

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Welcome to our special edition **Ukraine 2025** newsletter.

Ukraine Solidarity Campaign

Members will be pleased to recall that our branch is formally affiliated to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign:



“The Ukraine Solidarity Campaign seeks to organise solidarity and provide information in support of the Ukrainian labour movement, campaigning for working class, and democratic rights, against imperialist intervention and national chauvinism. It seeks to co-ordinate socialist and labour movement organisations who agree on this task, regardless of differences and opinions on other questions.

Basic aims are:

- *to support and build direct links with the independent socialists and the labour movement in Ukraine.*
- *to support the right of the Ukrainian people to determine their own future free from external intervention from Russian or Western imperialism”*

<https://ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org/>
info@ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org

Since the Russian invasion of Ukraine almost 3½ years ago, the campaign’s focus has been logistical support for and solidarity with the invaded people of Ukraine. However, our branch newsletter’s coverage of and active engagement in support of Ukraine’s plight in the face of the prolonged and worsening depredations, including mass child abduction and current escalating waves of aerial bombardment has hitherto been relatively slight, and in this supplement to our regular monthly newsletter we seek to rectify that, also looking at a close-to-home example of the contributions of the over 270000 Ukrainians currently in Britain, in refuge from the war. In the following pages we look at a handful of issues, with the intention of publishing follow-up material in continued solidarity in the months to come, likely September onwards after the holidays.

Seb Matthews (Unite workplace rep)

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Free the Children Abducted by Russia: Thousands March in London for Justice and Solidarity, Sunday, June 1st

On June 1st, 2025, —**International Children’s Day**—a workplace representative from our Branch and others from Cambridge joined thousands of demonstrators gathered in central London to participate in the “Free the Children Abducted by Russia” march from Marble Arch to Parliament Square, a powerful act of protest and solidarity with Ukraine and a call for justice **and accountability in the face of war crimes** for the thousands of Ukrainian children forcibly taken by Russian forces since the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022. The march was part of a growing international movement demanding accountability for Russia’s actions and war crimes in Ukraine. Organizers highlighted that over 19,000 Ukrainian children have been identified as abducted and forcibly relocated by Russia to Russian territory, with only a fraction returned. The event also served as a reminder of the broader humanitarian crisis caused by the war and the need for continued international support for Ukraine. Protesters demanded the immediate return of these children and accountability for those responsible.

The march began at 1PM at the statue of St Volodymyr near Holland Park—a symbolic site for the Ukrainian community—and proceeded to the Russian Embassy at Kensington Palace Gardens. Participants carried banners reading “Free the Children,” “Occupation is Not Peace,” and “Don’t Betray Ukraine,” underscoring the urgency of their demands and the broader call for a just peace that includes the full withdrawal of Russian troops from all Ukrainian territory.



The June 1st march was not only a protest but also a reaffirmation of international solidarity. It served as a reminder that the war in Ukraine is not just a geopolitical conflict but a humanitarian crisis—one that demands continued vigilance, advocacy, and action. Speakers at the event, including Labour MP John McDonnell and union leaders, emphasized that peace cannot be achieved through backroom deals or imposed settlements that ignore the rights and voices of Ukrainians. They warned against international complacency and urged governments—particularly the UK and the US—to increase support for Ukraine, both militarily and diplomatically.

Olena Ivashchenko, director of Campaign for Ukraine, voiced the fears of many:

“Kyiv’s future is being decided by politicians behind closed doors. True and sustainable peace cannot be achieved without justice—and that means bringing every child home..”

Her remarks echoed the sentiment of many marchers who believe that any peace process must include the return of abducted children and the prosecution of war crimes

Spearheaded by the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, the event was co-organized and endorsed by a broad coalition of other trade unions and civil society organizations, including:

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

- The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)
- GMB
- ASLEF (Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen)
- NUM (National Union of Mineworkers)
- UCU (University and College Union)
- Unison
- The Trades Union Congress (TUC)
- **Campaign for Ukraine**
- **Vsesvit**
- The **Save Ukraine Centre**, which works to rescue and rehabilitate abducted children
- President Zelensky's **Bring Kids Back** campaign



assembly at Parliament Square

This was a really impressive event, inspiring, affecting, and I met with some good trade unionists to network with on Ukraine solidarity. Amongst a whole host of strong contributions, with testimonies, some in Ukrainian, it was also good to see veteran human rights campaigner Peter Tatchell give a very strong oration, I found - cogent and very incisive giving special additional emphasis to the need to apply enforce full economic sanctions on Russia to cut off its financing of its war effort. *(continued...)*

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update



The large blue and yellow flag banner - in this last photo - at Parliament Square - came from Cambridge; we were told circa 200 children from schools and the **Cambridge Families for Ukraine** organisation contributed to its making.

