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PRESS RELEASE
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AND VETERANS

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Visit of Mrs Alice Rufo, Minister Delegate to the Minister for the Armed Forces and Veterans, to Ukraine on Friday 23 January 2026

As part of France's support for Ukraine, and in particular as a follow-up to the meeting of the Coalition of the Willing held at the Élysée Palace on 6 January, Mrs Alice Rufo, Minister Delegate to the Minister for the Armed Forces and Veterans, travelled to Ukraine on Friday 23 January 2026.

The objective of this visit was to express a message of support and solidarity with the Ukrainian people as the country faces intensifying Russian strikes, especially on its energy infrastructure, and as temperatures are freezing cold in this winter period. This visit also enabled the Minister Delegate to address all aspects of the France-Ukraine defence relationship with her various interlocutors.

On this occasion, Alice Rufo spoke to Natalia Kalmykova, Ukraine's Minister for Veterans, whom she had already met in Paris on 4 December 2025. Both ministers signed a memorandum of understanding aimed at strengthening co-operation between the two countries in the field of remembrance policy, the organisation of care for the wounded, and support for veterans.

The Minister Delegate then exchanged with Ukrainian veterans back from the front line to better understand their physical and traumatic injuries and discuss with them the measures put in place by the Ukrainian authorities to support them, and help them reintegrate into society.

Thereafter, Mrs Rufo attended a ceremony at the Heroes' Wall to honour the fallen Ukrainian soldiers, during which she laid a wreath alongside Mrs Kalmykova and Mr Serhiy Boyev, Ukraine's Deputy Defence Minister.

After this remembrance sequence, the Minister Delegate went to the Ukrainian Defence Ministry, where she met the new Minister of Defence, Mykhailo Fedorov, for short talks. She then held talks with the Deputy Defence Minister, Serhiy Boyev, during which they spoke about the military situation and support for Ukraine. Mrs Rufo emphasised France's willingness to strengthen industrial co-operation between both countries through joint development and production projects, with particular attention paid to innovation, especially in dronization, robotization, and artificial intelligence.

Finally, she was received at the Presidency of the Ukrainian Republic by Mr Igor Zhovka, Deputy Head of the Office and diplomatic adviser of President Zelensky. Together, they spoke about the ongoing negotiations to achieve a ceasefire, and about the key role played by the Coalition of the Willing in helping Ukraine obtain tangible security guarantees, thus enabling progress towards a just and lasting peace.

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