

For its part, Moscow has strongly criticised the United States and its NATO allies for providing Ukraine with weapons and holding joint drills, saying that such moves encourage Ukrainian hawks to try to regain the rebel-held areas by force.

Furthermore, Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly said Ukraine's aspirations to join NATO are a red line, and expressed concern about plans by some NATO members to set up military training centres in Ukraine. This, he has said, would give them a military foothold in the region even without Ukraine joining NATO.

[For a more detailed analysis of what is behind the conflict, click here.](#)

## What does Russia want?

It is more about what Russia does not want. Russia does not want Ukraine in NATO – and has said as much in its [list of security demands](#) which were sent to the US last December. The demands included a halt to any NATO drills near Russia's border. It also wants NATO to withdraw from Eastern Europe.

