

HIGHLIGHTS

PULSE OF PEACE IN DONBAS



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Ukrainian human rights organizations have drafted an appeal to the international community with steps that governments of all countries must take to support Ukraine. These are:

1. Maximum economic sanctions, including necessarily disconnecting Russia from SWIFT and imposing a trade embargo.
2. Shutting down the skies over Ukraine. This point is especially difficult and very important. It is very difficult for many countries to agree to it, but we should require them to cover Ukraine from the air, at least from Russian missiles.
3. Complete isolation of Russia in every possible sense and format.
4. Provision of the maximum number of weapons for Ukraine, especially anti-aircraft weapons.
5. Immediate imposition of personal sanctions (entry ban and blocking of assets) against all Russian oligarchs, not just a narrow circle, as now (more on the #BlockPutinWallets tag).
6. Allocation of maximum financial aid for Ukraine.
8. Close the passage of Russian military vessels through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.
9. Humanitarian aid.

RUSSIA SUFFERS LOSSES

The Russian authorities officially recognized the first military man killed in Ukraine – the head of Dagestan [expressed](#) his condolences in connection with the death of officer Nurmagomed Gadzhimagomedov. Since Russia officially [recognizes](#) its actions in Ukraine as a "special operation" rather than a war, data on combat casualties may be classified in [accordance with a Russian presidential decree](#) of May 28, 2015, amending the list of information classified as state secrets. [According to the Ukrainian Defense Ministry](#), the number of dead Russian servicemen exceeded four thousand. Despite the fact that officially Russia denies such reports, journalists [managed to contact relatives](#) of the captured Russian servicemen and confirm their identities. Ukrainian Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk [asked](#) the International Red Cross to help with the removal of the bodies of Russian servicemen.

The Ukrainian Interior Ministry [created](#) a website where it publishes photos and documents of dead and captured Russian servicemen so that their relatives could find them, and hotlines were also opened.

Leaked documents from the Russian Ministry of Health [showed](#) that the Kremlin was preparing for the many casualties caused by Russia's invasion of Ukraine and was asking for doctors and medics from across the country to be identified ready for deployment.

Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky made an appeal to Ukrainians. He stressed that Russia's plan to create a puppet government in Ukraine is gone, [noted](#) that the international anti-war coalition is active and called on the EU to grant membership to Ukraine. He also thanked Russians protesting against the war and called on everyone who cares to help Ukraine.

SHELLING OF UKRAINIAN CITIES CONTINUES

On February 26, heavy fighting and shelling of both military and civilian infrastructure continued. In Kyiv, one of the missile strikes targeted a [residential building](#), injuring [six people](#). Ukrainian Prosecutor General Irina Venediktova [stated](#) that this was qualified as a violation of the laws and customs of war. She noted that each of Russia's crimes is carefully recorded. At the same time, Russian official news agencies [reported](#) almost simultaneously and in the same wording, citing a source in the Russian Defense Ministry, that Russia was not involved. In the city of Vasylykiv near Kyiv, an [oil depot](#) caught fire after a rocket attack, which could lead to an environmental disaster. In Kharkiv a gas pipeline was [blown up](#). A [brief chronicle](#) of the hostilities is available at the [link](#), and photos of the third day of the war are here. Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba [stated](#) that Russian propaganda spread fakes that Ukraine was allegedly preparing to use a "dirty bomb" – radiological weapons – against Russia. He stressed that Ukraine has no nuclear weapons.

SANCTIONS AGAINST RUSSIAN

Sanctions pressure on Russia is intensifying. The EU, together with the US, Canada and the UK, [intends](#) to freeze the assets of the Russian Central Bank, disconnect a number of Russian banks from SWIFT, and deny Russian oligarchs access to Western markets. The head of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, [noted](#) that this would effectively block Russian exports and imports.

The SWIFT system, for its part, [declared](#) its readiness to execute the decision on sanctions against Russian banks after a "legal order". This means that Russian banks will not be able to conduct transactions with foreign counterparties automatically. It is not clear which banks will fall under this restriction - so far it is about the banks that are already under international sanctions, but the list may be expanded. The US expects that, following the disconnection of a number of Russian banks from SWIFT, financial institutions around the world will stop operations with them. Assets of the Central Bank of Russia in these countries will be frozen, that is, the Russian Central Bank will not be able to use its international reserves to support the ruble. According to the estimates of the White House, 630 billion dollars worth of foreign exchange reserves will be blocked. For a detailed description of sanctions against the banking system, as well as financial, technological, and visa sanctions, [see the Meduza article](#).

Many countries, including [Germany](#), [Belgium](#), and [Slovakia](#), are providing arms to Ukraine. Nine European countries [have closed](#) their airspace to Russian Federation aircraft, with German television channel ARD [reporting](#) on plans by all EU countries to close airspace to Russian Federation aircraft. In fact, it would mean a stop of air communication of the European Union with Russia. At the same time, Russian presidential spokesman Dmitry Peskov [said](#) that the sanctions adopted by Western countries because of Russia's attack on Ukraine are serious, but the government prepared for them in advance. According to him, "immediate measures are being taken to minimize the damage" from them. At the same time, Dmitry Medvedev, deputy chairman of the Russian Security Council, [commented](#) on the sanctions imposed on him and other members of the Russian Security Council, saying that the sanctions would not change anything, diplomatic relations were practically unnecessary, and he called Russia's suspension of membership in the Council of Europe and PACE "a good opportunity to restore the institution of the death penalty". He also [admitted](#) that Russia might withdraw from the strategic offensive arms treaty.

WAR CRIMES COMMITTED IN RUSSIA

Amnesty International [stated](#) that Russia is lying by saying that it only uses high-precision weapons in Ukraine. Human rights activists note that the Russian invasion of Ukraine was marked by indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas and strikes on facilities protected under international humanitarian law, and the Russian military demonstrated a blatant disregard for civilian life by using ballistic missiles and other explosive weapons with wide-area effects in densely populated areas. The

International Partnership for Human Rights [published](#) Truth Hounds' analysis of serious violations of international civil law committed by Russia in the first 48 hours of the attack on Ukraine.

More than 150,000 Ukrainian refugees, [according to the UN](#), have left Ukraine; about half have gone to Poland. The number of internally displaced persons is unknown. Ukrainian Health Minister Viktor Lyashko [said](#) 198 civilians, including three children, have been killed since the war began. Another 1,115 people, including 33 children, were injured.

Protests [continue](#) around the world.

An open [anti-war letter](#) was signed by over 250 Russian municipal deputies.