

16 September 2024

For media inquiries: Olga Kononenko +27646192237 (WhatsApp), info@uaza.co.za

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

We call on support for universal Human Rights and Democracy

While we appreciate the recognition of Ukrainian support during the anti-apartheid movement, it is essential to continue supporting and upholding the values enshrined in the South African Constitution.

We have noticed that last week IOL-related media have published three articles (10, 14 & 16 September) that seem to misrepresent the Ukrainian Association of South Africa (UAZA) and Ukrainians, which seems to be aiming at creating a negative stereotype. The Ukrainian Association of South Africa has not been contacted for the right of response which we believe is the violation of the [Press Code of Ethics](#).

We are issuing this statement to clarify the facts that were manipulated in the article:

1. Ukraine, as a Soviet Socialist Republic, played a key role in supporting the anti-apartheid movement, and we strongly oppose any distortion of this history.

Key facts:

- In 1962, the first ANC students began their studies for higher education in Kyiv, with many staying in Ukraine for four more years.
 - Many uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) cadres trained in the Soviet Union were sent to Ukraine. Already in 1963-1965, 328 recruits received training near Odesa.
 - For decades Ukraine played a crucial role as a Vice-Chair of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid.
 - In 1963 Oliver Tambo thanked Ukraine for its support, believing these actions could end apartheid.*
2. Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO # 189 – 705) is South African civil society organisation registered in 2017 that unites South Africans and Ukrainians living in South Africa to build a dialogue between the two countries. UAZA has over 200 members of various ethnicities in Cape Town, Durban, Gqeberha, Johannesburg, Limpopo, Pretoria and other major cities.
 3. Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, when Ukraine was a non aligned independent state, and escalated to a full-scale war in February 2022. Since then, russia has launched over 9,600 missiles and nearly 14,000 drones, damaging or destroying 6,203 civilian buildings, including over 2,000 schools, 742 hospitals, and 500 churches.

Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO # 189 – 705) unites South Africans and Ukrainians living in South Africa and aims to build a dialogue between the two countries. www.uaza.co.za email: info@uaza.co.za

16 September 2024

For media inquiries: Olga Kononenko +27646192237 (WhatsApp), info@uaza.co.za

As of September 2024, over **19,546 Ukrainian children remained under Russian control after they have been unlawfully and forcibly deported from Ukraine.** Post-2022, Russia approved new legislation allowing changes to the citizenship, names, and birthdates of Ukrainian children without parental consent. **Ukrainian children have been sent to 57 regions of Russia, with some already adopted into Russian families.** Even with the support from the UN, the International Red Cross, and others, only 388 children have been returned in nearly three years.

The Russian invasion of the sovereign country is an open violation of all principles declared in the Bandung Conference (1955). It is also in violation of UN Charter and in violation of hundreds of international agreements.

UAZA's activities are grounded in respect for South Africa's struggle for justice, equality, and freedom—values championed by Nelson Mandela were shared by the Ukrainian political prisoners during the Soviet times and are shared by Ukrainian political prisoners of Russia now, and those fighting for their freedom and rule-based order today.

Nelson Mandela himself received Ukraine's highest decoration, the Order of Prince Yaroslav the Wise, in Cape Town on May 5, 1999. This honor recognised his immense contribution to justice and human rights globally, further cementing the bond between Ukraine and South Africa. By placing the Ukrainian flag on Madiba's statue, we sought to reaffirm this bond in the spirit of mutual respect and shared values: freedom, justice, and human rights.

We call on all civil society organisations to defend the civil society organization in South Africa.

We call on all historians and academics to intervene and not to allow history manipulations.

We call on journalists to uphold the high standards of journalism and Press Code of Ethics.

We call on the South African government to uphold the South African Constitution and the rules-based international order and to immediately stop any economic or military cooperation with the states that violates international legislation and kills children.

Impose economic sanctions on Russian companies and individuals linked to the killings of civilians until the Russian military forces withdraw and Ukrainian borders are restored.

Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO # 189 – 705) unites South Africans and Ukrainians living in South Africa and aims to build a dialogue between the two countries. www.uaza.co.za email: info@uaza.co.za

16 September 2024

For media inquiries: Olga Kononenko +27646192237 (WhatsApp), info@uaza.co.za

***“To be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects
and enhances the freedom of others” Nelson Mandela***

Happy Heritage Month, fellow South Africans—brothers and sisters!

Additional information:

1. What Ukrainians are fighting for? Ukrainians are defending their freedom against Russian Imperialism

Russia’s long-term goals are to dismantle the rules-based international order, undermine democratic unity, and revive imperialism. Aligning with authoritarian states like Belarus, Iran, and North Korea, Russia aims to reestablish the Russian Empire, erase Ukrainian identity, and commit genocide. The South African Constitution, which upholds the rules-based order, stands opposed to such imperial ambitions.

