

European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine

Trade Union Newsletter

September 2024

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[ENSU public media policy](#)



In this issue

Covering events from August 24, 2024, to September 30, 2024

Welcome to the September 2024 issue of ENSU's trade union newsletter. In it we feature the successful tour of the Spanish State of the leaders of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) and the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU).

The tour has opened the possibility of increased material support to Ukraine and its trade unions from Catalan institutions (the Catalan government and Barcelona Council).

The issue also flags our ENSU's intention to contribute to the campaign to reduce Russian fossil fuel imports to the European Union, building on the effort of our Belgian committee in helping the successful broad campaign to stop transshipment of Russian Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) through the port of Zeebrugge.

Also featured is the conference of Ukrainian student union Direct Action (Priama Diia and the annual general meeting of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign.

From this issue on our section on solidarity with Ukraine will provide separate coverage of concrete fundraising appeals—which we urge readers to consider seriously—from general news on solidarity initiatives.

Ukraine: back to school...

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Ukraine faces a critical winter under fire: What we must do to help *now*

After 30 months of war, the strategy of Putin's invasion of Ukraine is clear as day—to make the cost of the Ukrainian resistance so high and life under fire so unbearable that army and civilian morale is destroyed, and the Ukraine government is forced to accept a “peace settlement” that surrenders entire provinces to the invader.

In that disastrous scenario, the criminal regime in the Kremlin would itself survive, an outcome that would not only be a catastrophe for Ukraine and democratic rights everywhere, but also “the worst disaster to befall Russia in modern history” ([words of jailed Russian anti-war socialist dissident Boris Kagarlitsky](#)).

Putin's strategy is three-pronged:

- On the front line, to grind back Ukrainian resistance in Donetsk, making use of Russia's five-to-one superiority in ammunition (helped by supplies from North Korea), while building army strength up to 1.6 million—more cannon fodder for the Donbass front and to throw against the Ukrainian incursion into the Kursk region.
- Inside Ukraine, to keep pulverising the country's energy infrastructure. The report [Attacks on Ukraine's Energy Infrastructure: Harm to the Civilian Population](#), by the UN's Human Rights Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (HRMMU), details the destruction so far wreaked and the annihilation that is being planned for winter (when temperatures will fall to 20 degrees below zero or lower).
- On the world political stage, to strengthen the position of the right and far-right allies of the Kremlin, along with its “anti-imperialist” supporters in BRICs, Sub-Saharan Africa and Central Asia (including the Taliban). Most critically, to further

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undermine US and European Union support for Ukraine through a win for Donald Trump in the November US presidential election and through inciting the Hungarian and Slovak governments to sabotage support from the European Union (EU).

What must the trade union movement that supports Ukraine and its working people do in response?

The immediate priority

First, respond—immediately and generously—to the demands of Ukraine’s trade union organisations. These were spelled out in the recent visit of the combined FPU and KVPU delegation to the Spanish State (see coverage on pages 13-20). In conversations with the Catalan government and Barcelona Council the delegation stressed the importance of Ukraine being supplied as soon as possible with as much emergency electrical equipment (generators, accumulators and chargers) as could be acquired.

Russian attacks have destroyed all of Ukraine’s thermal power stations. In the face of predictions by Ukraine’s energy authorities of daily power outages in the coming winter of between four and 18 hours, access to such emergency generation equipment can make a difference between life and death.

The Ukrainian people face a winter with power outages that could cut access to water (especially in high-rise buildings), immobilise heating systems (especially where these are centralised, as in Kyiv), cripple hospital and health services, and collapse sewerage systems. The impact on people’s chances of survival could be catastrophic, especially for the elderly, infirm and disabled.

The trade union movement itself must make the biggest financial contribution it can manage to acquire live-saving emergency electricity generation equipment to withstand the coming onslaught, but most of all it must press governments at all levels to provide the funds on the scale needed.

Stop Russian fossil fuel imports

The Russian war effort is overwhelming funded by fossil fuel exports—accounting for 63% of Russian export income in 2022.

According to [Razom We Stand](#), the Ukrainian campaign against Russian fossil fuel exports and for energy sustainability, “since the start of the war in Ukraine, Russia is earning almost €1bn every day selling oil and gas to Europe. Without a real embargo on Russian fossil fuels, the war in Ukraine will never end.”

While EU countries have reduced their imports of Russian fossil fuels since February 2022 (more than halving in value over that time), the EU remains their second largest importer, just behind China.

EU importation of LNG has actually increased. According to [an April 12 article in the Spanish business daily *El Economista*](#), “a tenth of the Russian gas that was previously going to the EU via pipelines is now arriving via tankers.”

The article cites an S&P Global Report which says “Europe will continue to depend on Russian gas”, with dependence having already increased in the first quarter of 2024 from 13% to 16% of total fossil fuel imports.

According to the [August 2023 monthly analysis of Russian fossil fuel exports and sanctions](#) of the Centre for Energy Research and Clean Air (CREA), France, Spain and Belgium are the lead EU importing countries of Russian LNG, with Spain accounting for 32% of all shipments. Spain has increased its imports because it has seven, often underutilised, regasification plants (27% of the total capacity of the EU and United Kingdom).

According to David Lewis, LNG analyst at S&P Global, there is no likelihood of this tendency changing because the Spanish government, led by the Spanish Socialist Workers Party (PSOE), will not intervene to cancel contracts between private companies.

The premise of this argument is partly false—ownership of the regasification plant at the Port of Bilbao is not totally private but [shared by the Energy Agency of the Basque Government \(EVE\)](#) with private concern Enagás. However, even if the gas industry were 100% private, a progressive government could act on the basis that reduced funding of Russia’s war on Ukraine is a higher priority than profit-making by fossil fuel giants.

In the first eight months of 2024 alone, Spanish importers paid Russian exporters €1.4 billion for LNG, as against the €1 billion in military and general aid that the Spanish government has committed to Ukraine for the whole of 2024.

For the EU as a whole, CREA calculates that Russia has to date accumulated €194 billion in total fossil fuel revenue since the start of the war, compared to [the little over €116 billion](#) in financial, military, humanitarian and refugee assistance the EU and its member states have made available to Ukraine. ,

[According to CREA](#): “Much more should be done to limit Russia’s export earnings and constrict the Kremlin’s war chest. This includes lowering the oil price cap, increasing monitoring and enforcement of sanctions, and banning unsanctioned fossil fuels such as LNG and pipeline fuels that are legally allowed into the EU.”

CREA does not say how many billions strict application of these measures could have taken from the Kremlin’s coffers, but states that “a lower price cap of US\$30 per barrel (still well above Russia’s production cost that [averages US\\$15 per barrel](#)) would have slashed Russia’s oil export revenue by 25% (€66 billion) since the sanctions were imposed in December 2022 until the end of August 2024.”

The task of trade unions standing in solidarity with Ukraine is to build support for the kind of measures proposed by CREA and Razom We Stand. We should be promoting practical national-level campaigns that can reduce dependency on Russian fossil fuel imports and also—a hugely positive by-product—speed up the transition to ecologically sustainable energy alternatives.

ENSU has already been involved in two such campaigns: the first the successful broad-based fight to end LNG transshipment at the Belgian port of Zeebrugge, and the second

the campaign of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland to stop the Glasgow-based firm Seapeak from transporting Russian LNG from Siberia.

We look to help develop similar broad campaigns wherever possible and we will urge trade union organisations at all levels to join them.

Redouble the battle for hearts and minds

The war in Ukraine grinds on, with increasingly weary Ukrainian troops holding out as best they can against the Russian onslaught on the Donetsk front. Yet, if the results of recent regional elections in Germany are anything to go by, their war-weariness is nothing compared to that of millions of voters who supported parties---far-right (Alliance for Germany) and ostensibly left (the Sahra Wagenknecht Alliance)—that call for an end to German military aid to Ukraine.

This “peace offensive”, like that of more well-intentioned but innocent pacifists and leftists, has and can only have, one effect in the real world: to further put at risk the already insufficient aid that Ukraine receives, strengthening and emboldening the Russian invader.

If left unanswered, those who demand a ceasefire now in the name of “peace” could also undermine support for Ukraine in the trade union movement itself, especially from “leaders” who, while asserting support, cannot find the courage to break their ties with pro-Putin official Russian unionism (the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia, FNPR).

The trade union movement that supports Ukraine must not resign itself to this “peace offensive” as simply another moment in politics that will blow over.

The reverse is true. Our responsibility to Ukraine is to make an energetic response to those who are demanding a ceasefire at any price, by alerting the membership of our unions as to the real stakes at this point in the war.

Always aware of what our Ukrainian brothers and sisters tell us they urgently need, these are the most important things the trade union movement must fight for at this critical moment:

- Emergency electricity generation equipment for Ukraine now!
- Run down Russian fossil fuel imports!
- End all ties with the FNPR!
- Counter the pro-Putin or peace-on-Russian-terms forces in our own countries

NOTE: The exchange rate of Ukrainian hryvnia (UAH) against the euro used in this number of the *Newsletter* is that applying on September 30, 2024.

Social media of the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine

Web site: www.ukraine-solidarity.eu

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EuropeUkraineSolidarity/>

Campaign: Stop Russian fossil fuel imports

Protest against Scottish firm 'helping Russia finance Ukraine war'



Source: The National

(July 23, 2024) Activists are protesting outside the headquarters of a Scottish firm reportedly helping Vladimir Putin finance the war in Ukraine.

The protest (pictured) by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland is outside the Glasgow HQ of giant LNG shipping multinational Seapeak.

It comes after the firm was revealed in a [Sky News investigation](#) to be transporting copious amounts of Russian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) from Siberia to Belgium, France and Spain, in massive ice-breaking tankers.

The business is not breaking any laws by enabling the gas exports which prop up the Kremlin regime and its military and, by extension, helping to fund the war in Ukraine.

The continued transport of LNG from Russia has also likely helped gas prices keep more stable amid the cost-of-living crisis.

But the firm's actions do fly in the face of a Scottish Government appeal for all companies to break off trading relations with Russia.

According to corporate filings, the Scottish firm is part of a larger global business owned by a US investor.

A release from the protest group said: "Russia is massively expanding its production of gas, which causes global warming, threatening human life on our planet.

"It's a further environmental crime by Russia, which is also committing deliberate acts of ecocide in Ukraine, including blowing up the Kakhovka dam and damaging nuclear power plants.

"If the new Labour government is serious about sanctions on Russia, the transport and insurance of Russian LNG must be included in those sanctions.

"Seapeak, stop shipping Russian gas! Stop funding Russia's war! Real sanctions now!

"For a just peace in Ukraine – all Russian troops out of Ukraine now. For a just and urgent transition to renewable energy sources."

Seapeak has been approached for comment.

Stop Glasgow-based Seapeak's shipping of Russian Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG)

*Seapeak, a Glasgow-based shipping company, one of the world's largest owner-operators of tankers, is transporting every year \$4bn-worth of Russian LNG from Siberia to Belgium, France and Spain, in massive ice-breaking tankers such as the Yakov Gakkel (pictured). So Seapeak is helping to finance Putin's invasion of Ukraine, a war which includes its illegal and murderous bombing of children's hospitals.



Children being evacuated from bombed Kyiv hospital



Seapeak ice-breaking Tanker Yakov Gakkel

* Russian largest export, oil, has been sanctioned by the UK, the EU and the US since Putin's illegal and genocidal full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, in which tens of thousands have been killed and millions forced to flee their homes, many thousands to Scotland.

* But as revealed by a recent Sky News report

<https://news.sky.com/story/the-critical-cog-in-putins-machine-and-how-british-firms-help-to-keep-russian-gas-flowing-into-europe-13161807>, 15%, and rising, of the EU's gas is still being imported from Russia, half of it as LNG. UK based companies such as Seapeak and City of London insurers are profiting from its transportation. Because the UK itself no longer imports Russian LNG itself, there can be no

"national energy security" defence for doing this. Seapeak and the City insurers are simply helping to finance Russia's dirty war to turn a (no doubt massive) profit for its US private equity owner. Gas, like all fossil fuels, of course, causes global warming which threatens human life on our planet.

Keir Starmer has made his support for Ukraine clear. But if the new Labour government is serious about effective sanctions on Russia, a ban on UK companies' involvement in the transport and insurance of Russian LNG should be included.

*Seapeak stop shipping Russian gas.
*Stop funding Russia's war. Effective Sanctions now.
*The new Labour government should ban UK-based companies from shipping or insuring the transport of Russian gas.
*For a just peace in Ukraine - all Russian troops out of Ukraine now.
*For a just and urgent transition to renewable energy sources.

Contact the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland to find out more about this campaign
uscscotland@gmail.com
<https://www.facebook.com/USCScotland>
[facebook.com/groups/USCScotland](https://www.facebook.com/groups/USCScotland)
<https://twitter.com/USCScotland>
<https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org/>



Open letter to the European Parliament: ban imports of Russian fossil fuels

Source: Razom We Stand.

Introduction by Belgian committee of the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine

(July 9, 2024) An appeal initiated by Razom We Stand, an environmental organisation in Ukraine, has been sent to the European Parliament following the June 2024 elections. It is supported by 115 people representing various environmental organisations and solidarity with popular resistance in Ukraine. It calls for a total embargo on Russian fossil fuels in the European Union.

On July 18, the newly elected European Parliament will hold its first session. It is therefore particularly important that solidarity with Ukraine is put on the agenda as one of the European Union's top priorities for the coming years.

This appeal is particularly important in the context of the new legislature of the European Parliament. Far-right parties have significantly increased their representation in recent European elections. Although they have no common position on the war in Ukraine, they are nonetheless close to Putin's ideology, which they share on key issues such as hatred of migrants, hostility to feminism, the cult of the authoritarian man of destiny and indifference to the environmental crisis. The far right remains divided by various factors, such as rivalries between several parties in the same country (Reconquête versus Rassemblement National in France, the Lega versus Fratelli d'Italia in Italy, Vox versus Se Acabó la



Belgian Federal Energy Minister Tinne van der Straeten addresses demonstrators demanding a halt to Russian LNG imports and transshipment in Belgium (Brussels, May 12, 2024, Credit: RESU-Belgium)

Fiesta in Spain). Other divisions are linked to differences over the more or less extensive concealment tactics used by the far right to “de-demonise” itself, and over the alliances it is prepared to forge with the traditional right.

There will now be three far-right groups in the European Parliament, all of which include parties historically

linked to Putin, even if some of them have spoken out against Russian aggression in 2022.

The largest far-right group was recently formed on the initiative of Hungarian President Viktor Orban. Its president is Rassemblement National’s Jordan Bardella and one of its co-presidents is Italian general Roberto Vannacci, former Italian military attaché in Moscow between 2020 and 2023. In 2023, Vannacci [published a book](#) in which he praised Putin’s regime. He was elected to the European Parliament on the Lega list headed by Matteo Salvini. Salvini, a minister in the Meloni government, has spoken out against the recent supply to Ukraine of an anti-aircraft defence system. It is therefore particularly important to support the appeal. If you know any members of the European Parliament, please do not hesitate to support this initiative.

Text of the open letter

Dear Members of the European Parliament,

We, the undersigned, appeal to you in the hope that you will continue to support Ukraine in its efforts to end the war. We believe that one of the main ways to do this is to stop the flow of money from Europe to Russia for the purchase of Russian fossil fuels.

At the European elections on June 6-9, 2024, European citizens decided who they wanted to lead the Union beyond 2024 for the next five years. This new beginning offers a chance to remedy the mistakes of the past and deliver on the European Union’s original promise of peace and prosperity.

