

UKRAINE SOLIDARITY

TUC
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Solidarity with Ukrainian Workers: Why Congress Must Back the NUM Motion

By Chris Kitchen, General Secretary, National Union of Mineworkers



At this year's TUC Congress, the National Union of Mineworkers is calling on our movement to stand firmly with Ukrainian workers by supporting our motion, **Solidarity with Ukrainian Workers.**

Across Ukraine, workers are living and working under conditions no trade unionist should ever face. As the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine (KVPU) reports, "not a single day in August passed without a Russian attack on Ukraine." Workers in Kyiv, Kryvyi Rih, Zaporizhzhia, Kherson and beyond endure relentless missile and drone strikes that make the daily journey to work a matter of life and death. In August alone, Russia launched "more than 6,000 drones... more than 200 missiles and over 5,000 aerial bombs against Ukraine."

These are not abstract statistics. They are the lived reality of miners, steelworkers, railway workers, medical

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staff, emergency responders and logistics workers. KVPU reports that in August 2026, 48 workers were killed and 158 injured at their workplaces, with 301 killed and 1,303 injured since the start of the year. Mines in the Dnipropetrovsk region—where our sister union, the Independent Trade Union of Miners of Ukraine (NPGU), organises—were attacked more than 20 times in August alone.

But nowhere is the brutality more concentrated than at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP), Europe's largest nuclear facility, seized by Russian forces in 2022. The occupiers have attempted to force workers to accept Russian citizenship and sign contracts with the Russian State Atomic Energy Corporation (Rosatom).

FREE THE ZAPORIZHZHIA 15

Chris Kitchen, General Secretary National Union of Mineworkers

The Nuclear Energy and Industry Workers' Union of Ukraine – Atomprofspilka, has reported 1,000 workers have been subjected to abuse and torture, and only 3,000 of the original 11,000 employees remain. Placing the safety of the Plant at serious risk.

Most shocking has been the return of Stalin era repression, with the abduction, torture and imprisonment of workers. Fifteen members of the Nuclear Energy and Industry Workers' Union of Ukraine, Atomprofspilka—have been subjected to show trials and sentenced to up to 25 years on fabricated charges.

Among them is Serhii Potyng, a member of the Youth Council of Atomprofspilka whose case symbolises the cruelty of the occupation. He was threatened to cease assisting residents and his fellow workers, his wife was detained and tortured before he himself was abducted, tortured, accused of 'terrorism,' and sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment.

This is not simply an attack on individuals—it is a deliberate strategy to suppress trade unionism by Russian occupiers. Independent unions were banned in occupied Donbas after 2014. Russian forces murdered miners' union leader Ivan Reznichenko in 2015.

The repression at ZNPP is a part of Russia's murderous war against the Ukrainian people, which has targeted and killed thousands of civilians, including workers in the energy, mining, health, education, rail, fire and rescue and all killed while performing essential civilian duties.



Natalia Shulha, union member at Zaporizhzhia NPP sentenced by Russian occupiers to 15 years' imprisonment

The Ukrainian labour movement—KVPU and Federation of Trade Unions (FPU)—has appealed directly to us for solidarity. Congress must answer that call. Our motion commits the TUC to campaign for the release of the detained ZNPP workers, to highlight the plight of all workers in occupied Ukrainian territory, and to strengthen international trade union action through the ITUC and ETUC.

This is not a distant conflict. It is a struggle for the fundamental rights every trade unionist holds dear: the right to organise, to work in safety, to live free from persecution. Ukrainian workers are defending those rights under bombardment.

At Congress 2026, I urge delegates across our movement: support the NUM motion. Stand with Ukrainian workers. Demand freedom for the imprisoned trade unionists of Zaporizhzhia.

APPEAL TO DELEGATES TO THE TRADES UNION CONGRESS

Dear Sisters and Brothers in the trade union movement,

We, the teachers, educators, and school staff of Kryvyi Rih, united within the Free Trade Union of Education Workers, address you in the spirit of international labour solidarity. We hold the deepest respect for your long-standing struggle for workers' rights, social justice, and peace. In these dark times for our country, we are sincerely grateful to the British trade union movement for your humanitarian support and unwavering solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

Today, Ukrainian education is facing a profound humanitarian crisis. As fellow trade unionists, we ask you to imagine our daily workplace reality for just one moment. When the siren sounds, the safety of hundreds of children in a school relies entirely on how effectively our skies are protected. For us, air defense systems are not tools of war; they are the ultimate means of civilian protection. They serve as a shield that saves the lives of teachers at their workplaces and children in their classrooms. Currently, this protection is critically diminished. In our industrial city of Kryvyi Rih alone, **121 educational institutions have already been damaged by brutal Russian shelling.** Schools, kindergartens, and vital civilian infrastructure have been destroyed. We call on you to stand up for the right of Ukrainian workers to safe working conditions and to support the call for strengthening the defense of our skies, so we can simply continue to teach children.

The trade union movement has always been built on the core principle: *"An injury to one is an injury to all."* We trust that you will hear the voice of your fellow workers from Kryvyi Rih and support our right to safe labour, a dignified life, and a peaceful future for our students.

In solidarity,

Members of the Free Trade Union of Education Workers of Kryvyi Rih, Ukraine

STOP FASCISM EAST AND WEST

PUTIN'S FRIENDS IN PARLIAMENT

From criminal convictions for taking Russian money to removing the Ukrainian flag from public spaces, Farage and friends have consistently supported Russia and Putin's regime.

