

Ukraine: Action Points for Scotland

On the 24th of February, Russia started a mass invasion of Ukraine. Neither it has stopped with a “fast Russian victory”, nor has Ukraine been defeated. Instead, what we have is the struggling, surrendering Russian army, frustrated Putin, and Ukraine standing firm and united in the face of aggression. Scottish people, European nations and the UN, are all standing in solidarity with Ukraine, condemning Russian aggression and supporting Ukraine’s fight for its sovereignty, democracy, and our common European values.

While hearing and sharing the Scottish Government’s concerns, we would like to suggest the **action points**, reflecting the urgent needs of Ukrainians and other nations involved, including Scotland, that the Government can aim to implement.

Humanitarian aid and refugees:

1. Create logistics to send supplies to Ukraine and refugees abroad. Provide humanitarian, medical aid and non-lethal military equipment.
2. Significantly simplify UK visa requirements: for Ukrainians with UK families and supporters. Provide social support to the refugees who arrive in Scotland.

Shelter Ukrainian sky and support the Ukrainian army:

3. Provide military assistance to Ukraine. Supply Ukraine with arms, including anti-aircraft weapons. Lobby to create a no-fly zone in Ukraine, both for humanitarian purposes and to stop Russian ballistic missiles or bombers controlling the sky.

Economy, diplomacy, culture:

4. Cut economic and diplomatic relations with Russia. Continue imposing sanctions – economic, asset-freezing, institutional and individual (including family members). Get Russian money out of the UK business and politics.
5. Suspend cultural relationships with Russia, and support Ukrainian culture. Fight with Russian propaganda.

Our overarching concern is that the government hears its people and Ukraine. When Russia declared war on Ukraine, Russia declared war on democracy, peace, Europe and our shared values – in particular, the liberal democracy that Ukraine represents. The Ukrainian nation, being the only European nation *directly* involved, is making an immense sacrifice for peace in Europe – Ukrainians give their lives to save the cultural heritage of the people of Ukraine, to protect the European border, to prevent Europe from the ecological disaster, being at risk after Russia captured Chernobyl and Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Stations. Ukraine will prevail, but our allies must do everything they can, while Ukrainians are fighting for their and our safety. Every day is bought at a great price, and the time for action is **now**.

Representatives of the Edinburgh Anti-War Volunteer Movement

09/03/2022

We further elaborate on these action points, explaining their necessity and suggesting concrete actions to implement them.

1. Medical, Humanitarian Aid and Logistics

Our first immediate concern is supplying Ukraine with **medical, humanitarian and military aid from Scotland**. We refuse to stand idly. Ukrainian charities and individuals have organised drop off points, yet we still are working on creating an efficient logistical mechanism in place. We call on the Scottish government to create or collaborate with a local organisation that will **provide reliable transport to Ukraine**.

We also encounter serious limitations on what goods can be bought and transported, including things such as **urgent medicines** (e.g. insulin), NATO first-aid kits and non-lethal military support for the army, such as **helmets, vests, night-vision goggles and drones**. Time is crucial for Ukraine now, and delivering what Ukraine requests is the most efficient way to help.

2. Refugees and Visas

Our second concern, shared by many people of Scotland, is the **refugees**.

Current **visa restrictions are impractical and impossible to satisfy** for many – the amount of resources (time, documents, money) needed for people to go through the standard visa route is not something they can afford. As of the 9th of March, we see this impossibility in practice – only a few hundred Ukrainians managed to obtain a visa through this new route, compared to hundreds of thousands looking for refuge in continental Europe. Therefore we require the visa procedure **to be significantly relaxed if not waived**.

It is also essential to simplify the transport, following the policy of **free trains and shelter** that EU countries are organising now – for example, creating **a humanitarian air corridor from Poland** to transport the refugees.

Last but not least, we ask to create **a social support centre for Ukrainians** in Scotland – we need people who will arrive to have access to necessary social services. Human lives are crucial, and we need to help the people who are fleeing and have seen the horrors of war.

3. Military Assistance and Sheltering Ukrainian Air

Ukraine needs **military assistance**, especially against Russian dominance in the air. We have seen Ukrainians come together to support the Ukrainian military, and the people of Europe and the whole world joining them. Most importantly, European countries should **help to protect Ukrainian air**, either through creating a **no-fly zone directly** (through NATO) **or by other means**. We need governments to do the same.

- First, **send crucial military aid to Ukraine** – equipment (if not troops), such as **planes MIG-29, SU-25 from Poland, Slovakia and Romania**, that can be operated

by Ukraine forces, **replacing them** with NATO F-18 and F35 (with an offer to pass these to Poland, Slovakia and Romania and train their pilots).

- Sending **anti-aircraft systems**, such as BUK, which are stored in e.g. Finland.
- Sending **drones**, e.g. Turkish Bayraktar that are already operated by the Ukrainian army.
- Continue sending **portable air-defence missile systems**, such as MANPAD (Stingers) and **anti-tank** missiles (Javelin, NLAW).

Imposing these measures and creating a no-fly zone over Ukraine can facilitate the creation of **safe humanitarian air corridors**, which are needed for simplifying supply lines, and rescuing refugees. Many cities are occupied, the infrastructure is destroyed, there is no food, water, electricity. At least 41 children were brutally killed by the Russian army as of 9 March 2022. Every day matters. The United Kingdom should create a safe air corridor over Ukraine for humanitarian relief, together with the United States. We ask you to support this and to ask the UK Parliament and HM's Government to make this decision.

4. Political and Economic Pressure

We need the government to apply **full political and economic pressure** on the Russian **government** and on the **individuals and their family members** close to the Russian government and Putin personally.

The Ukrainian government called for cutting all economic and diplomatic ties; our government needs to hear that and act. Closing the Russian consulate, closing Russian media spreading misinformation, introducing more economic restrictions through sanctions – would be a strong way to make a statement to the Russian government.

On the individual level, we ask to take a systematic approach in **investigating how Russian money affects business and politics** in Scotland. We call for strong measures, including **assets-freezing**, on finding any connection between UK assets and Putin's clique.

5. Culture

We need to raise public awareness about what is happening in Ukraine. For example, running a **public campaign on Ukrainian history and culture**. This war is happening because of Putin's neglectful interpretation of Ukrainian history, and partially because of our apathy towards the Ukrainian cause, and now we need to do all we can to correct this information gap. We also ask to temporarily **suspend current Russian cultural events in Scotland**, as we do not see it as an option to support these events amid the full-scale information war currently waged by Russia against Ukraine and the whole "western world".

We must stand in solidarity. We haven't yet done enough.

This letter was inspired by [The Kyiv Declaration](#) and the [Ukrainian Focus Group](#) (see [their action points](#)).