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the EU has shown courage in the face of a brutal war against European values and an unprecedented violation of established law and international order. Continued vital financial, humanitarian and military support to Ukraine has helped the country resist and defend itself.

However, more than two years after the start of the war, EU member states remain one of the main contributors to the Russian war machine, through fossil fuel trade with Russia (followed by China and India), due to incomplete sanctions packages with loopholes and a lack of enforcement mechanisms. These loopholes earned the Kremlin an estimated €1.13 billion in direct tax revenues.

The EU was the fourth largest buyer of Russian fossil fuels in May, with imports accounting for 13% (€1.9 billion) of the top five buyers. Pipeline gas accounted for the largest share of EU purchases of Russian fossil fuels (45%), followed by LNG (27%) and pipeline crude oil (22%). These figures exceed the aid given to Ukraine.

In June 2024, the EU Council adopted its 14th set of sanctions against Russia. While the intention to impose new restrictions is laudable, the current measures allow Russia sufficient time to adapt, which considerably reduces their overall effectiveness. In particular, the ban on LNG transshipments, due to come into force on March 26, 2025, gives Russia nine months to adapt to the

new restrictions. Given that this sanction has only a minimal direct impact on the EU economy, postponing its implementation seems unnecessarily lenient. These relatively weak sanctions not only undermine the EU's position of energy independence, but also come at a horrible cost to Ukraine, which continues to suffer daily attacks with massive loss of life and immense environmental damage as a result of the ongoing war.

Furthermore, we recognise the effort made to phase out Russian gas via [REPower EU](#) by 2027, but the package extends EU funding of the war against Russia by 4 years. We urge every EU member state to take the sovereign decision to get rid of Russian fossil fuel imports sooner, to stop sending the funds to Russia that end up in Putin's war chest.

To this end, the EU should put an end to the counter-productive practice of financing war, then sending money to remedy the destruction caused by EU payments for fossil fuels. Delaying or postponing the total embargo on Russian fossil fuels will only prolong the Russian war, undermine the EU's climate objectives and lead to further catastrophic and immeasurable loss of life in Ukraine.

We therefore call on you to ensure that taxpayers' money from EU member states is not used to finance the war or fuel the climate crisis. We ask that the first resolution of the newly elected European Parliament calls on EU member states to impose a full and transparent embargo on Russian gas by the end of 2024, as part of the 15th sanctions package.

List of signatories available [here](#)



More reading:

- [Sanctioned Russian oligarchs allowed to invest in UK North Sea oil producer](#)
- [What EU Sanctions on Russian LNG Would Mean for Global Gas](#)

Campaign: Break all ties with the FNPR

The global labour movement must hold Russia accountable for war crimes against Ukrainian workers

By Vasco Pedrina

Source: [Global Labour Column](#)

(September 18, 2024) The Russian Federation's ongoing war crimes against the people of Ukraine have reached a new level of escalation. Transgressions include the deliberate bombing of hospitals, factories, supermarkets, and post offices, and the killing of over eleven thousand civilians. Ukrainian workers are under attack, as the regime-loyal "trade union" FNPR (Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia) has persecuted Ukrainian trade unions in the occupied territories of Donbas and Crimea, while the Russian government has bombed union headquarters.

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) must address Russia's blatant disregard for fundamental workers' rights and human dignity. As the worldwide authority on labour standards, the ILO has both the duty and the capability to confront these breaches of its conventions. It's crucial that these abuses be brought before the ILO, and that the organisation take action to hold Russia accountable for its war crimes.

Ongoing inhumanity

Russia's criminal attacks on Ukraine's health care system should be understood as targeting not only vital infrastructure but also workplaces and workers. In October 2024, Physicians for Human Rights recorded 1442 attacks on health facilities, of which 742 hospitals and clinics were destroyed, killing 210 health workers in the process. That may be an underestimate since, in August, Human Rights Watch reported that Russia had damaged or destroyed 1736 medical facilities. The World Health Organisation repeatedly condemned as a war crime Russia's systematic tactic of destroying healthcare facilities and targeting healthcare workers.

Healthcare workers are far from alone in bearing the weight of Russia's aggression. Most blatant are the cases where Russian occupation forces not only torture, kill, and deport Ukrainian civilians, but have also instituted a system of forced labour in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine, especially in the Atomic Energy Industry. The phenomenon of forced labour in Russian-occupied nuclear power plants is supported by numerous pieces of evidence.

Additionally, the persecution and expropriation of Ukrainian trade unions, co-organised by the FNPR in the temporarily Russian-occupied territories, is a grave attack on Ukrainian workers' fundamental rights. They have banned the activities of Ukrainian free trade unions and savagely persecute anyone who attempts to maintain contact with their union.

What is particularly egregious is that the FNPR willingly serves as the executioner and accomplice of the Putin regime in its efforts to suppress the freedom of association. The FNPR plays a central role in the persecution of Ukrainian workers in the occupied territories by the Russian regime and is actively involved in — and benefits from — the illegal expropriation of Ukrainian trade unions.

The FNPR is an integral part of the repressive, criminal and inhumane machinery of the Putin dictatorship and, by extension, its war crimes. Putin publicly praised the FNPR at its 2024 Congress for implementing the "New Russia" system in the workplaces of occupied Ukraine. The FNPR is the only permitted trade union in the territories, and those who do not join and accept the process of "Russification" are viewed

with suspicion by the Russian occupying forces. This suspicion can lead to abduction or imprisonment in a torture facility, as many UN reports have shown.

The barbaric Russian attack on the Swiss Foundation for De-Mining (FSD) in Kharkiv in July 2024 marks another — alas, surely not the last — severe violation of international law by Russia, and underscores the urgency of this matter. Such blatant disregard for human rights and international norms demands constant and decisive action.

It is imperative that these cases be brought before the ILO, and that the ILO hold Russia accountable for its flagrant violations of ILO conventions designed to protect the most basic workers' rights and human dignity. The ILO system, as the global authority on labour standards, has the responsibility and function to address these violations and take a stand against the Russian Federation's actions.

Expel the FNPR and cease collaboration

It is crucial to address the role of the FNPR in this conflict. The FNPR, acting as a puppet of the Russian government, has supported the persecution of Ukrainian trade unions in occupied territories. Given this complicity, the FNPR does not represent the interests of workers in Russia or anywhere else.

The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) must, therefore, cease any direct or implicit support for the FNPR. Continued recognition or collaboration with such an organisation would only legitimise its actions and undermine the global labour movement's credibility. This explicitly means that the ITUC should prevent the FNPR from securing a seat on the ILO Governing Body in the next elections.

Unfortunately, this year the ITUC enabled (or at least did not try to stop) the election of FNPR representative Alexei Zharkov by leaving a space vacant for him. Despite all this misguided friendliness from the ITUC and the aggressive lobbying by the FNPR and their allies in the Chinese ACFTU, Zharkov was barely elected. This outcome is a stinging rebuke to the FNPR. Had the ITUC opposed Zharkov, he would not have been elected.

Moreover, the role of Russian representatives to the ILO in Putin's war machine should be investigated and those involved or supportive of war crimes should be sanctioned and denied visas. It is incomprehensible that [FNPR president] Mikhail Shmakov, who shamelessly acts as an accomplice to Putin, is not to our knowledge yet on any sanctions list—especially in contrast to representatives of the Russian employers' association who have been sanctioned.

Finally, at the next competent statutory meeting, the ITUC — the global democratic trade union movement — must make a decisive choice and expel the FNPR from its ranks. The fact that this warmongering organisation is only suspended already undermines the credibility of the ITUC.

Close the ILO's Moscow office

In Putin's Russia, freedom of speech and thought has been stifled, and working freely is no longer possible. This extends even to diplomatic staff, including those from the ILO, who are regularly harassed, as is often whispered behind closed doors. Reports of intimidation against non-Russian personnel have also surfaced multiple times.

Workers from many countries no longer feel safe travelling to Moscow, and many, particularly those from Eastern Europe and the Caucasus — regions that have suffered from Russian aggression — are unwilling to work in Moscow. Many trade unions from Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, and Central Asia refuse to be “managed” from Moscow. Given the situations in Georgia, Armenia and Central Asian countries, this stance is entirely understandable.

It is particularly untenable that Belarus, where Putin ally Lukashenko has banned all democratic trade unions and imprisoned over 40 trade unionists, is formally covered by an ILO office based in Moscow.

Therefore, the ILO office should be relocated without any further delay.

Democratic trade unions must oppose Putinism

We demand genuine trade union solidarity with our fellow trade unionists and workers in Ukraine, who are currently facing invasion and the attempted destruction of their nation. We expect every democratic trade union movement, including and especially those in countries belonging to the EU, G7, G20, and BRICS, to stand against the war criminal fascism embodied by Putinism.

There can be no justification for trade unions collaborating with such a regime and its subservient trade unions, particularly within frameworks like the G20 and other groups of which Russia is a member. If the G20, BRICS, and so on do not distance themselves from these actions and members, they risk becoming “clubs” protecting, legitimising, and ultimately enabling dictators and war criminals.

Action points against Putin’s regime

In conclusion, the whole international trade union community must speak clearly and loudly in the face of these atrocities. Bringing this case before the ILO is not only a necessary step in holding Russia accountable but also a critical measure to protect the integrity of international labour standards. The ILO and ITUC must stand united in their commitment to justice, human rights and the protection of workers worldwide.

Therefore, every democratic trade union movement should demand:

- That the ILO, using all legal means available, immediately take every step necessary to pursue, name, and punish all violations of workers’ and trade union rights committed by Russia in Ukraine. The ITUC and international union organisations must take all necessary legal and practical measures to that end at the next ILO gathering.
- That the ITUC and all its regional bodies completely distance themselves from the FNPR as an accomplice of the Putin regime — not only in Europe but also in Asia, Australia, and North, Central, and South America. We demand real trade union solidarity against Putin’s reckless and aggressive dictatorial regime and its proxies in the FNPR. The ITUC must finally expel FNPR from its membership.
- The immediate relocation of the ILO office from Moscow, as its continued operation would contradict the values and mission of the ILO in promoting workers’ rights and justice, given the Russian Federation’s ongoing violations of international law.
- As proud and strong democratic trade unions, the Brazilian CUT and the South African COSATU should consider not giving legitimacy and credibility to the FNPR and the ACFTU by engaging in the BRICS Trade Union Forum.

Note: Vasco Pedrina is a former Co-President of the [Unia trade union](#) and Vice-President of BWI (Building and Wood Workers’ International) and representative of the Swiss Trade Union Confederation on the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) Consultative Committee.

Tour of the Spanish State by the FPU and KVPU



‘We have come here to talk worker to worker’

By **Alfons Bech** (Trade Union Coordinator of the European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine)

(September 29, 2024) For the first time, the top leaders of the two main Ukrainian trade union centres have visited Spain: Grigori Osovyi and Vasyl Andreyev, the president and vice-president of the Federation of Trade Unions of Ukraine (FPU) and Olesia Briazgunova, the international head of the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU). KVPU President Mihaylo Volinets, who is also a member of the Ukrainian Parliament (the Verkhovna Rada), had to return to Kyiv halfway, summoned as a member of the energy committee due to the serious situation after Russia’s latest attacks on key energy centres. This detail shows how complicated this tour was in the midst of the war and how much importance the Ukrainian delegation has attached to this tour (see photos of Barcelona and Madrid public meetings, respectively top and bottom of this page)..

The trade unionists who came have a long track record. Grigori Osovyi comes from the former official trade union, affiliated to the [All-Union Central Council of Trade Unions](#), which after Ukrainian independence became the FPU. He was a member of the Communist Party, but now he is not affiliated to any party. Olesia is a young trade unionist, but with years of militancy in the KVPU. This independent trade union was formed by bringing together trade unionists who took part in the mining and other strikes, especially in the Donbas, as did its president Mihaylo Volynets and vice-president Natalia Levytska. It was established at the end of 1998. Vasyl Andreyev has been a construction worker since the age of 14 and joined the FPU: despite his relative youth, he is its vice-president and international officer. Vasyl’s words at the event on the last day of the tour are eloquent about his expectations: “*We have come here to talk worker to worker.*”



The delegation of the two Ukrainian trade union centres was made possible at the invitation of the [General Union of Workers](#) (UGT). In February this year a delegation of the UGT of Catalonia went to Kyiv to participate in an international conference of trade union solidarity on the second anniversary of the war. The European Network of Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU) had facilitated previous contacts and meetings in Paris and, as head of the ENSU trade union coordination, I had the privilege of accompanying them. With threats of attacks forcing us to hide in the hotel shelter, ours was the only international delegation present at the conference. From there, preparations began for the tour of Spain, and it was the UGT that made this step forward concrete. The first and most important part of the visit were the meetings in Barcelona and Madrid with the heads of the UGT federations, where we were able to share experiences and concerns.

The visits to Barcelona and Madrid were a success. During an exhausting week of meetings, events, interviews and visits, several possible actions to help trade unions and refugees and migrants were opened. In the Catalan Parliament, the delegation met with the speaker, Josep Rull, from [Together for Catalonia](#) (Junts), who was interested and hopes to be able to arrange an upcoming visit by the trade unions to hear them in a parliamentary session or committee. The delegation also had an interview with the parliamentary fractions of the [Party of Socialists of Catalonia](#) (PSC), [Republican Left of Catalonia](#) (ERC) and Junts, in which they promised to help them in various aspects. The Ukrainian delegation emphasised the role of trade unions in the war and reconstruction and promised to establish contact with the Ukrainian parliament (the Verkhovna Rada).

In Madrid, the Ukrainian trade unionists also met with the Congress fractions of the [Spanish Socialist Workers' Party](#) (PSOE), [Sumar](#) and ERC. The parliamentary groups were interested in helping them specifically on training schemes for trade unionists and on European labour and rights regulations. These official political meetings ranged from Spanish parliamentary officials from the committees on foreign affairs, labour, social economy, migration and the Toledo Pact (pension system) to officials from the EU, the Catalan government and Barcelona City Council.

In addition to these political representatives, the Ukrainian delegation met (in Catalonia) with civil society associations such as [Ómnium Cultural](#), the [Escarré International Centre for Ethnic and National Minorities](#), the [Barcelona Centre for International Affairs](#) and the [International Catalan Institute for Peace](#), and with different Ukrainian associations in Barcelona and Madrid, including the [Ukrainian Embassy of the Arts](#) in Barcelona.

Ukrainian trade unionists also took part in the events of the National Day (*Diada*) de Catalunya (11 September). In front of the statue of Rafel de Casanova (the highest military and political authority in Catalonia during the Bourbon siege of Barcelona in 1714) and together with the trade unions UGT and [Workers Commissions](#) (CCOO), the Ukrainians presented their own offering, with blue and yellow flowers symbolising the colours of their flag (pictured).



Now for a very brief review of some of the political issues that arose during these meetings and that I think may be of interest.

Impact of the war on the working class

The first thing the trade unionists told us is that the war is seriously affecting the lives of all working people. It started in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea and parts of Donbas, but with its extension in 2022 it has become a horrible daily situation everywhere in Ukraine.

