

Belarusian Union Leader: Russia's War in Ukraine Is Not Our War. We Can Stop it, We Must Stop It!

March 29, 2022



Dear compatriots, dear workers!

Russia's war against Ukraine has been going on for more than a month. From the beginning of the war, Belarus sided with Russia. Its troops enter Ukraine from our territory, rockets are launched, planes take off. And the more Belarus gets involved in the war, the more its participation in the aggression destroys infrastructure, homes, kills Ukrainian civilians, women, the elderly and children, the more the sanctions of the international community increase against it.

We are beginning to feel their effects. Prices rise, companies close or resort to part-time work, and wage problems begin. The turbulence has already affected strategic companies such as MZKT, oil refineries and Belaruskali. For the first time in many years, Belaruskali was forced to take out a bank loan to pay the salaries of its employees.

But this is just the beginning. The determination of the international community to punish those responsible for the war and the scale of the sanctions are such that in a few years there will not be much left of the country's modern economy. Belarus has never faced such a challenge in its history.

The country will gradually deteriorate to the technical and technological level of the economy of the middle of the last century. The deterioration will be accompanied by endemic unemployment, extremely low wages, poverty and the miserable existence of the population.

Moreover, Belarus, with Russia as the military aggressor, will have to pay multi-billion dollar reparations to Ukraine for the enormous damage caused by the war. Just as Nazi Germany paid reparations to the Soviet Union after World War II. This is how the factories of MAZ, MTZ, Motovelo and others appeared in Minsk.

Thus, Belarus will pay, by guaranteeing its own future, the adventure of having participated in the war against Ukraine. For years to come, the country has put its existence as an independent and sovereign state at stake, and its population will be on the verge of physical survival.

Few countries in the world have experienced wars in their history as deadly as we have. We must do everything we can to regain a good reputation, so that Belarus is never seen as a military aggressor. And who else will do it? The name of our country, the names of our villages and cities must not embody the threat and danger to the people of neighboring Ukraine, fraternal for us. Must not embody death.

I, the President of the Belarusian Congress of Democratic Trade Unions, Alexander Yarashuk, am addressing you. Russia's war in Ukraine is not our war. We can stop it, we must stop it! The absolute majority of Belarusians, 97%, do not want Belarus to participate in the war in Ukraine! Our descendants will not forgive us for silence at the most critical moment in our history! Don't be afraid of anything or anyone! It's hard to imagine anything worse than what is happening to us today. Never and nowhere in the world has the demand to end the war been a crime! And never and nowhere in the world has there been a nobler cause than to oppose war, against the murder of innocent people, women, the elderly and children!

Demand in your workplaces, in the name of the work collectives: no to the war, no to the participation of Belarus in it! Demand a ban on sending Belarusian troops to Ukraine, demand the withdrawal of Russian troops from our country! Let's do it now, let's do it today! Because tomorrow it will be late! Because tomorrow for Belarusians may never come!

Minsk, March 29, 2022