

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

33 YEARS OF UKRAINIAN INDEPENDENCE AND DEMOCRACY

#StandWithUkraine in Cape Town, Durban, and Pretoria: Take Action!

24 August

📍 **PRETORIA** - 12:00 - 17:00 **Charity Bazaar and Ukrainian Culture Exhibition** at the Hellenic Community <https://www.quicket.co.za/events/275046-independence-day-of-ukraine/#/>

📍 **DURBAN** - 12:00 pm Screening of the **Oscar-winning film 20 Days of Mariupol** at the AFDA, L1 2A Highdale Road, Glen Anil <https://rb.gy/prvcdp>

📍 **CAPE TOWN** - 11:00 - 14:00 Peaceful Gathering at the Mandela Glasses, Sea Point.

23 August

📍 **CAPE TOWN** – 10:00 at **Central Library** Donation of books for Ukrainian bookshelf by the Consular of Ukraine to RSA and UAZA

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

On 24 August 1991, Ukraine declared its independence from the Soviet Union, with 90.3% of Ukrainians voting for sovereignty in a referendum. Since then, democracy has been a core value, with over 80% of the population committed to it in 2023. **The Act of Ukrainian Independence, drafted by dissidents like Levko Lukyanenko, who spent 27 years in Soviet prisons, mirrors South Africa's struggle for freedom.**

Ukrainians worldwide honour this day, recognising the leaders, soldiers, and patriots who fought for freedom. This year, we pay tribute to the defenders of Ukraine—doctors, rescue workers, volunteers, and ordinary citizens—who have resisted Russia's invasion for over 900 days.

Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014 and escalated to full-scale war in February 2022. Since then, Russia has launched 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. Over 10 million Ukrainians have been displaced, with those in occupied areas suffering the most.

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

Despite 18% of Ukrainian territory being occupied, **Ukraine has militarily regained control over the Black Sea and reopened the grain corridor, initiating the Grain from Ukraine program.** The Grain from Ukraine program is established to prevent famine and provide much needed food support to no less than 5 million people in the countries of Africa and Asia, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Sudan, Southern Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, Kenya, and Nigeria. Grain from Ukraine is due to be expanded, with support provided to more countries including Mozambique, Malawi, Madagascar, Djibouti, Liberia, Mauritania, Lebanon, and others.

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.

As of June 2024, **Russia has unlawfully and forcibly deported 19,546 Ukrainian children.** 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.** support from the UN, the International Red Cross, and others, only 388 children have been returned in nearly three years.

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.

We urge the South African community to **CHOOSE DEMOCRACY OVER AUTOCRACY** and to **STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH UKRAINE** to help defend its sovereignty, freedom, to protect its people, and pave the way **FOR A JUST AND LONG LASTING PEACE.**

WE CALL ON THE SOUTH AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO:

- *Uphold the South African Constitution and the rules-based international order;*
- *Join the International Coalition for the Return of Ukrainian Children;*
- *Cease economic cooperation with Russia and impose sanctions until all Russian forces withdraw and Ukrainian borders are restored.*

“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