



**DEMOCRACY
WITHOUT
BORDERS**

27 February 2022

Statement in solidarity with Ukraine

Democracy Without Borders condemns the war of aggression carried out by the Russian regime and its enablers against Ukraine. We declare our solidarity with the Ukrainian people and their government who are faced with this illegal invasion. We stand in solidarity with all people speaking out for peace, democracy and freedom who are abused by the Russian regime and its forces: in Ukraine, Georgia, and Russia itself.

This war of aggression, which is a blatant violation of the UN Charter, is not only directed against the people of Ukraine and fundamental principles of a peaceful international order. It is directed against the principles of democracy, freedom and human rights that have started flourishing in Ukraine. The full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine is escalating the covert and open global war of autocratic regimes against democracy. Democratic forces need to push back as strongly as they can.

We call on all governments to help isolate the Russian regime and its enablers on the international stage, to assist Ukraine in exercising its right to self defense and to adopt the strongest possible measures to apply financial, economic and political pressure on the aggressors so they retreat and end hostilities.

We welcome measures already taken such as the delivery of weapons, closing of air space for Russian carriers, or cutting Russia off from the SWIFT payment system.

We consider the Russian veto against a Security Council resolution on this matter a misuse of the veto privilege as there is an obvious conflict of interest and the veto is entirely self-serving. We call on UN member states to seek a legal opinion from the International Court of Justice on whether the use of the veto under such circumstances can be reconciled with the spirit and aims of the UN Charter.

We welcome that the Security Council invokes the General Assembly's subsidiary responsibility under the principle of "Uniting for Peace". In our legal interpretation of the UN Charter, by way of a resolution adopted by a two-thirds majority, the General Assembly can overrule a veto exercised in the Security Council.

We call on the General Assembly convening under the principle of "Uniting for Peace" to establish that this is a war of aggression and to mandate strong measures of the international community.

The Russian government under Vladimir Putin is kleptocratic and has established a symbiosis with so-called oligarchs. Sanctions need to be applied to all members of this network of political and economic power in Russia who support the attack on Ukraine.

Those responsible for this war of aggression, in particular Vladimir Putin, need to face individual criminal responsibility. We emphasize that the International Criminal Court has legal jurisdiction to prosecute war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide on the territory of Ukraine since 2014 and call on the prosecutor to collect evidence and open an investigation should there be reason to believe that such crimes are perpetrated.

We call on all countries that haven't already done so to join the International Criminal Court and accept its jurisdiction. This is the moment for them to show their commitment to international justice. We regret that the court's jurisdiction over the crime of war of aggression has been implemented in a very restricted way and call on the state parties to review the arrangement.

We believe that a major reform of the UN is necessary to enable the world organization to maintain international peace and security and to deal with global challenges such as climate change or pandemics.

While we believe that a review of the UN Charter is required, including an abolishment of the veto right, important changes should be implemented below this threshold right now.

We call on the UN General Assembly to establish a Parliamentary Assembly using Article 22 of the UN Charter. This UN Parliamentary Assembly will help strengthen the UN's democratic character and involve elected representatives, civil society and citizens in the UN's deliberation and decision-making in a formal way. This new assembly can be an engine for further reforms.

We condemn war of aggression, war crimes, crimes against humanity, genocide and violations of fundamental human rights in all cases, independent from whom and where they are perpetrated. Those responsible need to be held accountable and brought to justice.