In 1994, Ukraine gave up its nuclear arsenal for security assurances from the USA, UK, and Russia. Russia’s aggression threatens global non-proliferation and increases the risk of more nations seeking weapons of mass destruction. In 2023, global military spending rose by 7%, diverting funds from socio-economic development.

2. Key facts on Ukraine’s support of the anti-apartheid movement*

Ukraine, one of the 15 Soviet republics, became a founding UN member in 1945. Despite limited foreign policy freedom, it focused on the support for the anti-apartheid movement:

- The first cohort of ANC students to pursue university degrees in the Soviet Union began their studies in Kyiv in 1962, and several remained in Ukraine for four more years.
- Of the ordinary soldiers in uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK, the ANC’s armed wing) who trained in the Soviet Union, most went to Ukraine. Between 1963 and 1965, according to historian Vladimir Shubin, 328 recruits received military training near Odesa, on the Black Sea coast in Ukraine. In the mid-1960s, the Soviet Union opened a training center for guerilla fighters in Perevalne, in the Crimean peninsula.

Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO # 189 – 705) unites South Africans and Ukrainians living in South Africa and aims to build a dialogue between the two countries. www.uaza.co.za email: info@uaza.co.za

For media inquiries: Olga Kononenko +27646192237 (WhatsApp), info@uaza.co.za

- Ukraine prominently advocated for measures against the apartheid government. In 1962, with a powerful declaration of support from the Ukrainian SSR, the UN General Assembly recommended stringent diplomatic, economic, and military sanctions against the South African government.
- In 1963, Oliver Tambo, the deputy head of the ANC, wrote a thank you letter to the Foreign Ministry of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic expressing his gratitude on behalf of millions of South Africans for supporting the resolution that called for sanctions implemented by the UN General Assembly in 1962. Tambo, expressed his appreciation for this support of justice and human rights and believed that, Ukrainian efforts would help to end the politics of apartheid.
- In 1985, the Ukrainian mission to the UN endorsed comprehensive sanctions against South Africa.
- Since 1963 the Ukrainian Soviet Republic has been training ANC cadres
- For many years, the representative of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic has been a Vice-Chairman of the UN Special Committee Against Apartheid and has co-sponsored many resolutions against apartheid.

3. Ukrainian dissidents saw South African freedom fighters, including Nelson Mandela as inspiration.

In Ukraine, as in other Soviet republics, the dissident movement opposed national oppression, resisting violations of sovereignty, Russification, and cultural destruction, while also fighting for political rights.

Human rights in the Soviet Union were severely limited. The Soviet Union was a totalitarian state from 1927 until 1953 and a one-party state until 1990. Freedom of speech was suppressed and dissents were imprisoned or killed.

During the Soviet Union and the tsarist empire, **Russification** was a form of linguistic imperialism, involving both overt and covert policies aimed at imposing Russian language and culture. These policies were enforced by Russian authorities and continue to be implemented by the modern Russian Federation.

Statement during the Ukraine-Africa Just Peace Talk made by the [Ukrainian Dissident Myroslav Marynych](#) who was inspired by Nelson Mandela: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxBPVjERtLM>

4. What were Ukrainians doing near the Mandela statue?

Ukrainian Association of South Africa (NPO # 189 – 705) unites South Africans and Ukrainians living in South Africa and aims to build a dialogue between the two countries. www.uaza.co.za email: info@uaza.co.za

16 September 2024

For media inquiries: Olga Kononenko +27646192237 (WhatsApp), info@uaza.co.za

The photo referenced by many IOL media outlets, sourced from the Russian information manipulation channel Sputnik, is actually from an official gathering in Cape Town on 24 February 2023, marking the somber first anniversary of the full-scale invasion.

Many Ukrainians and South Africans draw parallels between Ukraine's resistance to the Russian invasion and South Africa's struggle against apartheid. The principles championed by anti-apartheid leaders are what Ukrainians are fighting for against imperial Russia.

We deeply respect and honor the legacy of Nelson Mandela, a global icon of peace, justice, and human dignity, who is cherished not only in South Africa but also worldwide. At the Ukrainian support rally, the placement of the Ukrainian flag on the statue of Nelson Mandela was intended as a symbol of unity and shared values of freedom and justice.

5. How South Africans can support Ukraine

Join the Ukrainian Association of South Africa by becoming a member or following us on social media.

[Donate](#) to the Ukrainian Association of South Africa and the Voices of Children initiative, which provides psychological support to Ukrainian children affected by the Russian war.