

War in Ukraine

Saudi seeks to woo developing nations for Ukraine peace talks

China, India, Brazil and South Africa invited to Jeddah meeting in bid to boost support for Kyiv



A serviceman with a Ukrainian flag near the frontline in the country's eastern Donetsk region © REUTERS

Henry Foy in Brussels, **Samer Al-Atrush** in Dubai and **Felicia Schwartz** in Washington
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Saudi Arabia has invited leading developing nations to meet in a bid to win their backing for Ukraine, as the US and other western powers seek to weaken global support for [Moscow's](#) full-scale invasion.

Senior officials from China, Brazil, South Africa and India — Russia's partners in the BRICS grouping — have been invited to attend two-day talks in Jeddah next weekend, alongside more than 30 other states, according to four people with knowledge of the meeting. Russia has not been invited.

The gathering, a [successor to similar meetings in Copenhagen last month](#), will try to persuade countries from South America, Africa and south-east Asia to back Ukraine's peace plan, which calls for an end to the war by reclaiming its territory currently occupied by Russian troops.

National security advisers or their equivalents have been invited to attend the meeting, which comes amid [intense fighting in southern Ukraine](#). Kyiv has so far made hard-fought but limited gains in its summer counteroffensive.

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Other G20 members such as Mexico, Indonesia and Argentina have been invited, according to one of the people, alongside countries that have supported Ukraine such as Japan and South Korea. More than a dozen European countries have been invited, alongside the EU itself, in the form of Brussels representatives.

The meeting, which was first reported by the Wall Street Journal, is the latest step by Saudi Arabia as it seeks to position itself as a peace broker between Russia and Ukraine.

Riyadh has helped negotiate prisoner exchanges, worked to strike a deal to [return Ukrainian children forcibly relocated to Russia](#), and offered itself as mediator.

It has kept up close ties with Russia, with which it leads the Opec+ group of oil producers and exporters, but has also sent financial aid to Ukraine and hosted president Volodymyr Zelenskyy at an Arab League summit in May.

The kingdom has sought to position itself as a middle power with influence beyond its region, while balancing ties with the US, Russia and China. Acting as a mediator would demonstrate the effectiveness of that approach, one person familiar with the Saudi government's thinking said.

Western officials are aware that the war is likely to rumble on into next year and are keen to win over more developing nations to Ukraine's side. They believe that reducing diplomatic support for Moscow will help to bring Russian president Vladimir Putin to the negotiating table.

The US, EU and other western countries have endorsed Zelenskyy's peace plan, which calls for a complete withdrawal of Russian forces. Alternative proposals from China and other states are ambiguous about Russia's retreat.