

Solidarity with Vladyslav Starodubtsev. Fight Fascism.

written by Ukraine Solidarity Network (U.S.) | October 23, 2026



Vladyslav Starodubtsev, a Ukrainian military veteran and left-wing historian, was beaten by a mob of 15-20 far-right activists shortly before he was scheduled to deliver a talk titled “Left Lviv: A Short History of a Long Tradition” at the Lviv office of Social Movement (Sotsialnyi Rukh), a Ukrainian democratic ecosocialist organization.

The assault was not only an act of violence against Vladyslav but also an assault on Ukraine’s democratic left and its right to organize, speak, and participate freely in political life.

In his first statement following the attack, Vladyslav urged that “this attack should not allow the West to talk about ‘Nazis in Ukraine’ and downplay the need for Ukraine’s support.”

Unfortunately, it would not be surprising if self-described leftists who oppose the economic and military assistance essential to Ukraine’s resistance against Russia’s imperialist war of aggression opportunistically seized upon this attack to reinforce the Kremlin’s narrative that Ukraine requires systematic “denazification” and is therefore undeserving of international support.

We should respect Vladyslav’s wishes by unequivocally rejecting any attempt to exploit this attack to undermine solidarity with Ukraine. Those who believe that ending economic, humanitarian, and military assistance to Ukraine represents an antifascist position should consider whose interests such a policy would actually serve.

The threat posed by members of Ukraine’s far right is real, as this brutal attack demonstrates, and it must not be dismissed or minimized. The relatively weak electoral performance of far-right parties, whose joint presidential candidate received just 1.65% of the vote in 2019, does not negate the danger posed by violent extremist groups operating outside electoral politics. But their existence does not justify Russia’s invasion or its cynical appropriation of antifascist rhetoric to legitimize a war of aggression.

The struggle against the far right is not confined by national borders. It demands confronting political violence and authoritarianism wherever they emerge, including in the United States, where Trump commands a substantial political base, and in Russia, where Putin’s government has systematically suppressed political opposition, including anti-war movements. Solidarity with Ukraine and solidarity with those resisting the far right within Ukraine are not contradictory

commitments. They are entirely compatible.

We wish Vladyslav a full and speedy recovery. We respect his courage as someone who volunteered to fight against Russia's invasion, and we value his important work researching and documenting the history of Ukraine's democratic left. His voice deserves to be heard, not silenced through political violence.

Vladyslav Starobubstev's statement:

Thank you for your support. Right now, I'm thinking of two things: that this attack should not allow the West to talk about "Nazis in Ukraine" and downplay the need for Ukraine's support. The actions of ultra-right activists today were not only absolutely unacceptable for a democratic society — and showed the weakness of the right-wing idea— and can also threaten Ukraine's media image. And the second thing is that such events should not scare Ukrainian patriots, especially the left, from holding public events. Because that's exactly how societies decline — if you let such people dictate what, how, and where discussions take place.

I love everyone. Thank you all for your support. It feels very emotional and stressful, but seeing so many people — I feel strength, and indeed, a conscious democratic society. I also feel friendship, brotherhood, and solidarity.

I'll respond to everyone today and tomorrow. Too much today.

Source:

<https://www.ukrainesolidaritynetwork.us/solidarity-with-vladyslav-starobubstev-fight-fascism/>

Sign the Change! Petition here.

News coverage:

Alex Stezhensky, "Far-right group assaults Ukrainian war veteran before lecture in Lviv," New Voice of Ukraine, Oct. 18, 2026, <https://english.nv.ua/nation/ukrainian-veteran-allegedly-beaten-by-far-right-group-ahead-of-lviv-lecture-50651116.html>.