to the substantive text of the Russia Sanctions Regulations in order to automatically apply sanctions to relatives of designated individuals and refine the services prohibition; | Yes / No |
| 4 | <b>Agree</b> to authorise the Minister of Foreign Affairs to issue drafting instructions to give effect to the above;  | Yes / No |
| 5 | <b>Note</b> that a that a waiver of the 28-day rule is sought for the regulations (once approved) to come into force, on the basis that Russia's invasion of Ukraine constitutes an international emergency that requires a swift response;                | Yes / No |
| 6 | <b>Agree</b> to waive the 28-day rule so that the regulations can come into force on 10 May 2022;  | Yes / No |
| 7 | <b>Authorise</b> the submission to the Executive Council of Russia Sanctions Amendment Regulations (no. 4) 2022 on 9 May 2022.   | Yes / No |

Hon Nanaia Mahuta  
Minister of Foreign Affairs / Minita Take Aorere

Date:        /        /

Rt Hon Jacinda Ardern  
Prime Minister

Date:        /        /

Russia Sanctions – Disinformation and cyber actors

Hon Grant Robertson  
Deputy Prime Minister

Date:        /        /

Hon Andrew Little  
Minister Responsible for the GCSB

Date:        /        /

Hon David Parker  
Attorney General

Date:        /        /

Hon Damien O'Connor  
Minister for Trade and Export Growth

Date:        /        /

Hon Kris Faafoi  
Minister of Immigration

Date:        /        /

Hon Peeni Henare  
Minister of Defence

Date:        /        /