Says Grigori Osovyi: *“Because of the war 2.7 million direct jobs have been lost in construction, food, industry. Our membership is also on the frontline. Another part is in exile. All this has led to a very significant drop in membership and payment of dues. In total nine million jobs have disappeared.*

“To understand the extent of the war, in Kiev alone there have been 1500 rocket attacks. These are attacks day and night, deliberately so that the population cannot rest. Many people, children, women, men, need psychological care”

Olesia Briazgunova adds: *“Children and young people who need to take refuge will grow up in an atmosphere of fear. They are bombing energy centres. What will happen to children and women this winter?”*

The situation on the frontline

According to Vasyl Andreyev: *“Twenty per cent of our members are now in the military. Our country is at war because they have attacked us, and our members are missing from work because they are fighting to defend the country.”*

Grigori adds: *“The system of world order is very weak. There is no world body that touches a key and ceates peace, that’s the reality. Spain helps militarily, along with the United States, Europe, but they haven’t sent us rockets or enough ammunition. Russia has a million rounds of ammunition. The Western countries give us 20% of what Russia uses against us. There are no rockets, so we need, at the very least, drones.”*



KVPU International officer Olesia Briazgunova with UGT general secretary Camil Ros

Olesia says: *“Thank you very much for the military aid that Spain gives. It helps us to defend ourselves. The people of Ukraine are not giving up, they will always fight for their freedom. Today a comrade of ours died. We are paying a very high price for our sovereignty and for the defence of Europe.”*

On military prospects

Olesia adds that *“the Russian army has a plan to shut down everything indispensable for the life of people and the economy of Ukraine: energy, water, communications. There is danger to work in mines, nuclear power plants that are attacked, power distribution centres:*

electric power is the lifeblood of the country. Without power in mining areas and mines it is very dangerous to work: 51 of our people are stuck underground, but they continue to work despite the risk of more air strikes.”

Grigori replies to an MP in Madrid: *“26% of Ukraine’s territory is occupied by Russia. There are no conditions for negotiations.”* He points to two alternatives: *“Ukraine can win. Economic relations with Russia must be terminated and the aggressor will have to stop. Russia would have no money in a month if all economic relations were stopped.”*

The other alternative: *‘If we lose territory, Russia will enter Kiev. Then into Poland. And this could be World War III.’*

Putinist propaganda among Russian workers and in Spain itself

During the visits and contacts with parliamentary groups the delegation has heard some astonishing questions and opinions about peace. Although everyone’s countenance is rather serious, they smile from time to time. But Olesia’s clear eyes widened at such statements as “the most urgent thing is peace because both sides are burying their dead”—with hardly any distinction between attacker and attacked.

Grigori says that he has been able to detect a lot of pro-Putinist propaganda In Barcelona: *“They say that Russia made a ‘preventive war’ because Ukraine wanted to attack it. Another: that Ukraine is a Nazi state. We have national pride, we have a long history, but we have never been Nazis. Another lie: that the South and the Donbas are Russian territories. We are worried that 70% of Russians believe this lie. Between 70% and 80% of Russians think that Ukraine does not have to exist, that these lands are Russian. It is difficult to get the truth into the brains of these people.”*

In Madrid also Grigori says: *‘A Russian trade union [the Federation of Independent Trade Unions of Russia (FNPR)] fully supports their country’s aggression. In the occupied regions we trade union activists who have had to leave because of repression. That union acts to replace our activists and puts in their own. The Ukrainian language is also being substituted. A prize-winning documentary about Russian soldiers shows quite naturally that they want to win the war and do whatever it takes to do so.*

He repeats: *“There are no conditions for negotiating peace.”*

Olesia adds: *“More than 2000 trade unionists and public service workers in the occupied territories have been kidnapped.”*

One of the things the FPU and KVPU have been fighting hard for is to try to expel the FNPR from the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The union invited Putin to speak at its Congress and showed its full support for the “special military operation” against Ukraine. At the most recent ILO conference the Ukrainian trade unions came close to achieving the FNPR’s non-election as a member of the governing board, but the lack of strong support from the leadership of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) prevented it. The FNPR got in by just one vote: never before had the FNPR had such low international support! At the same time, Vasyl Andreyev was appointed to one of the 19 deputy seats without any opposition. A great achievement.

Social dialogue between government and trade unions

One of the key objectives of the visit was for Ukrainian trade unions to explain their relationship with the Ukrainian government and their views on the government’s economic and labour policies. If they were very clear about the need to defend themselves against the aggressor and to support the army and the government in the military field, they were equally clear about their dissatisfaction with the neo-liberalism and attacks on workers by the government: the Ukrainian government is taking advantage of the war situation to weaken the trade unions and to attack the living conditions of the working class.

Grigori: *“On the second day after the Russian occupation the Rada adopted a martial law. We in the trade unions tried to make it milder. It banned workers’ rights such as demonstrations or strikes. All these limitations must be repealed. Last year we saw that one third of adopted laws are negative for working people.”*

“We have some MPs who defend our position. The question is to make our government listen to us in parliament. Politicians listen when elections are coming, but now in our country there are no elections. concentration of power, and workers’ rights must be respected.”

Vasil: *“30,000 laws have been changed in Ukraine. Our union has been involved in the process of adapting laws since 2015. But the most drastic changes of the government against workers have been in the labour code and safety standards. We need to train experts, we need funds to train professionals. Two-week courses to train expert workers in sectors like construction, metal, maritime sector. Trade unions cannot do this alone. The experience of Spain, as part of Europe, can be very useful for us.”*

Olesia: *“We need help to understand and deal with regulations in Spain that can be useful for Ukraine. EU integration is very important for the young generation of Ukrainians, who expect an improvement in their lives.”*



The Ukrainian delegation met with deputies from the PSOE, ERC and Sumar in the Spanish Congress

The members of the Spanish Congress, especially members or spokespersons of different key committees for dialogue between trade unions, government and parties, were particularly interested in this point. The training of Ukrainian trade unionists in European laws and examples of their implementation in Spain could possibly be one of the concrete and useful aspects of this visit. PSOE deputy Elisa Garrido asked a question at the end: “Is there contact and dialogue between trade unions and the Ukrainian government?” Grigori Osovyi’s answer was clear and concise: *“Contact yes, dialogue none.”*

Rebuilding Ukraine

In a situation with more than five million displaced people, tens of thousands of wounded and crippled people, people who will be affected for life, talking about rebuilding the country after the war means, first of all, creating conditions for workers to return, to have a house, a decent salary and acceptable living conditions and services. In other words, not only economic and infrastructural reconstruction, but also social reconstruction.

Without that, what we can have is a big economic operation with juicy profits where large multinational companies divide up the areas and jobs, cashing in on Ukraine’s debt or European funds, hiring migrant workers from all over the world without agreements or rules, with low wages and lack of security. That

kind of reconstruction would mean a complete change for the worse in Ukraine. It must not happen. But if we don't want this scenario, we have to help the trade unions play a key role in it.

Vasyl, responsible for construction at FPU, says that *"we foresee a lack of manpower compared to the enormous destruction ... We have to create conditions so that people who had to leave Ukraine can come back."* Olesia also stresses the role of women *"who are replacing men at the front in many professions, including metal and mining. Their participation in the future must be regulated with equal rights."*

Grigori says that *"the one who has to pay for reconstruction is the one who caused the war and its disasters: Russia."* He calls for help to enable trade unions to participate in the process of planning this reconstruction. According to him, the Ukrainian government and big corporations are marginalising trade unions from all plans and discussions. He denounces that at the last reconstruction conference in Berlin organised between the German and Ukrainian governments *"out of two thousand participants between governments and employers, they only left room for two trade unionists."*

Continuing this step forward and concretising commitments

No doubt there are still many aspects and details that could be explained about this visit. I think I have reflected the most important. The associations, organisations, parties and people who attended some meetings, conferences or events were able to hear, touch and feel what is happening in Ukraine and the consequences for the Ukrainian working class of this war of aggression. It was not a visit from a government, nor a media narrative nor a story on the social networks: it was trade unionists of flesh and blood. A privilege.

Now it is up to us to disseminate, sort out and implement what we have heard and decide what role we want to have in helping Ukrainian trade unions. They have told us what they need: generators, houses, psychological support, trade union training, helping and organising refugees, union membership, countering misinformation and political support for the role of trade unions in reconstruction....

Let everyone help where they can.

Appendix: Russian Terror Targets Workers, Energy, and Freedom: Ukraine under massive attack again

Source: [*Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, from KVPU*](#)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) once again appeals to you because today, August 26, Ukraine has once again become the target of a massive attack by Russia. Russian forces used at least 127 missiles and 109 drones to strike energy, transport, and infrastructure facilities across 15 regions of Ukraine.

The Russian troops launched a terrorist attack on Ukrainian cities and towns using drones during the night. In the morning, the assault was intensified with various types of missiles, including cruise missiles and [Daggers](#). The aggressor's targets included workers, members of the KVPU, and residents.

In particular, as a result of the Russian attack on the Kyiv region, three people were injured, including a five-month-old child. In Sumy Oblast, the enemy struck a railway infrastructure site, damaging the network and buildings, and injuring a train driver's assistant. In the Lviv region, the Russian forces targeted several energy facilities, leading to power outages in the region. In the Zaporizhzhia region, the Russian forces attacked energy infrastructure, resulting in the death of a man in his own home after a rocket struck near a residential area. Another person lost their life due to a direct hit by an unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) on a high-rise building in the city of Lutsk.



Currently, the State Emergency Service of Ukraine has informed, at least seven people are dead and 47 injured (including four children born in 2014, 2017 and 2024) as a result of the Russian attacks.

On the evening of August 26, a missile strike on a hotel in Kryvyi Rih, Dnipropetrovsk Region, resulted in at least two fatalities and five injuries. According to Governor Serhii Lysak, several residential buildings, shops and vehicles were damaged. As of the morning of August 27, search operations are ongoing, with two people possibly trapped under the rubble.

On August 26, Russian terrorists once again attacked the Ukrainian energy infrastructure, which led to emergency power outages throughout the country.

We draw your attention to the fact that the Russian troops tried to destroy the Kyiv Hydroelectric Power Plant with various types of missiles and UAVs. As a result of shelling, there are hits and damage. It should be remembered that on June 6, 2023, [the Russian troops destroyed the dam of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, a war crime and an act of ecocide.](#)

In addition, we inform you that due to the increased offensive by Russian troops, [the lives and health of the residents of the mining towns of the Donetsk region are under even greater threat.](#) Russian troops are attacking Ukrainian mines, coal mining enterprises, and energy infrastructure. In addition, we emphasise that Ukrainian workers face constant danger, regardless of whether they are on their way to work or from work, at home or even in a supermarket.

For example, on August 6, 2024, during a missile attack on the Kapitalna mine of the State-Owned Enterprise (SOE) Myrnogradvugilya, where the primary trade union organisation of the NPGU operates, several workers were injured to varying degrees, including a repairman, a duty electrician, an equipment repairman, an underground installation machinist and a worker. On August 10, 2024, the operator of the central heat shield of the boiler-turbine shop was killed at [Kramatorskteploenergo LLC](#) as a result of a missile attack by Russian troops.

The Ukrainian energy system is critically short of domestic electricity production due to Russian shelling, and imports, already at their maximum, are insufficient to solve this problem.

Today's unprecedented attack is yet another proof that Russia will stop at nothing in its attempts to destroy Ukraine's energy sector and economy, and to break the resolve of the Ukrainian people, who are defending their freedom and democracy.

Today, Ukrainian workers, members of trade unions, continue to work despite the danger and are also fighting the Russian occupiers on the front lines.

We call on the international trade union community to continue providing comprehensive support to Ukrainians who are resisting the criminal Russian regime and fighting for peace and democracy. Help Ukraine resist, win, and liberate all occupied territories where terror reigns and human rights are trampled.

The appeal of the KVPU remains unchanged:

- Continue to provide economic, and humanitarian aid to Ukraine;
- Support the provision of military aid to Ukraine to protect the population, energy infrastructure, workplaces, and the country;
- Strengthen sanctions against the terrorist regime of Russia and those who support and finance it, as this can significantly limit the financial resources and export of technologies necessary for the continuation of the bloody war;
- Ensure the possibility of using frozen Russian assets and direct them to help Ukraine;
- Isolate and remove from positions in international organisations Russian political, public, and trade union figures, as representatives of a country that carries out terrorist activities against sovereign, independent Ukraine and its citizens.

Worker struggles in Ukraine—coal miners

Lviv: the 6000 miners have finally received their wages for March!



Source: *KVPU*

(September 9, 2024) Numerous persistent appeals, meetings and even a protest action (pictured) organised by the unions working at the Lviv State Coal Enterprise (*Lvivvugily*), in particular with the active participation of the Regional Union of the Independent Miners' Trade Union of Ukraine (NPGU) in Chervonograd and the primary branches of the union, have produced the first results.

On Thursday, September 5, the company received the first instalment of income from coal sales made before April, and employees finally received their unpaid wages for March and part of their wages for April.

"I hope that these important changes will be the first of many", said the President of the NPGU, Mykhailo Volynets. Because there are many problems in this sector today. More than UAH two billion (=€43.331 million) in wage debts owed to miners by state-owned coalmining companies. And an additional UAH 300 (=€6.5 million) to uranium miners at the [VostGOK state enterprise](#)."

Ukraine: Solidarity with the miners of Chervonograd (Lviv)

Source: [International Labour Network of Solidarity and Struggles](#)

(August 8, 2024) Since February 2024, the 6000 miners of Chervonograd have not been paid. On June 8, 2024, the Chervonograd regional union of the Independent Miners' Union of Ukraine (NPGU) declared:

"The unpaid wages not only aggravate the financial difficulties of the mining families, but also negatively affect the moral and psychological state of the employees and increase social tensions in the production teams and in the region, and also deprive the possibility of helping more than 800 company employees who are in the Ukrainian armed forces and to whom the miners provide everything necessary (ammunition, drones, cars, etc)

"In addition to their work at the mine, the miners are forced to find other employment to ensure their subsistence and that of their families."

At the beginning of August, miners from the Lviv state enterprise demonstrated in Kyiv in front of the Ministry of Energy, demanding payment of their six months' wages, but with no success.

Since February 24, 2022, the International Labour Network for Solidarity and Struggle, whose members include some one hundred trade union organisations from Africa, Europe and Latin America, has been

actively supporting the Ukrainian people in their resistance to large-scale imperialist aggression by the Russian Federation and in particular the trade union organisations involved in this resistance.

Today, our network lends its support to the miners of Chervonograd and their trade union organisations and demands that the government immediately take all necessary measures to ensure that all wages are paid to mine workers, because, in addition to the dramatic social consequences for thousands of workers and their families, this situation weakens Ukraine's capacity to resist Russian imperialism.

Miners expect payment of their debts, not promises

Source: KVPU press release

(August 5, 2024) On Monday, August 5, as promised, a Cabinet meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk took place. The Independent Miners' Union of Ukraine (NPGU) was represented by Nataliya Levytska, First Deputy Secretary of the NPGU, and Myroslava Kaftan, President of the NPGU regional association in Chervonograd.

The days before, on August 1 and 2, miners from the Lviv state enterprise demonstrated in Kyiv in front of the Ukrainian Ministry of Energy (pictured), demanding payment of wages owed for six months and guaranteed sales of mined coal.

At Monday's meeting, NPGU representatives reiterated their demands for payment of wage arrears and resolution of the coal sales issue, as well as resolution of the artificially created problem of the [unified social contribution](#) and unpaid sick leave.

Iryna Vereshchuk promised to immediately pass on all the problematic issues raised by the state coal



mining companies to Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmygal, in order to resolve the situation as quickly as possible.

According to the results of the meeting on August 5, they also promised, as they were obliged, to draw up a protocol, publish relevant instructions and identify those responsible for implementing them. We can only hope that they will finally deliver concrete results, in contrast to the procedural undertakings and projections of the two previous meetings.

