

# Is Britain Ready for World War III? Former Top General Warns Brits Might Have to Serve Conscript Army as Whitehall Examines Using Ukraine Training Plan to Get Volunteers Ready to Fight Russia

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*Britain has to 'think carefully' about [conscripting hundreds of thousands of Brits to fight Russia](#), a former top British Army officer has warned.*

General Richard Shirreff, a former [Nato](#) commander, warned that the UK might need to introduce a system akin to that used in [Finland](#) in the event of a European land war.

It came after the head of the British Army warned in a speech yesterday that a 'citizen army' will be needed for any direct confrontation with Vladimir [Putin](#).

Not three weeks of 2024 have passed, and the governments of Estonia, [Sweden](#) and now the UK have already warned their respective nations that the prospect of large-scale war is on the horizon.

Although he stopped short of backing conscription, general Sir Patrick Sanders said preparing for war against [Russia](#) should be a 'whole-of-nation' undertaking, including what he described as 'national mobilisation'.

However Sir Richard, the Deputy Supreme Allied Commander Europe from 2011 to 2014, suggested that conscription might well be required, because a large enough volunteer force would 'need a huge amount of effort and money which is probably not there.'

'I think Gen Sanders is absolutely right to be talking about a citizen volunteer army. I

think now, against all the odds though, is the time to start thinking the unthinkable and really having to think quite carefully about conscription if we are to deliver the numbers needed,' he told [Sky News](#).

But at the same time Whitehall is believed to be looking at ways of training large amounts of volunteers quickly, based on work done with Ukrainian troops.

British forces have trained some 30,000 Ukrainians, including civilians, on UK soil under Operation Interflex, the multinational support mission backing the country as it continues to push back against the two-year-long Russian invasion.

But what do these options mean for the average Brit? Here we try to answer some of the basic questions about what the start of World War III might look like.

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