

Stand Against Genocide and Imperialism, from Palestine to Ukraine

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Two wars dominate world politics today-and the U.S. is involved in both, although in very different ways. Washington enables Israel's genocidal onslaught on Gaza with weapons, funds and political support while providing direct military backing through airstrikes in Yemen, Syria and Iraq. In Ukraine, however, the U.S. opposes Russia's also-genocidal attack on its culture and people, and has provided weapons, funds, and political backing to the Ukraine government. Washington's double standards and hypocrisy are obvious to the millions of people around the world who have taken to the streets in solidarity with Palestine.

The staggering cynicism of the Biden administration-denouncing Russian missiles that destroy schools and hospitals in Ukraine while sending weapons to perform such atrocities in Gaza-may lead some activists to conclude that U.S. backing for Ukraine delegitimizes its people's struggle against Russia. Yet a closer look shows that **both Ukraine and Palestine are facing wars waged on them by powers that seek not only to subjugate them militarily but to erase them as a people with their own national identity.**

Consider the words of Russian President Vladimir Putin. He justified the 2022 invasion by claiming that Ukraine is led by Nazis, is not a "real" country and therefore has no legitimate claim to national self-determination. Then look at the map that Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held up at the United Nations General Assembly in 2023-one that showed Israel with Gaza and the Occupied Territories on the West Bank completely erased. Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov even likened Israel's war aims in Gaza to those of Russia in Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has lined up behind the U.S. in supporting Israel, which has made many in the Palestine solidarity movement skeptical about supporting Ukraine's resistance against Russia. However, even if Zelensky backs Israel at the same time he is attacking workers'

union rights in Ukraine, the Ukrainian people have the right to defend themselves against Russian imperialist invaders and to get the weapons they need anywhere they can. Regardless of what their President says, Ukrainians are worthy of our solidarity, just as the struggles of American Black people, other oppressed groups and workers deserve international support no matter what the US President says. The same is true for Palestine: it is possible to criticize Hamas' politics and actions while supporting the struggle for self-determination for Palestinians and the international movement to support that goal. In particular we support worker-to-worker solidarity, including aid convoys, to Palestine and Ukraine.

Both Ukrainians and Palestinians are standing against imperialist aggression. As a statement by more than 300 prominent Ukrainian activists, journalists and scholars put it:

Watching the Israeli targeting civilian infrastructure in Gaza, the Israeli humanitarian blockade and occupation of land resonates especially painfully with us. From this place of pain of experience and solidarity, we call on our fellow Ukrainians globally and all the people to raise their voices in support of the Palestinian people and condemn the ongoing Israeli mass ethnic cleansing.

We reject the Ukrainian government statements that express unconditional support for Israel's military actions, and we consider the calls to avoid [Palestinian] civilian casualties by Ukraine's [Ministry of Foreign Affairs] belated and insufficient. This position is a retreat from the support of Palestinian rights and condemnation of the Israeli occupation, which Ukraine has followed for decades, including voting in the UN.

For its part, the U.S. government backs Israel's war to crush Gaza because it serves its interest to have a loyal, militarily powerful ally in the Middle East. It supported Ukraine—with plenty of strings attached—because Washington wishes to inflict a “strategic defeat” on Russia. This calculated approach to achieving U.S. imperialist goals lies behind the Biden administration's hypocrisy and double standards regarding Palestine and Ukraine. Factions in the Republican Party oppose even that support, some because they share Putin's white nationalist ultraconservatism and some because they see U.S. confrontation with China as the main foreign policy objective.

We also support many other important movements for national liberation, from Western Sahara to the struggle of the Kurds in the Middle East and the fight for self-determination in Puerto Rico, Kashmir and beyond. **We focus today on Ukraine and Palestine not because these and other struggles are unimportant, but because the major contending imperialist powers have made Ukraine and Palestine a testing ground for new imperialist wars of aggression and genocide.** If they succeed, it will be a blow to democracy and national self-determination everywhere.

As the situation in Gaza grows ever more desperate and another year passes in Russia's war against Ukraine, we seek to build links between these struggles of resistance and to put forward an alternative of self-determination and justice. As many Jewish participants in the Palestine solidarity movement have pointed out, the genocide against Jews in the Second World War is being used to justify both genocide against Palestinians today and the attempt to erase Ukraine.

Never again for Jews. Never again for Palestinians. Never again for Ukrainians. Never again for anyone anywhere.

Find out more about the Ukraine Solidarity Network at:
<https://linktr.ee/ukrainesolidaritynetwork>