The protest visit by miners from the Lviv region brought a result, albeit very small: after a meeting of the protesters at the Ministry of Energy with Deputy Minister of Energy [Oleksandr Heilo](#), with the participation of representatives of the state enterprise (SE)

Ukrvugillia, [Centernergo PJSC](#), [Trypilska TPP](#) and the heads of relevant departments of the Ministry, Centernergo PJSC allocated UAH 20 million (= €433,300) to the state enterprise Lvivvugilya, which was paid to the employees. They were grateful for this, but these funds, unfortunately, do not solve their

problems. Because, according to the Ministry of Energy, as of August 5, 2024, wage arrears to employees of the state enterprise Lvivvugilya already amounted to more than UAH 600 million (= €13 million). At the same time, as of April 1, 2024, the company had shipped via state enterprise Ukrvugilya to PJSC Centernergo output to the value of UAH 426 million (= €9.3 million), for which it has not yet received payment.

The wage arrears situation at other state-owned coal mining companies is no better, as shown by operational data from the Ministry of Energy. According to it, as of August 5, 2024, wage arrears for mines currently in operation amounted to UAH 1.375 million (= €29.790 million). And if we add to this UAH 550 million (= €11,916 billion), earned even before the full-scale war and still unpaid to miners in companies currently operating in the temporarily occupied territory but already “forgotten” by the department concerned, the wage debt is close to UAH 2 billion (= €43.331 million).

“The wage debt continues to grow, and some of those in charge want to put off solving the problem until the future, without worrying about whether people will live until that future or not”, said the President of the Independent Miners’ Union of Ukraine.

Mykhailo Volynets is rightly outraged. “The Ministry of the Economy and the Ministry of Finance are also adopting a frankly negative stance. They cynically ignore the mining problems and propose to solve them in the abstract future. However, there is a constructive position from Prime Minister Denys Shmygal and Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk. So, very slowly, but we are making progress. The issue of the sale of coal products and the search for sources of funding for the purchase of coal by state-owned enterprises to ensure a stable passage through the autumn-winter period of 2024-2025 remains on the table. There is a lot of work to be done. For my part, I will continue to interact with the Prime Minister and other government officials and parliamentarians interested in solving the industry’s problems. But the workers’ collectives, the people and the miners must understand that without their participation and active stance, the problems will not be solved.”

Lviv miners are in Kyiv

Source: KVPU

(August 1, 2024) This morning of August 1, miners from the Lviv region gathered near the Ministry of Energy building in Kyiv (pictured). Their main demand is the payment of wage arrears and a guarantee that the current wage will be paid on time.



The miners came wearing hard hats and carrying placards saying “Give us back our wages”, “Our families want to eat too”, etc. Volodymyr Zolotchivskyi, from the miners’ union, explained that there have been wage arrears for underground and surface workers since February 2024.

“Our wages are divided between underground and surface workers. The underground workers are partially paid thanks to

financial support from the State, i.e. 30% to 40% of the salary per month is paid. The surface workers are not paid at all”, said the president of the coal miners’ union.

The miners were invited to the ministry building for a meeting with the Ukrainian deputy energy minister, Oleksandr Heilo.

“Unfortunately, we have not received any details about the repayment of the debt owed to the employees of the Lviv State Coal Enterprise. As a result, today desperate people are forced to take part in a demonstration near the Ministry of Energy,” explains Andriy Godyk, First Deputy Director of the Lviv municipality.

Other worker struggles in Ukraine

Maternity ward being destroyed in the Khmelnytskyi region

Source: *Be like Nina*

(September 24, 2024) In the town of [Derazhnya](#), in the Khmelnytskyi region, the director of a local hospital has decided to close the maternity ward in violation of the law. Without consulting the staff, he has taken a decision that could result in 19 medical workers (women) losing their jobs and deprive the people of Derazhnya and neighbouring districts of adequate medical care.

Last year, the community had already defended this service, and this time the problem arose

because of the absence of a neonatologist—the director is accused of not having wanted to find a replacement for the doctor who left on maternity leave. For this reason, the service will not receive funding.

“Our priority is the development of the hospital. As for the director, either he allows us to work in peace, or he cannot be the director of our institution, because there are no development objectives or at least stability on his part”, stress the members of *Be like Nina*.

The care staff (pictured) say that closure due to a temporary problem is a crime against the community! The staff are asking for public support and demanding an internal investigation into the director’s actions.



The KVPU is categorically against the introduction of lockouts

Source: *KVPU*

(September 20, 2024) A national-level meeting of the KVPU has been held by videoconference.

The meeting discussed the position of trade union organisations on the draft Ukrainian law “On Collective Labour Disputes” (Regulation No. 12034) and related bills.

A group of people’s deputies led by Galina Tretiakova [Head of the Parliamentary Committee on Social Policy and Veterans’ Rights] proposed the draft laws on collective labour disputes in the Verkhovna Rada (parliament) on September 16,

A warning strike can only take place once and for only two hours. In view of all these proposals and others that are no less anti-popular, the KVPU categorically opposes their adoption.

As KVPU representatives pointed out, the most unacceptable aspect of the bill is that it legalises the employer’s right to lock out workers. The draft also proposes to limit the number of members of the “body authorised” by the employees to lead the strike, and those who do so, in the event that the court declares the strike illegal, will be obliged to compensate the employer for the damage caused by such a strike, in an amount specified by the court.

Repairing war damage in Odessa: A worker's widow dispossessed

by Vitaliy Dudin

(September 17, 2024)

The Odessa Administrative Court has handed down the first decision applying the law on financial assistance for damage caused to the life and health of critical infrastructure workers because of Russian military aggression. The case is controversial: after recognising the violation by the pension fund, the court did not recognise the plaintiff's right to compensation.

The deceased worked as a security guard for a contractor (Business Security Service LLC) and his workplace was located at the port of Pivdennyi, where he was killed by a missile.

The pension fund authority refused to pay the widow UAH one million (= €21,741) based on a letter from the contractor stating that he was not part of the critical infrastructure. This body did not even ask the national communications service to establish whether the port was on the critical infrastructure register!

The court therefore declared the company's decision unlawful but ordered the application to be reconsidered.

Important: according to the court, the benefits granted to critical infrastructure workers also apply to employees of subcontractors who were not linked to it by an employment relationship.

Nurses in Ukraine on the brink of collapse

Be like Nina is sounding the alarm over the critical workload and mass exodus of staff

Source: *Be like Nina*



(September 9, 2024)

Oksana Slobodiana and Oleksiy Chupryna, activists with Be like Nina, have declared that the situation of Ukrainian nurses is critical due to the high workload and lack of staff. They said this at a meeting with the Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada's National Health Committee, Mykhailo Radutskyi (pictured). The most pressing problem is the workload of middle and lower-ranking staff and the loss of qualified

personnel in Ukrainian medicine: "nurses are simply being made redundant while suffering from an excessive workload and with no prospects for the future", the movement stressed.

According to them, Mykhailo Radutskyi was eager to discuss the topic of medical autonomy, for which he is lobbying for a bill. "But the situation of healthcare workers is very complicated. The government

knows and understands the problems, but it has no plans to solve them (...) We did not see any point in working and improving working conditions and building a perspective for the future. We constantly hear the phrase that no one will protect doctors, only patients. I do not understand this at all, because doctors, their families and the government will sooner or later become patients. And the quality of services provided to patients directly depends on the provision of hospitals, equipment and, most importantly, sufficient staff,” said Oksana Slobodiana.

This disregard for the interests of care workers comes at a time when the number of care workers has fallen by more than 40,000 since last year. Like millions of other Ukrainians, they have been forced to move abroad as a result of Russian aggression. If they integrate successfully in the host country, they are unlikely to return to Ukraine: nurses’ salaries in the poorest EU countries are three times higher than in Ukraine, and in the richest countries they are 20 to 25 times higher. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz recently called on local authorities to simplify bureaucratic procedures for employing Ukrainians, with a particular focus on healthcare professionals.

Even in Turkey, where the national average salary is €100 lower than in Ukraine, nurses are relatively well paid. In general, nurses in most EU countries are paid above the national average. In Ukraine, however, their salaries are well below average. This is despite the high demand for medical staff in times of war. Moreover, additional payments for work in front-line areas are irregular and selective.

One of Ukraine’s possible strategies for dealing with labour shortages is to attract workers from other countries. However, wages in the countries from which migrant workers most often come are either comparable to those in Ukraine (Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Philippines) or higher than in Ukraine (India, Vietnam, Thailand, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan). So, while richer countries are actively recruiting foreign nurses, it is impossible for Ukraine to do so while maintaining the current level of salaries and working conditions.

On the contrary, Be like Nina proposes a list of solutions that would enable Ukraine to remedy the shortage of carers. These include decent wages and working conditions, clear workload standards and sanctions for managers who humiliate and neglect the interests of carers.

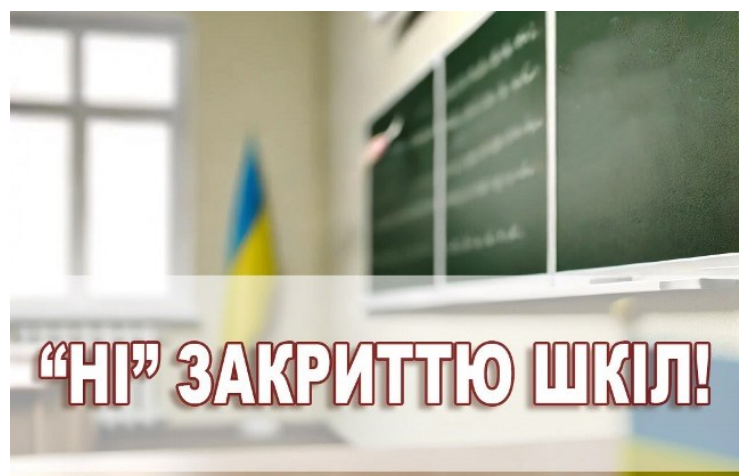
Educators against school closures and redundancies

Source: FPU

(August 23, 2024) The Trade Union of Workers in Education and Science of Ukraine (an FPU affiliate) has issued an appeal to the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the Joint Representative Body of Trade Union Associations, and the Committee on Education, concerning Order No. 1112 of the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine.

The provisions of Order No. 1112, which were not submitted to the trade unions for approval, restrict the rights of participants in the educational process to choose educational institutions and forms of education and access to Ukrainian education for children from temporarily occupied territories, while simultaneously threatening to dismiss a significant number of teachers and reduce the network of general secondary schools.

Like the Order of the Ministry of Education and Science of June 13, 2024 (No. 850), the updated Order has also provoked a negative reaction from the education community and civil society.



‘NO’ to college closures!

The union stressed the need for these government agencies to take appropriate measures and actions to bring the provisions of Ministry of Higher Education Order No. 1112 into line with current legislation and prevent violations of the rights of Ukrainian citizens to complete general secondary education during martial law.

WORK SAFELY! Regulation of labour protection in Ukraine

Source: Social Movement

(August 30, 2024) It is not profit margins, but the preservation of the ability to work of those involved in production that characterises a truly developed economy. However, as we can see, Ukraine is still far from establishing the right to safe working conditions: injuries have become an integral part of working life due to employers' greed and government inaction, and since the beginning of the invasion Russian bombs have also contributed to this. Under these circumstances, neglecting employee safety rules can have an excessive cost to society.

It is worth noting that the occupational health and safety guarantees enshrined in the Constitution and laws of Ukraine can minimise risks for workers and impose broad obligations on employers. They can become a reliable tool in the hands of employees and trade unions.

Vitaliy Dudin, PhD in labour law and activist of the Social Movement, will give a lecture on the regulation of labour protection under Ukrainian law.

The lecture will focus on practical issues:

What rules will help employees protect their life and health?

What are employers responsible for and what cannot be demanded of them?

What should victims do in the event of an industrial accident?

Is the government's draft law on safety and health at work in line with European Union experience?

When: 11 September 2024 at 19:00 (Wednesday)

The event is organised by the Social Movement NGO in cooperation with the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy (DIPD) as part of the course on LABOUR DEFENCE, which aims to increase the capacity of employees to protect their labour rights.

Russia: Authorities prosecute five foreign journalists covering the war in the Kursk region

Source: International Federation of Journalists

(August 22, 2024) Russia's Federal Security Services (FSB) have opened criminal cases against British reporter Nick Paton Walsh; Ukrainian correspondents Olesya Nikolaevna Borovik and Diana Vladimirovna Butsko; and Italian journalists Stefania Battistini and cameraman Simone Traini, for illegally crossing the Russian-Ukrainian border in Sudzha, the Kursk region in western Russia. If found guilty, the journalists could face up to five years in prison. The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) rejects the charges brought against the journalists by the Russian authorities, who seem determined not only to silence local journalists that dare to speak up against Russia's actions in Ukraine, but also to hamper and censor the work of international journalists covering the war.

On August 22, Russia's security services [opened](#) a criminal investigation against British reporter and CNN's International Security Editor, Nick Paton Walsh, following a [legal assessment](#) of [visual materials](#) that allegedly prove the presence of the British reporter in Sudzha.

However, Paton Walsh is not the only foreign journalist prosecuted by Russian authorities for covering the cross-border Ukrainian offensive in Russian territory. Ukrainian correspondents Olesya Borovik, who was working for My-Ukraina television, and Diana Butsko, who was reporting for the local Hromadske news site, are also [being prosecuted](#) based on the same charges.

Five days earlier, on August 17, the Russian News Agency

TASS [reported](#) that the FSB state security service had initiated a criminal case in relation to charges of illegally crossing the border against Italian reporters Stefania Battistini and Simone Traini, who took video footage in Sudzha, the Russian region of Kursk. The Italian media crew, who were working for the public broadcaster RAI under Ukrainian military escort, were the first to report the Ukrainian offensive in the Kursk region that started on August 6.

If found guilty, the reporters [could face up](#) to five years in prison, according to [Russia's Criminal Code](#). The FSB announced that prosecuted journalists will shortly be placed on an international wanted list.

The Italian public broadcaster RAI aired a TV report on August 14 showing their correspondents driving in the region accompanied by Ukrainian military. After the broadcast, [threats of prosecution](#) against the two Italian journalists flooded Russian media and prompted their media employer RAI to make the journalists "[return](#) temporarily to Italy, solely to ensure personal safety and security". Battistini and Traini arrived safely in Milan, Italy, on August 18.

Following their return, the General Secretary of the IFJ affiliate, the Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI), Alessandra Costante, [said](#): "We wonder what the government is waiting for to show discomfort and amazement towards Putin's Russia [...] What could have an impact on this affair is to summon the Russian ambassador to formally ask for an account of the threats to the two journalists and to all Italian media."

Russia's Foreign Ministry said that it [had summoned](#) Italy's ambassador in Moscow in relation to the border crossing.

IFJ General Secretary Anthony Bellanger said: "We utterly reject the charges brought by Russian authorities against foreign journalists for simply doing their job. Bringing legal action against and prosecuting foreign journalists to intimidate and silence them shows Russia's desperation to control the war's narrative beyond its borders. We stand in full solidarity with prosecuted journalists and urge the Russian government to halt its tactics involving journalists for political ends."

For more information, contact IFJ on +32 2 235 22 16



Screenshot of CNN video. Credit: CNN

Community struggles in Ukraine

Zaporizhzhia suffocates: 'We must defend the right to breathe'

Source: Patrick Le Tréhondat

(September 19, 2024) In Zaporizhzhia, activists are sounding the alarm about the current Program for the Progressive Reduction of Harmful Emissions. They say it should be amended to include measures to minimise the presence of phenol and formaldehyde in the air. The authorities assure us that these proposals have been sent to the [Marzieiev Institute](#) and will also be taken into account when they are examined by the working group.

