

Council support for Ukrainian government

Statement to be delivered by Dominic Taylor to the Bath and North East Somerset Council meeting on 24th February, 2026

On the 25th March, 2022, in light of the horrific conflict in the Ukraine that had begun a month prior, the council honourably resolved to 'express their full support and solidarity with Ukrainian people' (point 6 of minute 135 ¹). However this is not what happened. The council instead publicly expressed their full support and solidarity with the Ukrainian government:

- the Ukrainian flag has flown continuously over the town hall ever since;
- a sign in the market, accompanied by the Ukrainian flag, informs visitors exactly how many miles they are from Kiev;
- Russian language commentaries are no longer available in tourist attractions, even though Russian is spoken by a quarter of a billion people including many Ukrainians, but are available in Ukrainian, which is spoken by less than 40 million people;
- Ukrainian war propaganda was hosted in the public library, clearly expressing a desire for victory rather than for peace.

As you are no doubt aware, the regime that you are supporting came to power in 2014 following Euromaidan, or the Euromaidan coup as it is also known, in which democratically elected president Viktor Yanukovich was removed from power. In 2015, The Guardian described the new regime in the following terms: 'Welcome to Ukraine, the most corrupt nation in Europe' ². In 2018, Reuters wrote about 'Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem' ³. In 2021, before the Russian invasion, NE Global declared 'Ukrainian president's rule becomes increasingly corrupt, authoritarian' ⁴. And indeed it did: in 2022, the regime imposed martial law, prohibited military age men from leaving the country ⁵ and has not held an election ever since. In 2024, the BBC reported on conscription squads forcibly abducting young men into the Ukrainian army ⁶. Looking beyond corporate media, one finds compelling allegations of money laundering, sabotage of gas pipelines, harbouring bioweapons labs and involvement in forced organ harvesting. This is the regime with which you have publicly identified for the past four years without ever giving meaningful justification in spite of having been challenged on multiple occasions.

As you are also aware, on the 25th March, 2022, the council noted that it receives £10,500 per Ukrainian refugee (point 3 of minute 135 ¹); this is compared to the paltry £600 in taxes from local residents (£120 million / 200,000 ⁷). You therefore have a financial incentive to perpetuate a conflict that has already claimed the lives of hundreds of thousands of people ⁸, many of them Ukrainian people with whom you have expressed solidarity. However, it is never a legitimate function of a local council to take sides in an international conflict, especially when financial considerations may sway sound judgement, nor to do anything that perpetuates violence and bloodshed. I therefore demand that you do what you committed to do four years ago: show your 'solidarity with Ukrainian people' by ceasing all actions that aggravate the conflict and that support the regime currently oppressing them.

¹ <https://democracy.bathnes.gov.uk/documents/g6183/Printed%20minutes%2025th-Mar-2022%2011.00%20Council.pdf?T=1>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/news/2015/feb/04/welcome-to-the-most-corrupt-nation-in-europe-ukraine>

³ <https://www.reuters.com/article/opinion/commentary-ukraines-neo-nazi-problem-idUSKBN1GV2TC/>

⁴ <https://www.neglobal.eu/ukrainian-presidents-rule-becomes-increasingly-corrupt-authoritarian/>

⁵ <https://www.france24.com/en/tv-shows/focus/20230607-ukraine-s-mobilisation-tests-its-social-fabric>

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cz994d6vqe5o>

⁷ <https://www.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2024-25-Statement-of-Accounts-FINAL-For-Website-Accessible.pdf>

⁸ <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c62n922dnw7o>