Seb Matthews
(Unite workplace rep)

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

One prominent defining factor of this Unite branch's relationship with Cambridge University Press and Assessment (CUPA) is this General Principles clause in our Recognition Agreement and subsequent established mutually agreed practice both pre- and post-merger:

"4 (a) The Press and the Association share the common objective of ensuring the prosperity of the Press."

In that light, and in alignment with our membership's endorsement of the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign, we are pleased to share with members the following testimony from Ukrainian CUPA colleague Nataliia Zinets, concerning CUPA's active collaboration with and support for Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science.

Unite Committee

CUPA – MoES Ukraine

My journey with Cambridge University Press & Assessment started in November 2022. Me and my two kids had arrived in the UK in April earlier that year, following the Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February. I joined the Portfolio Office initially as a Project manager (now Senior PM) and since then have been managing various projects within the Strategic Portfolio, including large scale transformation programmes and the business planning of Strategic Portfolio projects.

Being Ukrainian, I have also been taking part in different initiatives aiming to support Ukraine: from collecting donations, to volunteering in the events to raise awareness of the war and make sure Ukraine keeps its voice on the global stage

At work I've always been looking for an opportunity to contribute to CUP&A initiatives in the educational sphere in Ukraine.

When you turn things up a notch and keep following your passions, dreams do come true!.



- Hence I was delighted to join the team organising the Ukrainian Ministry of Education and Science (MoES) visit to Cambridge in May this year.

This joint teamwork was about making things happen. As a result of the visit, CUPA and MoES of Ukraine have signed a cooperation agreement aimed at enhancing English language learning across the country with focus on:

- Advancing English language teaching in Ukraine
- Launching new formats for teacher training and professional development
- Implementing joint initiatives

During the visit it was agreed to resume Cambridge English digital exams in Uzhhorod, Chernivtsi, and Ivano-Frankivsk — opening up new opportunities for Ukrainian learners.

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

As [Francesca Woodward](#) (Global Managing Director, English) said:

"We want to help strengthen Ukrainians' connections with the wider world. This initiative will create new opportunities for Ukrainians. We know that developing real-life English language skills can dramatically improve people's prospects and this new partnership will focus on developing English language education across the country."



<https://www.cambridge.org/news-and-insights/ukraine-cambridge-partnership-english-language-education>

With this partnership close to my heart, we continue building relationships that carry reform in the educational sphere in Ukraine forward — with clarity, care and shared purpose.

Without a doubt I am very grateful to the UK for its continuous support of Ukraine at different levels and feeling proud to be part of CUPA and contributing to developing a bright future for my native country.

Nataliia Zinets

(Senior Project Manager, Portfolio Office, Technology,
Cambridge University Press & Assessment)

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Support firefighters and rescue workers in Ukraine

<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/p/support-firefighters-and-rescue-workers-in-ukraine>



**Support
firefighters
+ rescue
workers in
Ukraine!**

We have been helping UK trade unionists and others raise funds for UA's 10th Rescue Squad, based in Donetsk oblast – so far providing tens of thousands of pounds in vehicles, equipment and PPE. More is needed – please help!



More about the Rescue Squad, their life-saving work and their union – and **DONATE** – at **bit.ly/supportukrainerescue** or scan QR

More information about this appeal / donate:
bit.ly/supportukrainerescue or use QR code

ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org

info@ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org

We are also on **Bluesky, Facebook, Instagram** and **X/Twitter**

USC is the UK's trade union-based campaign in support of Ukraine and its workers.

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Unite members at CUPA recognise the many barriers to recruitment, promotion and retention affecting UK businesses with regards to Ukrainian workers both skilled and unskilled, and the immense and often highly distressing prolonged pressures on Ukrainians here with regards to freedom to work and right to stay - during a period of intensifying aggression perpetrated upon Ukraine itself by Russian invading forces now 3½ years into the war.

Nataliia Zinets, author of the CUPA-MoES article on previous pages, addresses this thorny issue and highlights the Early Day Motion “Ensuring stability for Ukrainian refugees in the UK” as a means of redress, which we hope Unite members here will lobby their MPs to support.

Unite Committee

Visas and obstacles impinging on Ukrainians seeking survival in UK

Ukrainians are very grateful for the support the UK has provided both to Ukraine and to the many Ukrainian families who were forced to flee their homes because of this brutal war. We deeply appreciate the protection we have received, including the recent extension of the 18-month stay under the Ukraine schemes.