But according to activist Valéria Morozova (pictured), the program, which was approved by a majority vote at the public hearings, may not be taken into account:

“The head of the Zaporizhzhia city council’s environmental safety department, Hleb Zolotaryov, assured us that the emissions reduction programme would be adopted in 2-3 weeks’ time at the executive committee meeting on September 12, 2024! And this despite the fact that the public has been demanding its immediate revision.”

In addition, public activists fear that the low percentage of NGO representatives in the working group set up to deal with these issues means that they will not be able to influence the decision to adopt the programme, explains Valeria Morozova:

‘We must defend the right to breathe now! Air quality for the next seven years will depend on the quality of the final version of the program!’

This is why the VUS association is calling on citizens to join the environmental defence initiative, which will take place on September 28.



Against the dismissal of the postwoman

Source: Suspilne

(September 4, 2024) In the village of Velyka Vyska in the Kirovohrad region, the postwoman’s job has been abolished. For this reason, the post office manager, Valentina Shevchenko, wishes to resign. According to the head of the post office, her workload but not her salary will increase after the postwoman disappears. She said that she had received an order from the Director General of [Ukrposhta](#) to dismiss the postwoman in August.

Valentina Maslyanikova had been working as a postwoman for 23 years. She serves 250 people every day. Her salary is five thousand hryvnias [€109]. There are two thousand inhabitants in the village, 500 of whom are over 60. These people desperately need mail. Forty local residents opposed to the reduction in



the number of postal service workers gathered near the only branch of Ukrposhta in Velika Vyska (pictured). According to Olena Hrachova, they fear that the post office will be closed.

People are collecting signatures against the dismissal of the postwoman. “Every year, the number of public services decreases,” said

one resident. The nearest post office to Velika Vyska is 35 kilometres away. According to Iryna Krochak, if the postwoman is sacked and the post office is closed, local residents will block the motorway near the village.

A Ukrainian tenants’ union is born

Source: French committee of ENSU

(August 25, 2024) It’s time to unite and defend our rights together! Only by supporting each other can we establish fair relations between tenants and landlords.

Join the Union of Housing Tenants (logo to the right)! We are an organisation of tenants who have decided to unite to defend their interests collectively. We are founded on the principles of mass participation and self-organisation, solidarity and democracy, mutual aid and intolerance towards all forms of discrimination. We also believe that the public good should prevail over profit and that housing is an inalienable and fundamental right of every human being.

Our aims:

- To defend the rights of tenants in Ukraine through self-organisation and mutual support;
- To fight for the creation of conditions conducive to equal and fair relations between landlords and tenants;
- To promote the adoption of fair public policies in the field of rental housing.

If you are a tenant and would like to join our union, please send us a private message or an email. Likewise, if you have experienced illegal evictions, excessive prices, abuse, discrimination by landlords or other violations of your rights, send us your stories and we will publish them (anonymously) on our channel.

Don’t forget that the right to housing is a constitutional right for every Ukrainian citizen!



Privatisation in wartime: another prostheses company to go

Source: French committee of ENSU

(September 1, 2024) After Dnipro (see Number 11 of our newsletter, page 28), a new privatisation of a prosthesis company. The buyer must undertake not to make any redundancies for six months!

The Poltava prosthesis factory has been put up for sale. The privatisation auction will take place on September 10. Potential investors must submit all the documents required to take part in the tender.

“Currently, all prosthetic and orthopaedic companies have been transferred to the State Property Fund in 2022. Out of 17 companies in operation, 15 are not profitable”, said Iryna Smirnova, head of the regional branch of the State Property Fund of Ukraine.

We wonder what the profitability of a state prosthesis company means in a country at war?

“During this six-month period, we made a profit of UAH 17 million. Usually, as they say, in good times, we produced 50, 48, 46 million products a year. Despite the fact that we recently even opened a rehabilitation department, customers have halved”, said Serhiy Tsegelnyk, director of the Poltava prosthesis factory.

The starting auction price is UAH 18 million. Under the terms of the auction, the buyer must maintain the main production activity for the next 10 years. In addition, the future owner must not lay off any employees for six months, explained Iryna Smirnova.

“For the moment, the company has no debts in wages and taxes. There are only” debts to be paid, amounting to UAH 5.3 million (= €114,000) which the company currently has”, said Iryna Smirnova.

Social Movement stands for a socially fair mobilisation

Source: Sotsialnyi Rukh (Social Movement)

(August 26, 2024) On August 24, activists from Lviv Social Movement supported a rally of women and children demanding clear conditions for military service (pictured). Students and other active citizens also joined the demonstration.

After two years of large-scale invasion, the volunteers who went to defend Ukraine in the early days of the war are still serving and do not know when they will be able to return. Prolonged service at the front without clearly defined conditions of service puts psychological pressure on servicemen and their families, undermining the army’s morale and combat readiness. The absence of laws on conditions of service also demotivates the civilian population and reduces the effectiveness of mobilisation, increasing the risk of corruption and desertion.

The Social Movement supports the just demands of the movement’s activists for “clear conditions of service”. We are defending a fair distribution of the burden of the war on Ukrainian society and social guarantees for servicemen and their families. Let’s not forget that exhausted soldiers = a lost war!



Women's struggles in Ukraine

Kharkiv Metro First! A woman works as a driver

Source: French Committee of the ENSU

(23 September 2024) The driver's name is Anastasia Mazurkova (pictured). She is 25 years old and came to work on the metro after completing her studies at the Kharkiv Polytechnic Institute National Technical University. "It is unusual for a man for a woman to try to enter this profession. But the team reacted with interest and respect", says Anastasia.



She also said that her job is not easy but requires considerable concentration and attention. At the same time, she adds, it's not so much the destruction of stereotypes that's important as "that people understand from a professional point of view the complexity of being a female driver".

In June, women were also recruited to train as Kyiv Metro drivers, as there are not enough men to run the system. At the same time, the Ministry of the Economy is considering retraining women in professions where there is a shortage of specialists.

77% of Solidarity zone participants are women, but look...

Source: Solidarity Collectives



(September 19, 2024) From the very beginning women were predominant in the Solidarity zone collective, and women are still in the majority now. We mention this because we can see that women are not given sufficient visibility in human rights activism.

We call on the media, and also on our colleagues in human rights organisations to raise the visibility of women, to invite women experts and to insist on equal representation in practice and not just in theory!

(VIDEO) Solidarity with Ukraine—a feminist perspective



More than two years have passed since Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine

Despite these atrocities, the resistance of the Ukrainian people has been heroic, with Ukrainian women taking an active role in the defense of their country.

We asked Ukrainian feminists to speak on why the struggle against Russia's imperialist invasion is not only about Ukraine, and why it is also about the future of humanity and should matter to the whole world!

This video concludes with messages of solidarity from a U.S. Black feminist and an Iranian feminist.

English, subtitles: subtitulado en Español: Sous-titrage en français

Bilkis publishes a feminist comic strip

After the publication of its zine, the Lviv feminist group Bilkis has published a comic strip.

The feminist press is reborn in Ukraine...

Presentation

Have you ever had a mother, teacher or other adult who knew better than you what you should like and who you should like?



In collaboration with @khalabuda_comics, we've put together a comic for you - illustrating how to find yourself on a blue and pink board.

And we're preparing a video about it soon!

Put a stop to heteropatriarchy!

Download link for the comic strip

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EqL1KcxCM8zwKCCiHhN4irEfm_H5LFqi/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawFQ5_dleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHT7MAHfHTtWdfQHsdVplTQnJ_a8MTU-VLmOxCy-mFMkUU_mTTAgHoSWtHA_aem_UD7u-rfktlJRqhVPhXTM2A&pli=1\\$](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1EqL1KcxCM8zwKCCiHhN4irEfm_H5LFqi/view?fbclid=IwY2xjawFQ5_dleHRuA2FlbQIxMAABHT7MAHfHTtWdfQHsdVplTQnJ_a8MTU-VLmOxCy-mFMkUU_mTTAgHoSWtHA_aem_UD7u-rfktlJRqhVPhXTM2A&pli=1$)

And ... Bilkis stops distributing meals

(September 8, 2024) The feminist group Bilkis announced this morning that it was stopping the distribution of free meals that it had been organising in Lviv on Sunday mornings. The main reason is that "the main members of the team, Ivanka and Oleksiy, have decided to join the army". Bilkis explains.

We have some news for you: from September our weekly vegan lunch giveaways will be cancelled.

It was a difficult decision, but there are several reasons for it. The most important is that the main members of the team, Ivanka and Oleksiy, have decided to join the army. In addition, the cooking venue was the project coordinator's flat, which she was no longer able to rent. And the rest of the Bilkis team does not currently have sufficient resources to continue the fundraising campaigns and reorganise the project.

However, we want to remember how, for over a year, we went out in the rain, heat and snow to help people with vegan food and other resources in the Shevchenkivskyi district of Lviv. And that's not all:

- Visitors to the food station found friends in the queue as they waited for their meal
- They were able to count on our emotional support during and after the distribution - for example, someone figured out how to send messages on his phone
- Thanks to our help, many people have discovered the world of delicious food without animal exploitation
- Helped spread social activism in Lviv.

We're at least glad that there are still hot food outlets in Lviv and that people who need them have somewhere to eat.

The cooker and blender we collected will continue to be used for other good causes.

We would like to thank everyone who took part in the project! We appreciate you, we love you and we hug you!

Women's bullet-proof vests *at last...*

Source: French committee of ENSU

(August 28, 2024) Interior Ministry units have received women's bullet-proof vests for the first time.

Bullet-proof vests with ballistic plates will be sent to meet the needs of the National Border Service, the National Emergency Service, the National Guard and the Ukrainian National Police.

The deputy head of the Ukrainian National Police, Hennadiy Fedoryuk, said that at present, around 25% of women work in the department and perform all the necessary tasks on an equal footing with men.



The Ukrainian Ministry of Defence certified the first women's body armour at the end of 2023. Produced by the national company Ukrainian Armor, the bullet-proof vest is adapted to the female body structure: the armour plate is curved outwards.

The Ministry of Defence subsequently certified another model of women's body armour. The new body armour, developed by the company Temp-3000, was fitted with shock absorbers. These will help to adjust the body armour to the anatomical characteristics of each woman.

The 'mineuses' of Donetsk: women go down the mine

Source: French committee of ENSU

(August 19, 2024) More than two hundred women currently work at the Bilozersk mine in the Donetsk region, nearly fifty of them in underground jobs. The number of miners at the coal-fired power station has fallen due to the mobilisation of men. The greatest shortage is now among underground miners, as well as drivers of underground installations and electric locomotives, and electrical fitters. Women are helping to cover the needs of these professions.

Hanna Dzhezheleva worked for seventeen years as a nurse in a hospital in the mining town of [Bilozerske](#), Pokrovsky district, Donetsk region. When the staff were made redundant, she went to look for a new job. "After staying at home for a year without work, I went to the mine, thinking that maybe something suitable would turn up. I went down, I looked around: well, here I have nothing to lose, I'm out of work. Since then, I've gone down the mine almost every day, where I stay until 8 o'clock. I work in shifts. Before that, there were only men here. I'm the only one to have gone down into the mine on this site", she says.



A total of 249 women work at the Bilozerska mine, 46 of them in underground jobs. “This represents around five per cent of the total number of employees involved in underground work”, explains Vitaly Vilkhovy, head of the DTEK group at the Bilozerska mine. He notes that the women began working underground at the start of a large-scale invasion, when the men left to defend the country.

The company created conditions that met women’s needs: separate showers were installed, and work clothes and shoes of appropriate sizes were purchased.

According to the President of the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions of the Donetsk Region, Dmytro Zeleny, the shortage of personnel in the mining sector in the Donetsk region ranges from 20 to 30 per cent.

Student struggles in Ukraine



Priama Diia (Direct Action) holds its Second Congress

Source: Priama Diia

(September 8, 2024) This summer has not only been a period of relaxation for us, but also an opportunity to acquire new knowledge and skills. As well as the Lviv Free School, delegates from our union's university organisations met at the General Congress to discuss their work plans for the new academic year, develop a more effective structure for our union and gain valuable experience through workshops and conferences.

The second Direct Action Congress saw some important organisational changes. On the basis of the experience of our comrades abroad, in particular the Polish trade union Workers' Initiative, we decided that the Congress of Delegates was the highest decision-making body and agreed on the main guidelines and general plan of activities. If necessary, a General Assembly will also be convened to consider decisions. The executive body of the Congress, the Coordination, which will implement the decisions of the Congress, was elected, as was the Control and Audit Commission, which will monitor the work of the Coordination.

To a large extent, these changes are the result of a critical re-examination of our internal processes and problems, which have been described by a number of experienced campaigners (reference to Joe Freeman in *The Tyranny of Structurelessness*). Our internal work is now more transparent, more rational and more democratic.

It will now be easier for our members to fulfil their potential in a variety of areas, including document management, finance, the media and legal matters, as well as with the sectors responsible for the general development of the union, the adaptation and training of new arrivals, problems in the dormitories and the fight against various forms of discrimination.

In the absence of developed bodies of public autonomy, joint discussions on the question of votes and collective creativity have helped to develop forms of organising democratic processes among our members. This day-to-day reproduction of grassroots democracy is particularly important in the context of strengthening civil society, on which the future of Ukraine depends.

Our congress was not only an opportunity to share the experience of the student struggle in different parts of the country, but also a great opportunity to find like-minded people for common actions and to inspire each other to face new challenges.

Thank you all for your active participation in the Congress!

Together, let's stay on course for change!

Languages under threat at Kyiv university

Source: Priama Diia

(September 4, 2024) The new academic year for students at [Ukraine's only language university](#) begins with yet another non-transparent “merger”.

Most know how so-called “optimisation” by the Ministry of Education and Science works. This case is no exception. Students at the Faculty of Linguistics have been faced with problems identical to those at other

universities: lack of information for students and staff, unknown future of dormitories and academic buildings, changes in tuition fees, etc.

We'll be coming back to the situation at the National Language University in more detail. For now, we invite you to support the students' initiative and sign the petition to save the Kyiv National Linguistics University.

<https://petition.kmu.gov.ua/petitions/7145>



University in Lviv: about dormitories for students

Source: Priama Diia (Direct Action)

(August 29, 2024) The dormitories at the [Ukrainian National Forestry University](#) (NTLU) in Lviv are currently being refurbished. Our activists have therefore decided to familiarise the new arrivals with their rights, the plans for repairs to the dormitories, financial estimates and other documents relating to life in the dormitory.

Because of our attempts to inform NLTU students, we were simultaneously banned from the local [university] Telegram chat and the caretaker was ordered not to let anyone into the dorms. The students were more sympathetic towards us and therefore pointed out a number of other problems, including the fact that the management had recently ordered us to accommodate four people per room: “Absolutely all the rooms will be occupied by four students”. Previously, only three people per room had been living in the dormitory rooms for years, and this innovation caused outrage.

We decided to ask the management for clarification on the size of the rooms. That turned out to be 18 square metres. This means that there are 4.5 square metres per person in the room, which is a violation of health standards and the law.

We then reported the situation to Vice-Rector Yuriy Tsyntylyuk, who was not aware of the law. We asked for measures to be taken to find new places and build new dormitories, to which he replied that it was “unpatriotic” to ask for new dormitories in wartime.

On the same day, the administration found nothing better than to oblige each student in the dormitory to sign an agreement in which he or she undertook to “live with other people who could be accommodated with me beyond the standard per square metre”. Such an agreement is a flagrant violation of these regulations and has no legal value.

It is easier for the administration to put ten people in a room or evict someone than to spend money on creating new places. Whether further steps will be taken to build new dormitories depends on the students themselves and their involvement in the life of the university.

