

2025.03.18

**4.5 Deputy S.M. Ahier of St. Helier North of the Minister for External Relations regarding frozen Russian assets held in Jersey (OQ.65/2025):**

Will the Minister commit to the transfer to Ukraine of all frozen Russian assets held in Jersey and, if not, will he assure the Assembly that, if a peace deal is reached, those frozen assets will not be returned to Russia until such time as any war reparations required have been met in full?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst of St. Mary, St. Ouen and St. Peter (The Minister for External Relations):**

The assets subject to an asset freeze under the Sanctions and Asset-Freezing (Jersey) Law 2019 still legally belong to the legal owner. There are no powers under that law which would allow Jersey to transfer or otherwise spend, donate or loan frozen assets. Jersey implements the U.K.'s financial sanctions regime and therefore we will follow the position taken in the U.K. when and if a peace deal is reached.

**4.5.1 Deputy S.M. Ahier:**

If other European finance ministries decide to set up a compensation trust using the frozen Russian assets, which is being discussed currently, would the Minister transfer the frozen Russian assets held in Jersey to such a fund or would he only be influenced by the decision of Westminster?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

Firstly, of course, legally it would not be within the Minister's power to do such a thing. It would require a change in legislation which would involve this Assembly. Secondly, these matters are best dealt with on a more global consensus basis. We do consider what the European Union is doing, as I know the U.K. would consider what the European Union is doing, and I have had a number of conversations both in Westminster and in Brussels about these matters and there is no common consensus at this point. We have to be careful not to confuse privately-owned assets with States-owned assets, which are being treated in a different manner.

**4.5.2 Deputy J. Renouf of St. Brelade:**

I found a slight contradiction. I may have just not quite understood but the Minister said that Jersey law does not allow us to do anything with the assets that are frozen but that he would follow the U.K. lead. If the U.K. lead is to do something, in other words if U.K. legislation allows something which Jersey legislation does not, what will he do?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

As I indicated, it depends what the action is. If the action is simply the lifting of sanctions, then that would automatically happen under the Jersey legislation. If it is to do something else with the assets, other than that straightforward lifting, then that would be a decision for this Assembly because it would require legislation.

**4.5.3 Deputy J. Renouf:**

To be really clear, if we wished to do something with those assets, then we would require an amendment to legislation or primary legislation; what would be the route?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

Well, because I have not considered what the route would be, I imagine it would be a change to the Sanctions and Asset-Freezing (Jersey) Law. It would depend what the global consensus was and, of course, with all these matters, Ministers take advice from the relevant people who need to advise which would be the best route. It may be because it was such a bespoke issue relating to a single jurisdiction that a new piece of primary law would be introduced. It may be that speed of action was more important and therefore, it was simply an amendment to the existing regulation.

**4.5.4 Deputy S.M. Ahier:**

There are £230 billion of Russian assets frozen in total. This will not match the expected £400 billion of war damage reparations that will be required. Has the Minister had direct engagement with the United Kingdom or with other European countries to discuss the matter of war reparations and, if not, does he intend to instigate such conversations to ensure resolution of this matter?

**Deputy I.J. Gorst:**

As I indicated earlier, I have had conversations with U.K. Ministers and with senior officials in Brussels from member states about the use of frozen assets, not about war reparations. I do not think that that necessarily falls within the remit of Jersey's Minister for External Relations.