# Nigel Farage's Supporter Calls for Closer Ties with Kremlin Sparking Controversy



**Nigel Farage's Supporter Advocates Closer Ties with Kremlin Amid Backlash**

Nigel Farage, the leader of Britain’s Reform UK party, faces increasing scrutiny after one of his prominent supporters called for closer ties with Russia. Jonathan Mappin, an heir to the Mappin and Webb jewellery family and a practising Scientologist, hosted a Reform rally in Tintagel, Cornwall, where attendees reportedly cheered Farage’s controversial remarks blaming the West for Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

Mappin, 59, has expressed admiration for Russian President Vladimir Putin, describing him as "smart" and stating, "We love him." Mappin previously employed Farage on the advisory board of his company, Dutch Green Business, and organized the Cornwall event where candidates supported Farage's controversial stance.

Farage’s comments, made during a BBC interview, have been condemned by Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky’s office and UK Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, who stated that Farage's statements "play into Putin’s hands." Farage, however, maintains he is not an apologist for Putin but insists the West's policies have contributed to the current conflict.

Additionally, Nigel Farage faces further backlash for his remarks and the alleged pro-Russian sympathies of 22 Reform candidates. This includes controversial statements by candidates such as Andrew Husband, Angela Carter-Begbie, and John Clark, who have echoed misinformation and praised Putin.

The controversy unfolds amid ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, including recent guided bomb attacks on Kharkiv, which killed three people and injured 52. Ukrainian President Zelensky has called for more military aid to counter the escalating threats from Russian weaponry. Both Sunak and Labour leader Keir Starmer have publicly criticized Farage’s comments, emphasizing the importance of supporting Ukraine against Russian aggression.