LGBTI+ struggles in Ukraine

Car Pride in Kharkiv

Source: French Committee of ENSU

(September 16, 2024) Kharkiv hosted its sixth KharkivPride dedicated to LGBTQ+ rights on September 15, this time - in “CarPride” format (pictured). Columns of 13 cars, with the participation of around 60 people, travelled along one of the city’s main avenues. As the organisers explain, they chose this format



to make the event as safe as possible during the war. This is not the first time that the KharkivPride has taken the form of a car parade. The march was held in the same format in 2020 during the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Anna Sharygina, co-organiser of “KharkivPride”, the slogan of this year’s parade is “Together towards equality and victory”.

The participants urged the Verkhovna Rada to adopt bills on strengthening liability for crimes based on intolerance (No. 5488) and on the institution of registered partnerships (No. 9103).

“People who fight, who risk their lives, simply cannot have rights? That’s undignified and unjust, and the war has highlighted such challenges,” said Sharygina.

Kharkiv Pride commemorates fallen LGBTQ+ soldiers.

Source: French Committee of ENSU

(September 14, 2024) At 9am on Saturday, a commemoration of fallen LGBTQ+ soldiers took place at the monument to the defenders of Ukraine. The monument featured 12 portraits of LGBTQ+ soldiers who gave their lives in defence of Ukraine.

Only two of the portraits had their faces uncovered, while the other soldiers died before coming out of the closet.

These are just some of the fallen soldiers from the LGBTQ+ community that we are aware of.



Every year at Kharkiv Pride, we draw attention to the LGBTQ+ soldiers who died without rights and honour their memory.

We once again stress the importance of passing the Registered Partnership Bill No. 9103, which would allow recognition of LGBTQ+ families, and Bill No. 5488 on strengthening criminal liability for homophobic and transphobic crimes.

LGBT soldiers' union: soldier wins case against homophobia in Lviv regional council

(September 12, 2024) In a press release, the [LGBT soldiers' union](#) states that Petro Zherukha (pictured) is a member of the union and congratulates its member on this success.



The Lviv District Administrative Court has declared illegal and overturned the Lviv Regional Council's appeal to the state leadership adopted in April 2023 to prevent the adoption of the Partnership Institute Law, which allows the LGBT community to register their relationships.

The lawsuit was brought by Petro Zherukha, a bisexual serviceman in the Ukrainian armed forces, who was the author of an e-petition in favour of registered partnerships for same-sex and different-sex couples. Petro Zherukha also pointed out that the controversial decision violated his rights as an LGBT+ person and a member of the LGBT+ community, violating the prevention of discrimination against this group of people.

At a meeting held on April 6 at the initiative of the [far right] Svoboda party, the Lviv regional council adopted an appeal to state leaders to prevent the adoption of the draft law on registered partnerships for same-sex couples. The appeal was supported by 51 councillors.

Other Ukraine news and analysis

Culture in wartime: Ukrainians are reading a lot

Source: French Committee of ENSU

(September 22, 2024) Interest in Ukrainian literature has grown rapidly since the start of the full-scale war.

In 2023, the revenues of Ukrainian book publishers doubled compared to 2022, and the pre-war indicators for 2021 were exceeded by more than a third. Last year, the five largest publishing houses earned more than UAH two billion (= €43.5 million), and a total of 19 companies broke the UAH 100 million mark (= €21,750).

This year, market dynamics remain positive: 19 of the 22 largest publishing houses are experiencing financial growth in the first quarter of 2024.

So where does this growth come from? Firstly, books in Russian have lost their place. Secondly, in 2023, the government started ordering textbooks again.

Thirdly, against the backdrop of the war, readers' habits have changed.

The press office of the [KSD publishing house](#) states: "At the start of the large-scale invasion, we saw a rapid increase in demand for books on historical subjects. If we talk about fiction writers, we see a trend towards increased sales of modern Ukrainian writers."

Today, after the full-scale invasion, the average price of Ukrainian books has risen by 37.5%, and the price of certain categories of books has doubled.

Of course, every Ukrainian business is now exposed to the dangers of war.



"In 2023, we printed an average of 1.5 edition of books per working day. In the first half of 2024, they started printing two editions a day. After the [Russian strike \[on the Kharkiv printing works, pictured\]](#), everything changed", explains Yulia Orlova, Managing Director of Vivat Editions.

In the fire, the stocks of soldier Pavel Belyansky's novel *You Can't Retreat from a Fight* were burnt, but Vivat managed to reprint it, and pre-orders showed considerable demand.

Writer Andrii Kokotyukha believes that Ukrainian demand for history books began to actively form in 2012, in response to the activities of pro-Russian Education Minister [Dmytro Tabachnyk](#). Since then, this genre has continued to grow and strengthen.

"War affects everything. Because of the war, it's impossible to plan for the long term, it's impossible to predict when books will come out. There is also a significant shortage of staff, and because of the power cut, it is difficult to keep to the printing schedule. There is also a risk that the books will "die" in the warehouse or printing plant in the event of a bombing", concludes Svitlana Andryushchenko, co-founder of the [One More Page publishing house](#).

Trade unionists mobilised: improving living conditions for soldiers

Source: KVPU

(September 17, 2024) The independent Ukrainian miners' union (NPGU) in the Western Donbass is constantly helping its colleagues who, as a result of a large-scale attack by Russian aggressors, have been forced to change their work clothes for military uniforms.



Recently, union representatives organised another trip to the front. They brought tools, camouflage netting, medical and hygiene products and other things necessary for a soldier's life. The soldiers were particularly pleased with the washing machine, which this time had been brought to them by the miners, among others.

As usual, volunteers from the NPGU's regional association provided the defenders with long-life and quick-cooking foodstuffs, which are very useful in difficult combat conditions.

Meanwhile, activists from the NPGU miners' union in Western Donbass and its main branches are preparing humanitarian aid for forthcoming trips to the front line.

Waiting for funds, so the children go hungry...

Source: Mariupol City Council (in exile)

(September 13, 2024) In Mariupol, kindergarten meals are not funded: parents say the children are hungry. It is also forbidden for families to provide the children their own food, so that they are not poisoned by home-made food, according to the "authorities". Parents are outraged because of the lack of food, with kindergartens only open until 1200 to 1300 hours.

"We have raised this issue several times at parents' meetings. The only answer is that they are waiting for funds from Donetsk", says a Mariupol resident.

According to the residents, the financial authorities of the so-called "Donetsk People's Republic" have not yet taken a decision on the funding mechanism for pre-school organisations. So, the children are left hungry.



Bombings: workers must be protected

Source: *Sotsialnyi Rukh (Social Movement)*

(September 13, 2024) In the last seven months, 275 deaths have occurred in the workplace, half of them war related. Among the causes of these tragedies are sudden bombardments in border areas, failure to heed air warnings and inaction by employers to protect their staff.

These are the findings of the latest issue of the magazine [Labour Protection](#). The editorial's main leitmotiv is to persuade employers to take all appropriate measures to protect the life and health of their employees. Many company directors fail to take the necessary measures due to a lack of resources or deliberate passivity, resulting in increasing loss of life and property.

Social Movement fully supports the responsible position of the editorial committee, which raises the issue of the social causes of injury and loss of life and cannot allow employers to blame everything on the war. As you will see, at least 50% of workers' lives are lost through the fault of their employers. This situation can be remedied by drawing up even stricter labour protection rules, in line with martial law: no work without fallout shelters, earmarking of profits to improve working conditions, extended powers for labour inspectorates, even to the point of closing down businesses to prevent avoidable injuries and loss of life.

In this magazine, an article by a Social Movement lawyer criticises the pension authorities for refusing for far-fetched reasons financial assistance to infrastructure workers injured by the Russian attacks. The state must treat with respect those who most risk their lives in defending Ukraine!

The life of a worker is above all else!

See: (<https://ohoronapraci.kiev.ua/.../mi-silni-tomu-so-mi-razom>)

Thanks go to trade unionists aware of military needs

Source: *KVPU*

(September 3, 2024) The Chervonograd regional association of the Independent Miners' Trade Union of Ukraine (NPGU), together with the main branches of the NPGU that form part of it, are providing ongoing assistance to the military units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and the anti-terrorist defence units that are defending our country from the Russian invaders and in which their former members are currently serving as other miners.



Miners from the Lviv region continue to provide assistance to the military units of the Ukrainian Armed Forces and land defence units that are defending our country from the Russian invaders and in which their former fellow miners are currently serving. Activists and leaders of the NPGU, who are part of its Chervonograd Regional Association, are constantly taking part.

The miners of the Lvivvugilya state enterprise recently handed over another “[Mavik](#)” to aerial reconnaissance. This is in addition to the seven that the soldiers of the Ukrainian Armed Forces received from the miners on the eve of Ukraine's Independence Day.

Exorbitant cost of housing for displaced persons

By Alyona Tkalich

Source : Socportal

(September 3, 2024) As a result of the Russian invasion, around four million Ukrainians who have become internally displaced persons are still unable to return home. Most of them rent accommodation at their own expense. In March this year, most of them lost their right to financial aid, forcing 130,000 people who could no longer pay their rent to return to dangerous regions.

The situation of displaced people has exacerbated problems in the housing rental market that existed even before the full-scale war, says the tenants' union. This self-organised initiative defends tenants' rights, promotes the creation of conditions for equal and fair relations between tenants and landlords, and also advocates the adoption of fair public policies in this area.

According to the National Statistics Service for 2023, rental prices rose by 15.9%, while official inflation was 5.1%, meaning that rental price growth is three times higher than inflation.

One of the tenants spoke about her situation. The young woman had rented a small flat in Lviv for UAH 6000 (= €130) a month for 5 years and, at the start of the invasion, the owner of the flat decided to increase the rent to US\$500 (= €450). Of course, the tenant didn't agree and decided to move out in a month's time, to which the landlord reacted aggressively, breaking into the flat the next day and telling her to move out. The tenant called the police. But the police did nothing to prevent the eviction, apart from suggesting that she "publicise the situation in the media".



In occupied Mariupol, Russian workers protest

Source: Mariupol Town Council (in exile)

(September 3, 2024) The residents of Mariupol have complained on several occasions about the "repairs" suspended by the occupiers. Russian workers are simply abandoning unfinished houses, leaving them with "open" roofs and no windows. The reason is that the developers have stopped paying them for their work.

The Russian workers are outraged; they haven't been paid for 6-7 months. They say they have already appealed to the Moscow authorities, but all they get in response are promises.

The occupiers have already brought more than 30,000 Russian migrants to the city. They understand that this is cheap and illegal labour, which can be "abandoned" at any time because it has no rights.

At the same time, Russian contractors take advantage of the “repairs” that are “abandoned” and “unfinished” and put money in their pockets through bribery schemes. Mariupol has been transformed into a place of corruption and disorder.

Families of prisoners of war: ‘Shame on International Red Cross’

Source: *Media Initiative for Human Rights* (translation, *Patrick Le Tréhondat*)

(August 29, 2024) Families of Ukrainian prisoners of war protested outside the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) office in Kyiv today, chanting “Shame,” Olha Reshetylova, coordinator of the Media Initiative for Human Rights reported on [Facebook](#) ([video](#)).



“What happened today at the walls of the Kyiv office of the ICRC is a verdict on the entire system of international law and international organisations,” Reshetylova said.

“Desperate relatives of POWs – ready for self-immolation because their loved

ones have been tortured and killed for years – are effectively storming the ICRC. And this is just the beginning.”

The ICRC, UN, OSCE [Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe], and other international organisations have been observing for years as thousands of Ukrainians die in captivity, she added.

“Yes, Russia is the one holding and killing them,” she wrote.

“But the international community enables Russia’s impunity by continuing to pretend that the Geneva Conventions are in effect and that everything will resolve itself. It won’t. Either you take action and break through to the detention sites, or you will see the real anger of desperate Ukrainian mothers and wives.”

Nearly all Ukrainian POWs tortured in Russian captivity

Source: [New Voice of Ukraine](#)

(August 7, 2024) Oleksandr Vlasenko, the ICRC spokesperson in Ukraine, told news outlet *hromadske* that about 100 families, including relatives of marine infantrymen, gathered outside the office. The protest took place on the Day of Remembrance for Ukraine’s Defenders. According to Vlasenko, people came hoping to get any information about their loved ones who are in captivity.

“They all came looking for one thing — news about their loved ones who are in captivity,” said Vlasenko.

“We met with them and learned about their frustration, anger, and pain. You can understand them; living in uncertainty for many months, not knowing what happened to a loved one, how they are — it’s terrible. So they are frustrated, looking for someone to blame, wanting us to give them information.”

The International Committee of the Red Cross is the only organisation with a mandate to visit places of detention of POWs, but this is only possible with the consent of the prison, isolation ward, or colony administration. Russia rarely allows ICRC representatives to access such places.

Vlasenko noted that despite all efforts since 2022, the ICRC has still not been able to inform thousands of families about the status of their loved ones due to restrictions, which causes frustration even within the organisation.

“When states comply with their obligations under the Geneva Conventions and open the doors of detention facilities to our workers, it gives families the opportunity to learn about the status of their loved ones,” the spokesperson said.

“We want to assure the relatives of the missing that we are working tirelessly to gain access to POWs, wherever they are held.”



Helping victims of Russian attacks, he became one of them...

Yevgeni Yurko, 21, ambulance driver, killed by a second strike while providing first aid in Poltava. The Russian military apply this murderous ‘double strike’ tactic against emergency service workers and volunteers rushing to help victims of their first strikes

Further reading

- [Russia Destroys Mining Cities in Donbas, Targeting Workers](#)

Solidarity with Ukraine's workers and unions **Fundraing appeals and campaigns**

Vital Equipment Needed for Ukraine Rescue Squads

Source: [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign](#)

The bravery, dedication and determination of the Mining Rescue Squads in the Donetsk Region are unmatched.

But they urgently need new equipment that can help them save more lives.

Your support today can help purchase:

- Helmets, fire-proof boots and tunics, so rescue workers can save lives in the brutal aftermath of a missile strike
- Medical trauma first-aid kits, providing life-saving interventions when civilians and workers are targeted
- Thermal imagers and gas analysers, keeping rescue workers and miners safe when mines are targeted by Russian artillery

Please circulate this information as we ask you all to stand in solidarity with Ukraine's workers and join our campaign to raise money for life-saving equipment.



Fund appeal by Solidarity Collectives, Czech Anarchist Federation



(September 19, 2024) We are asking you to support the anti-authoritarian group of international fighters who risk their lives in the fight against Russian occupiers. Among them are Jakub from the Czech Republic, Bender and Loki. They are fighting against the Russian dictatorship, and now they urgently need an SUV to carry out combat missions in eastern Ukraine.

As the guys write:

“We are working in the Eastern sector, and our vehicle was recently burned by separatist bastards at night. We are asking you to help us raise funds for a new car so we can continue to fulfil our missions and help in the fight.”

This fundraiser is organised by the Solidarity Collectives and the Czech Anarchist Federation AFED

Stories of the fighters:

Jakub (Czech Republic):

“Hello, my name is Jakub, I am an anarchist, I have a wife and a daughter and recently I went to fight for Ukraine. I made the decision together with my wife, who is from here. From the very beginning we discussed the possibility of active participation, but it was mostly emotions rather than real considerations. The situation changed when the second anniversary of the invasion approached. A

shortage of manpower was becoming apparent. So my wife and I decided that we had to take part in the fighting directly. Someone would stay here with our daughter and someone would go and join in the defense of civilians from the fascist occupation. We considered both options, but in the end it turned out that I went. I am now fighting in a mortar unit alongside several other anarchist comrades.”