FARAGE ADMIRES PUTIN

- Nigel Farage said he "admired" Putin as "an operator" – in 2014, the year Russia invaded Crimea and supported Assad's mass murder in Syria
- Farage lied: "I have never said anything nice about Putin". In fact he said: "he is a very canny, very sharp, very clever political operator, and actually the West has had this wrong for 30 years."

FARAGE PUSHES RUSSIAN PROPAGANDA ON UKRAINE

- As Russian tanks rolled towards Kyiv in 2022, Farage said Russia and Putin were "provoked" – the Kremlin's key talking point.
- Farage says of Russian-invaded provinces Donetsk and Luhansk: "if we held a referendum in those provinces and ask people would they want to be part of Ukraine or Russia, they would say Russia" ... In fact, when Ukraine became independent, Luhansk voted 83.8% to be part of Ukraine; Donetsk 83.9%.



RUSSIAN MONEY AND REFORM CORRUPTION

- Farage was paid to appear numerous times on RT – Putin's personal propaganda channel
- Reform UK's former Welsh leader Nathan Gill was jailed for taking Kremlin bribes
- Yet Farage refused to launch an investigation into the party's vulnerability to Russian influence



PATRIOTISM FOR SALE

The British far right has ties to, or looks favourably on, Russia and Putin's regime.

The far influencer Tommy Robinson (real name Stephen Yaxley-Lennon) has, said Hope Not Hate, become "Putin's useful idiot". Like Farage, he appeared on RT, where in 2020 he denied Assad war crimes in Syria, a Putinist line. Since the start of the full-scale invasion he has repeated and amplified pro-Putin disinformation about the war. In June Robinson was in Moscow funded by Elon Musk's family foundation, attending a Kremlin conference. From where he issued calls for racist mobilisations after a knife attack in Belfast—which then saw a Ukrainian family burned from their home.

Even further to the right of Robinson are **Patriotic Alternative**, who support Russia's war in Ukraine on the basis that Putin is fighting against "gender ideology". Leader Mark Collett regularly posts disinformation and conspiracy theories about the full-scale invasion, blames Ukraine and NATO for Russian aggression, and wrote in the days following the start of the big war that "Western liberal democracy is a greater threat to any Eastern European nation than Russia."

None of this is really a surprise but it is worth noting. The UK far right claims they are the real patriots of Britain, while praising the country's enemies. **It must be called out, time and time again.**

This winter Ukraine Solidarity Campaign will be supporting an international aid convoy to deliver vital aid to education workers and union members resisting the invasion on the frontline. To support our aid project contact us at : info@ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org - find out more at: ukrainesolidarity.org



UKRAINIANS WANT PEACE NOT SURRENDER AND OCCUPATION

Elizabeth Lawrence (UCU Activist and former President)

Since 2022 the Ukrainian people have resisted an all-out invasion of their country. Putin attempted to invade Ukraine and overthrow the existing government. If he had been successful, he would have installed a puppet government, denying the Ukrainian people's right to self-determination.

Since then, Putin's continuing war aims are to annex parts of Ukrainian territory.

The Ukrainian people have suffered much in this war. They want peace, but peace with freedom and security, not surrender and occupation.

Those who put pressure on Ukrainians to compromise are betraying the Ukrainian people – and they have no proposals to make Putin withdraw troops from Ukraine or make any concessions for peace.

Some of the arguments put for 'welfare not warfare' and 'wages not weapons' deny the situation the Ukrainian people are in. Ukrainian workers, their trade unions and civil society organisations struggle for welfare. They oppose the labour code the Ukrainian government is trying to introduce. They demand better rehabilitation

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programmes for those injured by the war.

They call for better pay and conditions for health and education workers. All these are important welfare struggles, which should be supported. They also call for the weapons they need for self-defence. **It's not a choice between welfare and warfare.**

Underlying the calls for 'welfare not warfare' is sometimes the 'proxy war' analysis of the Russo-Ukraine war. This analysis is stuck in 1914 and treats the war as simply an inter-imperialist conflict in which it does not matter which side wins. This ends up supporting Russian imperialism, and by implication the right in general of major powers to treat neighbouring states as their backyards.

The Ukrainian people are fighting a people's war of national liberation. It is in the interests of workers everywhere for Ukraine to win. A Ukrainian victory over Russian imperialism is the best basis for the reconstruction of Ukraine as a democratic, socially-just and environmentally-conscious society, and for democratic reform of the Russian Federation.



This is why many Ukrainian socialists and trade unionists, together with internationalist fighters, are fighting in the armed forces of Ukraine.

'Welfare not warfare' is a slogan which accepts a zero-sum economic approach. It accepts the argument from the capitalist class that the only way to fund warfare is to cut welfare. This is not correct. There are other alternatives such as taxing the rich.

The zero-sum approach is not in the interests of any group of workers if they find themselves in a situation where they have to fight a war against invasion.

We should recognise the danger that the far-right will co-opt slogans like 'welfare not warfare' when they really just mean 'do not spend any money on foreigners'. No books for children overseas.

The text of motion 75 calls for opposition to conscription in the UK. Historically the labour movement has taken a variety of positions on conscription. Many would have supported it in World War II in the war against fascism. We cannot take a position on conscription for all times and places.

In Ukraine the left is campaigning for a fair system of conscription, not calling for its abolition. While we all prefer to settle disputes through negotiation, **sometimes armed resistance to invaders and dictators is needed**, as is the case in Ukraine today.

The labour movement should be internationalist. Internationalism means standing with Ukraine. We should support military and humanitarian aid for Ukraine. We should demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukraine and defend Ukrainians' right to determine their own future.