As of late 2024, around 217,000 Ukrainians were residing in the UK and vast majority are receiving tremendous support from their local communities. In many towns across the continent there are Ukrainian schools, most adults are working, and Ukrainian children are settled in British schools. We are doing our best to rebuild our lives with dignity and to contribute meaningfully to society.

However, I want to express how hurt and unsettled many of Ukrainian families feel in light of the government’s current messaging:

“We recognise the Ukrainian government’s desire for the return of their citizens to help rebuild Ukraine when it is safe to do so. This is why the temporary Ukraine schemes do not lead to settlement.”

This policy, while presented in a diplomatic way, deeply troubles Ukrainian families in the UK. It echoes the logic behind Operation Keelhaul—a tragic and shameful episode in British history, during which Soviet citizens and soldiers in the West were forcibly repatriated to the USSR after World War II. Many of them faced imprisonment, torture, or death. This historical parallel, however uncomfortable, is impossible to ignore for those of Ukrainians now being told they have no future here.

Among Ukrainian families there are people from illegally occupied territories, people whose cities are under daily missile attacks, and families who have lost homes, jobs, and loved ones. Nobody can guarantee their safety back in Ukraine—not yet, and perhaps not for many years. It’s not just statistics or burdens to be managed. These are people with lives, hopes, and dreams—many of those working, studying, and actively contributing to their local communities.

Ukrainians simply want a chance to plan their lives—not to live in fear of being uprooted or deported like in Stalin’s times. *(continued...)*

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Ukrainians have lots of initiatives in place launched by pro-active communities and leaders on different levels. One of the examples is the Early Day Motion, **EDM (Early Day Motion)1000: Ensuring stability for Ukrainian refugees in the UK**

<https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/63371/ensuring-stability-for-ukrainian-refugees-in-the-uk#:~:text=That%20this%20House%20believes%20that%20Ukrainian%20refugees%20fleeing,a%20pathway%20for%20obtaining%20Indefinite%20Leave%20to%20Remain.>

Ukrainians remain grateful for the UK's solidarity with Ukraine, and hope this support will continue to include compassion, justice, and respect for human dignity.

Nataliia Zinets

Further Reading:

[Ukrainian refugees face losing jobs and homes due to UK visa extension uncertainty](#) [The Guardian, 3 Feb 2025]

[Support and information for people affected by the crisis in Ukraine](#) [the Refugee Council, ca. 19 Feb 2025]

[EU proposes extending right for 4m Ukrainians to stay in bloc until 2027](#) [The Guardian, 4 Jun 2025]

Cambridge Scholar Brings Ukraine's Voices to the Stage in Acclaimed Play

Professor Rory Finnin, Fellow of Robinson College and Professor of Ukrainian Studies at the University of Cambridge, has played a pivotal role in the creation of *The Reckoning*, a powerful new work of documentary theatre now showing at London's Arcola Theatre. Co-written by Anastasiia Kosodii and Josephine Burton, and directed by Burton, the play draws on verified witness testimonies from across Ukraine to confront the brutal realities of Russia's war of aggression.

Described as "shattering" by *The Guardian* and "a challenging, artfully constructed indictment of Russian war crimes" by *The Stage*, *The Reckoning* blends storytelling, music, and shared food to forge solidarity between performers and audience. Professor Finnin's research and collaboration helped shape the play's ethical and cultural depth, supported by a grant from Cambridge's AHRC Impact Starter Fund.

As Finnin said on opening night:

"*The Reckoning* empowers us to look closely and to see with new purpose. It brings Ukrainian voices to the fore and challenges us to listen and respond to them, with urgency and moral clarity."

Read more: [Cambridge scholar helps bring Ukraine's pain and power to the stage in critically acclaimed creative collaboration | University of Cambridge](#)

Unite the Union – Ukraine Update

Ukrainian Independence Day 2025

Ukrainian Heritage Art & Music Centre is initiating a large project for the Independence Day of Ukraine, which will last two days: August 23 - Ukrainian Flag Day and August 24 - Ukrainian Independence Day! You are welcome to join Ukrainians for the celebrations in Cambridge!

The program will begin on 23rd August with a traditional protest rally at 2pm on Kings Parade which will last for one hour and from 3pm will continue at the Ukrainian House on Fitzroy Street in Cambridge, CB1 1EW.

On Sunday, August 24, HAM Centre is planning a Ukrainian Independence Day Public March through the city's central streets, starting at 11am near St. Paul Cathedral and finishing with a protest rally on Kings Parade at 2pm.

<https://www.facebook.com/share/1KTKZGkZaK/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