Bender:

“To the question ‘Why did you come to fight?’, I answer simply: ‘Why shouldn’t I have?’ Fighting against dictatorial regimes like Putin’s is my path. Actions, protests and punk concerts are forever in my heart. I like Ukraine and its brave people very much, I feel at home here. I could not hold back my tears when I heard about the full-scale invasion on the radio.”

Loki:

“My call sign is Loki, and I am a mortar gunner. For me, the fight against dictatorship is not a new phenomenon. When it became clear in the 1990s that authoritarian regimes could return, I began to realize that we were facing a new round of repression. Unfortunately, this scenario is repeating itself: the Russian regime continues to bring death and repression not only to its own people, but also to neighbouring states.

“The Russian imperial machine has not changed: it continues to support far-right organisations and dictatorships around the world. We cannot allow it to spread its influence further. That’s why I’m here, as part of an international group of anti-authoritarian fighters, to stop it and defend the freedom that is so hard to achieve. This struggle is not a discussion, but it is the active destruction of the fascist regime.”

[Buenaventura Durruti](#): *“Fascism is not to be debated, it is to be destroyed!”*

The goal is to raise 10,000 euros

Link to the fundraising jar: <https://send.monobank.ua/jar/2zsdimERt3>

Bank card number 5375 4112 2244 7760

Paypal: nelsongarbo.vm@gmail.com

Public service unions lead effort to restore clean water in Ukraine



Source: European Public Service Union

(September 19, 2024) After the Russian bombardment destroyed Mykolaiv City’s water system, the European Public Service Union (EPSU) and public service unions took action to restore people’s access to clean water.

In March 2022, the city of Mykolaiv in Ukraine faced a Russian bombardment that destroyed the water purification system and left over half a million people without access

to clean, drinkable water.

In response to this urgent need for clean water, the Ukrainian trade union Ukrelektroprofspilka (Energy and Electrical Engineering Industry Workers Union) launched a solidarity campaign for a new water purification system. EPSU swiftly contributed to the project.

Thanks to the efforts of Ukrelektroprofspilka, a new purification system was installed and started to serve trade union members and their families. One union member expressed the gravity of the situation, saying, “We had forgotten what water tasted like.”

This powerful testimony highlights the vital need for clean water. This initiative demonstrates the key role of public service workers and their unions in restoring essential services, even in the face of war and destruction.

Water is a fundamental human right, not a target in conflict, [as UN Rapporteur Mr. Pedro Arrojo-Agudo has clearly stated](#). Access to clean water should be guaranteed for all, regardless of the circumstances. EPSU remains committed to defending this right, whether it is threatened by privatisation plans or by the devastation of war.

EPSU will continue its efforts to rebuild Ukraine with our affiliates.

Please [watch the video](#) for the testimonies of our affiliates.

Social Movement continues to help Mykolaiv

Thanks to you, we were able to purchase a water treatment plant for Mykolaiv, which is already providing hundreds of families with clean water. This is an important step to overcome the consequences of Russian shelling, which has deprived the townspeople of access to drinking water. Your contribution has helped make life easier for many people. Thank you for supporting this initiative!

However, we are not stopping! To support our other humanitarian initiatives, please use the details below.

Details to help

1. To transfer in UAH:

4441 1144 5075 7164

Recipient: Tidva Artem

2. For a multi-currency transfer - recipient: Yuliya Yurchenko

IBAN: GB86HBUK40142801446495

BIC/SWIFT: HBUKGB4121W

Bank: HSBC bank

Email: margerinescotch@gmail.com

3. PayPal:

Ti2artya@gmail.com (Artem Tidva)

Solidarity Collectives: How we help animals

Source: [Facebook](#)

(September 3, 2024) During our August humanitarian trip to Eastern Ukraine, helping animals became an important goal. We received a huge amount of requests for pet food from local animal volunteers, which we managed to fulfil thanks to your donations and our partners' support.

The homelessness of animal companions has always been a significant issue in our country. With the start of the full-scale invasion, it has become even more acute, especially in the frontline territories. A nearly non-existent culture of responsible pet ownership and/or a lack of adequate veterinary services (not every

village has an available vet and not every owner can afford to pay for the sterilisation) has led to a majority of domestic and street animals remaining unsterilised. As a result, many pets lost their homes due to mass evacuations. Add these to those already wandering the streets and you see an uncontrollable population growth.

Constant shelling has increased the number of wounded animals. With no one around to care for them, these injuries often lead to amputations. It takes too long for these pets to be found and taken in by kind-hearted people. Among them are the local volunteers who have taken on a difficult mission of caring for animals. We do our part to assist them during our humanitarian trips.



This time we revisited Mrs. Nadiia from the Kupiansk region and brought pet food for 10 dogs and two cats under her care. Thanks to our friends from the [Ukraine Solidarity Bus](#) (pictured) she received a Jackery

2000 charging station. We also checked in on Yanina in Izyum and provided her wards with antiparasitic treatments and provisions.

The mining town Dobropillya was added to our usual list. This is the town where people are evacuated from the frontline areas, and the situation here is quite critical. Therefore, we decided to do our best to help local shelters and brought them 300 kg of food.

The first shelter housed at least 50 dogs and about the same number of cats. The number of pets in the second one is constantly changing and has been growing recently due to evacuations from the Pokrovsk district. Even at the very moment of our visit, we caught volunteers building enclosures for newly arrived dogs. So you can only imagine how many new animals they get every day.

We will keep in touch with Nadiia, Yanina, and the shelters in Dobropillya to support the work of these dedicated animal activists. You can greatly assist us by donating, reposting, or sending food and antiparasitic treatments.

Details for animal aid

Monobank jar: <https://send.monobank.ua/jar/7EZuQAw6VR>

Card number: 5375 4112 1599 3812

PayPal: ksenia.kozeniuk@gmail.com

Support the humanitarian initiatives of leftists and trade unionists, because our solidarity is our strength!

Source: [Halo Trust](#)

The NGO [Ukrainian LGBTIQ+ Military for Equal Rights](#) has signed a memorandum of cooperation with the international organisation Halo Trust, which has been conducting humanitarian demining in 30 countries and territories for 35 years.

Veterans can contact us for help with referrals for training and employment.

Halo Trust eliminates the threat of explosive remnants of war: it finds explosive devices, marks territories, draws maps, clears unexploded ordnance in former combat zones, including booby traps, and communicates with communities on mine action. The organisation has about 10,000 deminers worldwide.



Halo has been working in eastern Ukraine since 2015. The company is currently engaged in demining in Kyiv, Chernihiv, Sumy, Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Kherson regions.

The veteran community of our NGO intends to cooperate with Halo Ukraine and employ our members, send them to relevant training and demining exercises.

A campaign successfully concluded--Scooters for Kharkiv

Source: Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland



Solidarity with Ukraine's workers and unions

News

Our sixth ambulance to Ukraine

Source: [*Taiwan Stands With Ukraine*](#)

(September 17, 2024) Happy Mid-Autumn Festival!

On this beautiful mid-autumn festival day, we pray for peace and prosperity in Ukraine and Taiwan and thank everyone who has been helping us in the past year!

In the early summer, many Taiwanese and Ukrainians joined together in our online fundraiser to help the people of Ukraine. This ambulance, the sixth one that we have helped purchase, is now on its way from Germany to Ukraine to save lives and spread the word about Taiwan's generosity.



Medical products from Lorraine to Ukraine

Source: [*Nataliya Andreyko \(Echanges Lorraine Ukraine \(ELU\)\)*](#)



(September 14, 2024) There are some wonderful people who make it possible for this cruel world to survive...

Christiane and Gilbert Valin are among them. More than 20 years ago, they set up the Partenariat Santé 57 association, which supports a dispensary in Lebanon where people who cannot afford to pay for medical care are treated.

Partenariat Santé 57 collects medical products and equipment, as well as personal hygiene products, and sends them to Lebanon.

But misfortune knows no borders, and when you have a big heart...you help all those in need.

Since the start of the war in Ukraine, Christiane and Gilbert have also been supporting our association. Part of their collection goes with our convoys to Ukraine.

Today we filled our van with nappies, sanitary pads, hygiene products and medical equipment. We hope to be able to send the next humanitarian convoy to Ukraine in October.

Many thanks Christiane and Gilbert for your unfailing support!

Festival of *L'Humanité*: Ukraine makes an appearance...



LA FÊTE DE L'HUMANITÉ

PROGRAMME DU STAND

L'APRÈS

GDS GAUCHE DÉMOCRATIQUE & SOCIALE

ENSEMBLE!
MOUVEMENT POUR UNE ALTERNATIVE DE GAUCHE, ÉCOLOGISTE ET SOLIDAIRE

Dimanche 15
11h-13h

Après 30 mois de guerre contre l'Ukraine, à gauche, quelles analyses ? Quelle solidarité ?
Avec Jean-Pierre Pasternak (Union des Ukrainiens de France), Stefan Bekier (RESU et Ensemble!), David Gaillard-Bazylenko (chercheur franco-ukrainien), une syndicaliste de Solidaires, Nico Dix et Manon Boltansky, membres du NPA de retour d'Ukraine.

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign holds Annual General Meeting



Source: [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign](#)

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign held its Annual General Meeting (AGM)/Conference in London on Saturday, September 7. The conference adopted a declaration of solidarity which we publish below. The conference was opened by chair John McDonnell MP with reports on the current situation by Yuliya Yurchenko, of the Social Movement, Maria Exall, Vice President of Trade Union Congress, Hanna Ostapenko, Progresylni/Social Democrat Platform and Olesia Briazgunova, International Secretary Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine.

UKRAINE SOLIDARITY CAMPAIGN CONFERENCE DECLARATION

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign salutes the people of Ukraine's resistance to the invasion and destruction of their country and its cultural identity. This is a just war of an oppressed people for freedom, independence and self-determination. Putin's war is an imperialist aggression to reassert Russia's dominance over the former Soviet republics. Putin's dictatorship is linked to neo-fascist and authoritarian forces around the world which are undermining support for Ukraine and attacking democracy globally.

Ukraine has the right to get the arms necessary to liberate the country, from wherever possible and without conditions. Most Western countries have been slow in providing arms. They claim to support Ukraine's fight for democracy while sometimes backing brutal dictatorships elsewhere.

The future of Ukraine must not be decided by separate negotiations between Russia and the West. Ukraine's foreign debt must be cancelled for a Reconstruction based on social and economic justice. The Ukrainian trade unions are right to resist the neoliberal reforms introduced by the government and supported by the West.

A Russian defeat will not only be a victory for Ukraine's resistance to imperialist domination but for democracy and all progressive forces opposing occupation and fighting for self-determination. Solidarity must mean helping Ukraine win the war. We are therefore calling for the following:

1. Arms for Ukraine - give the weapons to free the country.
2. Cancel Ukraine's debt - for a Reconstruction based on social, economic and climate justice.
3. Full sanctions - Ban trade with Russian companies and sanction companies trading with Russia.
4. Seize Russian assets - Redistribute all liquid assets and proceeds from the sale of non-liquid to Ukraine.
5. Prosecute War Criminals - Justice for the victims of Russia's genocide.
6. Open the borders – full support for refugees from Ukraine and Russian war resisters.
7. Support for Russian war opponents.

The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign calls for solidarity to help the people of Ukraine win and secure a just peace.

Ukraine in the trade unions

By Michael Baker

Source: [Workers Liberty](#)

(September 3, 2024) As union conference season 2024 closes, it is worth a lap of the British unions, to check in on the current situation for policy on the war in Ukraine, and active solidarity work being done in each union on the basis of (or despite) that policy.



[Trade Union Congress \(TUC\)](#)

Perhaps the single biggest success in terms of labour movement solidarity occurred at the TUC general congress in 2023. A [motion](#) proposed by the [GMB Union](#) and [ASLEF](#) called for active solidarity and an acknowledgement of the war in Ukraine as an “illegal, aggressive invasion” by Russia. It “acknowledged” the work done by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign and named several Ukrainian unions that had been coordinating important work both to support workers and to oppose the invasion.

The passing of this motion was a victory for Ukraine solidarity in the movement. The TUC’s central body has since been more receptive to coordinating Ukraine solidarity work – sharing Ukraine Solidarity Campaign fundraising appeals on its website, and even sending General Secretary Paul Nowak on an [European Trade Union Confederation \(ETUC\)](#) delegation to Ukraine.

[Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen \(ASLEF\)](#)

ASLEF was a founding member of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign in 2014. Its leadership has been consistent in support for Ukrainian workers, donating regularly to fundraising appeals and taking part in delegations to Ukraine. General Secretary Mick Whelan was in Ukraine just days before the war began in February 2022.

At the rank-and-file level, more could be done to encourage active solidarity. Activists in ASLEF should look to build on the union’s strong position.

Unfortunately, the union is also affiliated to the [Stop the War Coalition \(STWC\)](#)— a contradiction with their other positions on Ukraine. A motion to this year’s conference called for the union to disaffiliate from STWC but fell by a small margin.

[Communication Workers Union \(CWU\)](#)

The CWU is one of a couple of examples where, after toing and froing, no formal policy has been passed. In 2022, a Stop the War Coalition motion was put to the conference floor, but a speech by Dave Ward against it as “insufficient”, as well as political arguments made by several activists from the floor, ensured that it did not pass. 2023 saw no CWU conference during the postal strike, and there was no conference business in 2024 either – though a successful Ukraine Solidarity fringe meeting was held.

Outside of their own conference policy, the CWU delegation was an important element in winning the vote at the TUC in 2023, after the union voted in favour of the GMB’s solidarity motion.

Activists in the CWU will almost certainly be bringing policy to next year’s conference.

Fire Brigades Union (FBU)

After the war began, a statement from the FBU Executive Council called for a full withdrawal of Russian troops, and to work in solidarity with Ukrainian firefighters' unions. It also, however, denounced the war as a "proxy war", decried NATO expansion, and for fraternisation between Ukrainian and Russian soldiers. At the TUC congress 2023, they were one of the main unions voting against the solidarity with Ukraine motion.

There is work to be done by the rank and file within the union to fight for a better policy and win the political argument about Ukrainian self-determination.

GMB Union

Perhaps the biggest benefit that the GMB has given Ukraine work in Britain is its motion to TUC Congress 2023, discussed above. Within the union, there has been [specific policy](#) passed affirming a similar position: a statement released after the start of the war condemning the invasion and calling for solidarity with Ukrainian unions; policy affirming the right of Ukrainians to receive arms and military aid, calling for a just reconstruction, and calling for the cancellation of Ukraine's foreign debt; and a number of actions following through on this policy, including donating vehicles and money to a military unit largely staffed by Ukrainian miners.

National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers (NASUWT)

The NASUWT has not passed formal policy but released a statement in February 2022 calling for solidarity with Ukraine, in particular its teachers and students, and extending solidarity to the Independent Union of Education and Science of Ukraine (VPONU), the independent Ukrainian education workers' union.

The union's leadership have circulated fundraisers and messages about solidarity work, but more can be done to push for active solidarity work within the union and with its Ukrainian counterparts.

National Education Union (NEU)

There have been three NEU conferences since the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

In the first two, representatives of the ruling faction, NEU Left, which includes the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), Stalinists and fellow travellers, attempted to have their position accepted by conference. They failed.

After last year's NEU conference disgusted, pro-Ukraine NEU members set up a group to press for a decent, internationalist policy. This group has been active in the last year, producing a newsletter, intervening inside NEU structures. At branch level there is also considerable campaigning.

This year, in Bournemouth, the NEU Ukraine Solidarity Network's position was on the agenda. It would have passed by a big majority. However, the SWP and their acolytes filibustered, and the motion narrowly failed to be voted on. Their behaviour was a disgrace, wasting time at every opportunity.

National Union of Journalists (NUJ)

The National Union of Journalists has focused its solidarity work on giving support to Ukrainian journalists. One month after the war began in 2022, the union called for their members to support a fundraising initiative by the [International Federation of Journalists \(IFJ\)](#), in collaboration with the Ukrainian journalists' union, the [National Union of Journalists of Ukraine \(NUJU\)](#). At their Delegates' Meeting in 2023, this was formalised as policy, and the National Executive Committee (NEC) has been instructed to continue donating to the same fund on a yearly basis. The Irish section of the NUJ mobilised for a trade union demonstration in solidarity with Ukraine in Dublin, but little else has happened since.

National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)

The National Union of Mineworkers has been a consistent ally of the Ukrainian people – a connection that dates back further than perhaps any other British union, to 1984, when Donetsk miners donated to support their British comrades during the miners’ strike.

Though a much smaller union now than it was then, the NUM has had an enormous tangible impact on Ukraine solidarity work since the beginning of the war, going on numerous delegations to Ukraine and giving large amounts of money to aid fundraising and practical solidarity. Their commitment to the cause is commendable and should be replicated.

Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)

The PCS civil service union was one of the first, in [June 2022](#), to pass a motion overwhelmingly supporting solidarity with Ukraine, affiliating to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, and defeating a Stop the War Coalition motion opposing arms to Ukraine. Since then, the union has been an active supporter of demonstrations and events on the topic, including calling multiple demonstrations itself.

More work can be done both at the branch level and in terms of delegations and practical solidarity work, but the PCS has been a strong example of internationalism when it comes to Ukraine, and with a new, more left-wing NEC elected, there is hope for more concrete work to be done to back up the existing policy.

National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT)

The UK’s largest transport union has a chequered past when it comes to Ukraine. In 2014, the union passed one of the worst pieces of policy possible, hailing the Russian-nationalist uprising in the Donbas as a victory for “antifascism”.

Since 2022, the union has kept very quiet about this stance – but it has not been formally overturned by a vote at the national AGM. In the wake of the war beginning, the RMT NEC put out a statement that condemned the invasion and called for a full withdrawal of troops, as well as affirming that “we oppose war and support peace and cross border solidarity between workers.” While nothing in the statement was overtly wrong, it was clearly a middle-ground compromise statement, with little force behind it for the union to take decisive solidarity action.

The 2022 AGM passed a very positive motion in solidarity with the Belarusian rail saboteurs, who were disrupting Russian trains travelling through Belarus to deliver arms to the front in Ukraine. Some practical support for the prisoners in question was arranged at the branch level.

University and College Union (UCU)

As reported in *Solidarity* (Number [711](#)), UCU Congress 2024 passed a motion that called for solidarity with Ukraine, and affiliated the union to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. However, an amendment was also passed removing specific mention of military aid. This was a bizarre pacifist twist to add to an otherwise good motion, made all the more confusing by not having any practical effect on the interpretable outcome of the motion.

The UCU4Ukraine solidarity network has coalesced a group of activists involved with the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, who have been instrumental in pushing support for Ukraine at the national level since the passing of a very poor Stop the War Coalition motion at 2023 congress.

UNISON

Unison conference at the end of June saw a big victory for Ukraine solidarity in the British labour movement. The UK's biggest union by membership passed a motion by a two thirds majority, calling for solidarity with Ukraine. The NEC had previously voted to support the motion.

The motion called for active support to Ukraine's liberation struggle, an immediate withdrawal of all Russian troops, strengthened links with Ukrainian Trade Unions, and affiliation to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign. Activists in Unison will be looking to build on this success and implement some practical activity in the coming year.

Unite the Union

The formal policy of Unite on Ukraine came out of a confusing mess at the 2023 policy conference. Faced with a bad motion on Ukraine, and a better amendment, the union's executive put forward its own alternative statement, very similar to the anodyne one published by the leadership after the outbreak of the war in 2022. A *Solidarity* article from [September last year](#) details the flaws of Unite's (lack of) policy in greater detail, but the statement does not call for arms to be sent to Ukraine (in fact, it hints at opposing them), and its resolutions were almost entirely UK-focused (calling for the UK government to increase sanctions, calling for rights for Ukrainian refugees, calling for tax loopholes against Russian oligarchs to be closed).

Practical solidarity with the Ukrainian working class has fallen off the agenda – activists in Unite should look to rectify this at the rank-and-file level.

Conclusion

There is not a single union in the country where there is not more to be done on the question of Ukraine.

Almost two and a half years into the war, it is inevitable that some fatigue sets in to conversations around the Ukrainian working class and the Russian invasion. But there is a fight to be had across the movement: to win good policy where it doesn't yet exist, and to use it to build links with the organised Ukrainian working class where it does. The struggle will continue not just as long as the war does, but long after. We have a duty to our Ukrainian comrades to make sure solidarity remains an active process, not just tokenistic declarations.

From Giuditta Rescue Team

Source: [Facebook](#)

(September 2, 2024) Schools reopen in Ukraine today, and for the third year in a row the ringing of the bell is accompanied by sirens and roars, as tonight, particularly in Kyiv. But not all the students are going back to class today, only those facilities equipped with appropriate shelters to take children and students to safety in the event of an attack by the Russians, for them we continue with distance learning.



Over the past few days, together with our friends from @beauty_studio_tripping, we have been in Malyn, a historic town in the Zhytomyr oblast, just outside Kyiv, to deliver a monitor and various useful materials for the laboratories of the local school.

A school of excellence, newly renovated, whose director Alexander gave us a very special welcome.

After sharing an Italian pizza, he gave us a tour of the classrooms, the institute's well-equipped shelters and the laboratories: from mechanics and IT to photography and theatre, where the children can develop their ideas and practise with the tools.

The day ended with the prospect of twinning with Italian schools, in order to get to know the difficult reality of Ukraine at war and the moral strength of a people that does not accept surrender and submission.

Labour Day event for Ukraine in New York

Source: [Ukraine Solidarity Capital District](#)

(September 3, 2024) Ukraine Solidarity Capital District had an information table at the Labor Day event in Halfmoon, New York, USA.

It was a big gathering of union members and their families. Most of the people with whom we spoke were supportive towards Ukraine.



Don't welcome him, detain him!

On September 2, the Tokyo-based anti-arms trade movement NAJAT (Network Against Japan Arms Trade) held an emergency protest at the Mongolian Embassy.

They demanded that "the Mongolian government fulfil its obligations as an International

Criminal Court member state and arrest Putin."

Six other groups, including peace activists, the Ukraine Solidarity Movement, and the Chechnya Solidarity Movement, supported this action.



[VIDEO](#): Ulan Bator protest against Putin's visit to Mongolia

Source: [Kanal 13](#)

(September 3, 2024)

‘A Lasting Peace in Ukraine’: emergency motion passed at Scottish National Party conference

Source: Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland

(September 2, 2024) Conference welcomes the recent reports indicating President Zelensky is set to present his peace plan to President Biden, Vice President Harris, and President Trump; recognises that the efforts to secure a lasting peace which restores the full sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine are strengthened by the recent Kursk offensive which has dealt a hammer blow to Putin’s illegal invasion and ability to wage his brutal war; calls on the Scottish Government, UK Government, and all western nations to continue to welcome and support refugees impacted by the war, and step up the delivery of military aid so Ukraine can protect their right to self-determination on the battlefield, and secure a lasting peace.

Proposed - Kelvin SNP (Jack O’Neil)

Seconded - Councillor Lloyd Melville



Ukraine Solidarity Campaign Scotland stall at Scottish National Party (SNP) Conference. Over 30 signed up to the Stop SeaPeak campaign including Pete Wishart MP, the SNP’s Westminster Deputy leader and spokesperson on International Affairs and Refugees. Many visitors were shocked and surprised to find out that Russian gas isn’t sanctioned.

Ukraine National Day in Ghent

Source: Belgian Committee of ENSU

(August 25, 2024) The “Together for Ukraine on Independence Day” event we organised in Ghent on Saturday, August 24 was again a great success.

With a very nice turnout of Ukrainian people and Belgians and Dutch in solidarity. With a series of very tasteful performances by Polina, Lena, Ludmila and Xavier, a few touching moments, good speeches by Alderman for International Cooperation Hafsa El-Bazioui on behalf of the City of Ghent and by Kit Van Sant-Shyshkarova and myself [Thomas Weyts] on behalf of the organisers.

But also with tasteful face painting activities for the children, and extremely well cared for and well-attended stands by Heart4Ukraine and Peace for Ukraine - Ghent, etc.

Many thanks to all the participants, and the many Ukrainian, Belgian and Dutch volunteers, from the people who took care of the children’s entertainment, the



musicians, the stand keepers and the people who made the cakes, to the helpers at the bar and the sound man, who helped to make it a great day.

Many participants and passers-by gave generous support for the aid initiatives present, which together collected some €1400, money that will be spent very quickly on direct aid in Ukraine.

Thanks also to Peace for Ukraine - Ghent, Support Ukrainian Resistance, the European Network in Solidarity with Ukraine, Aid to Ukraine and AdMoSphere for the good cooperation and practical support. Let's do it again!

Ukraine in exile

Ukrainian classes start in the Basque Country (Euskadi)

Source: [Ukraine-Euskadi Association](#)

(September 13, 2024) Who does homework before the start of the school year? That's right! The teachers. These days Ukrainian teachers and volunteers are working hard to prepare the first day of school at the Ukrainian Centre in Bilbao.

Already this Saturday, thanks to the joint efforts, the long-awaited opening celebration of the 2024-2025 academic year of the Ukrainian School of Lesya Ukrainka will take place.



The Ukrainian Centre in Bilbao continues to demonstrate its great commitment to education and cultural preservation. This project is key to keeping the Ukrainian language and traditions alive, and we are sure that this new cycle will be full of achievements and growth.

We remind you that the registration for the Ukrainian School in Bilbao for the school year 2024/2025 is still open.

For the first time this year, we are opening a group for teenagers who have a good command of the Ukrainian language and wish to further deepen their knowledge.

We are also continuing with the registration for groups of younger children, from 3 to 5 and 6 to 8 years old. Classes for them will be held from 11:00 to 13:30 (with a half-hour break).

For the group of children over 8 years old and teenagers, the classes will be from 14:00 to 16:30 (with a half hour break).

We will contact all registrants to provide full details.

Classes will be held at the Ukrainian Centre in Bilbao (Sarriko).

Charity football tournament in Donostia (San Sebastian)

Source: [Ukraine-Euskadi Association](#)

Yesterday, on September 1, in Donostia, a charity football tournament was held. Ukrainians gathered to raise funds to help Ukraine.

Four non-professional teams from three Basque provinces took part in the tournament. After the intense matches, the ranking was distributed as follows:

I place - Prime UA, Donostia II place – Vitoria III place – Tolosa IV place - Bilbao



All received their cups. Although not all are winners, but the spirit of rivalry yesterday was replaced by the spirit of friendship and solidarity. The main and most important thing was not the sport victory, but to do our bit to bring the victory closer on another battlefield - in Ukraine, where the victory means the life of all Ukrainians, freedom and democracy.

All funds raised during the football tournament will go to the defenders of Ukraine.

We would like to thank all the participants, the organisers and the people in charge of Polideportivo Egia in Donostia.

Worker struggles in Belarus

Action of solidarity with Belarusian trade unions in Amsterdam

Source: Salidarnast

On September 21, 2024, at the [FNV 2024 Solidarity Festival](#) in Amsterdam, representatives of Belarusian independent unions told the story of repressions in Belarus and their fight for workers' rights.

The program of the [event](#) included an action in support of political prisoners with participants wearing T-shirts



with a picture of Aliaksander Yarashuk, leader of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), who was thrown in jail for his trade union activity.

The action participants made a group photo, calling for the release of all political prisoners in Belarus whose number currently exceeds 1500.

The Belarusian section of the Festival, a joint event of Salidarnast e.V. and the Federation of Dutch Trade Unions (FNV), was devoted to repressions against independent trade unions in the country and the dissolution of the BKDP. The participants were apprised of the current situation in Belarus and could acquire merchandise featuring calls for the release of political prisoners.

Show solidarity with imprisoned anarchist

Source: [ACK - Galicia](#)

(September 9, 2024) On September 10, Artiom Solovy, an anarchist and Food Not Bombs activist from Minsk, who was arrested in August 2021, will be spending his next birthday in prison. Artiom, together with Yevgeny Rubashko and Alexander Belov, was charged with “organising and preparing actions grossly violating public order or actively participating in them” and “forming or participating in an extremist group”, for which he received a sentence of five years in a penal colony. He is one of the defendants in the so-called [“Pramen case”](#), which was fabricated by Belarusian services to lend credibility to the accusation of an “organised conspiracy”.

Write letters to imprisoned Belarusian anarchists and anti-fascists, as this is one important way to support the imprisoned and at the same time is a signal to prison officials that the imprisoned person is not left alone.

Letters must have the address on the envelope and the content of the message *written in Cyrillic, Russian or Belarusian*. Address to the prisoner:

Артем Дмитриевич Соловей

ИК № 17, ул. 1-я Заводская, 8 г. Шклов, 213004

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If you want to help in any other way. please contact one of the groups supporting the imprisoned. Leave a link to ACK-Belarus media in the comments.

A new trial for Naftan trade union activist Olga Britikova

Source: Viasna Center

(August 22, 2024) On Thursday, August 22, the Vitsebsk regional court began a new criminal trial against Olga Britikova behind closed doors. Olga Britikova was arrested a year ago, in August 2023. She was initially charged with incitement to hatred. Under article 130 of the Criminal Code, she was sentenced to three



years in prison. The sentence was handed down on 8 April 2024. Olga appealed the decision to the Supreme Court on June 11, but the sentence was upheld. At the end of June, the political prisoner was transferred to Homel IK-4, before being sent back to SIZO-2 in Vitsebsk. It transpired that a second criminal case had been opened against her.

The trial was due to start on August 20, but the session disappeared from the calendar and was postponed until the 22nd. This time, the activist will be tried by Yevgeny Burunov, who has already handed down more than twenty convictions on political grounds.

Between April 19 and 21, 2022, more than 20 representatives and activists of the independent trade union movement were arrested in Belarus. At the same time, the leaders and employees of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions (BKDP), the leaders and activists of the trade unions SPM (Free Trade Union of Metalworkers), SPB (Belarusian Free Trade Union), REP (Belarusian Trade Union of Workers in the Radio and Electronic Industry) and a few other trade union activists were persecuted at the same time. Most of them were found guilty and some served their sentences. This period can be seen as the beginning of the authorities' planned defeat of all independent trade unions in Belarus. According to information from human rights activists Viasna, a total of more than 35 independent trade union activists were arrested between April 2022 and August 2023.

As of August 21, 16 workers' rights activists were still behind bars.

Remember Maria Kolesnikova

Source: Vicent Presumey

Remember Maria Kolesnikova. A musician and the wife of an opposition presidential candidate arrested in Belarus in 2020, she joined forces with Svetlana Tsikhanovskaia, who actually won the election.

Kidnapped by Lukashenko's thugs in September 2020, sentenced to 11 years in prison, a personality known for her energy, we now learn that she is in total isolation and weighs only 45 kilos. They are killing her.



Further background

- [The neoliberal battle for Ukraine's reconstruction \(in English\)](#)
- [Forced Labor and Pervasive Violations of Workers' Rights In Belarus \(In English\)](#)
- [Forgotten veterans: how Ukrainians 'closed the sky' over Vietnam \(Ukrainian, subtitles in English, French and Spanish\)](#)