

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Vladyslav Bobrovnyk  
Ukraine Association of Washington State  
Head of Advocacy  
206-327-5898

Marcia Jacobs  
Ukraine Defense Support  
Communications Volunteer  
907-394-4030

COMMUNITY UNITES IN OBSERVANCE OF FEB. 24<sup>TH</sup> – TWO FULL YEARS SINCE  
RUSSIAN FULL-SCALE INVASION

Seattle, Feb. 15, 2024 – Thousands of supporters of Ukraine’s fight for freedom will come together February 24th in Seattle to mark the second anniversary of Russia’s full-scale invasion. Marchers will gather at 11:30 am at Seattle City Hall where a flash mob will perform. Participants will then march to the Seattle Center where a rally will be held from 1 – 3 pm. Local dignitaries, including Washington’s Senators and members of Congress, have been invited to attend. The events are open to the public.

American and Ukrainian officials, former front-line soldiers, and first responders who have been serving since the beginning of the war will share their stories at the rally. The Feb. 24 events are organized by local nonprofits Ukrainian Association of Washington State (UAWS) and Ukraine Defense Support (UDS) to remind our elected representatives about Ukraine’s ongoing fight for freedom and democracy. Similar events are planned across the country and around the world.

Every day brings more destruction and death in Ukraine as Russia continues its brutal bombardment of civilian targets – apartment buildings, hospitals, schools, water supplies and energy infrastructure. More than one hundred thousand Ukrainians have been brutally murdered, and millions are displaced refugees. Additionally, an estimated 200,000 Ukrainian children have been kidnapped and taken to Russia.<sup>1</sup>

The strong show of community support will continue to shine that evening as scores of local buildings and landmarks will light up in blue and yellow and/or fly the Ukrainian flag as illuminate Seattle once again shows the world that Washington State stands with Ukraine.

“America’s legacy as a defender of global freedom is renewed through our support for Ukraine. This is not about obligation; it’s about standing with those who share our values in the face of tyranny. Strengthening Ukraine’s defense serves not only as a beacon of hope but as a bulwark for democracies everywhere. It’s imperative that our government takes actions that actually reflect the overwhelming support of its citizens for more support for Ukraine,” said Liliya Kovalenko, president of the Ukrainian Association of Washington.

“Ukraine’s fight for freedom is America’s fight too. The post-WWII order that has provided stability and prosperity to the free world for decades is in jeopardy. Russia’s invasion cannot stand,” said Carl Larson, co-founder of Ukraine Defense Support and a U.S. Army Iraq War veteran who served in the International Legion in Ukraine in 2022.

As Russia’s aggression enters its third year it is critical that all who support Ukraine’s right to exist show their support. Uniting on this somber anniversary sends a clear signal that Americans demand that their elected officials do more to support our ally’s fight for freedom and democracy.

The Ukrainian Association of Washington State (UAWS) was founded in 1971 to preserve, promote, and celebrate the Ukrainian culture and heritage of more than 100,000 residents of Washington State and the Northwest more broadly. The UAWS has for decades been the preeminent organization representing Ukrainians in Washington through hosting cultural events, community initiatives, and supporting educational programs and cross-cultural cooperation between the U.S. and Ukraine. Since 2014, in response to the war and ongoing Russian aggression in Ukraine, the UAWS has further dedicated itself to supporting Ukraine through additional cultural, educational, and advocacy initiatives. UAWS also actively organizes charity events to raise funds for humanitarian aid, with a specific focus on providing medical supplies and assisting internal refugees. Since 2014 the UAWS has delivered millions of dollars' worth of aid with the support of its partners in the U.S. and abroad. <https://uaws.org>

Ukraine Defense Support was founded in 2022 by Carl Larson and Pam Dalan, both of Seattle, after Larson's return from serving in the International Legion in Ukraine. UDS sends urgently needed supplies, including night vision equipment, drones, Humvees and other vehicles, portable generators, military clothing and medical supplies to Ukraine's frontlines. The state-registered nonprofit currently has over 100 active volunteers working to keep as many of Ukraine's defenders alive as possible. <https://ukrainedefensesupport.org/>

For additional details, please visit: <https://believeinukrainewa.info/>

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1 Save the Children (NGO) and Ukrainian Ombudswoman for Children's Rights, Daria Herasymchuk, estimate that up to 200,000 Ukrainian children have been kidnapped behind occupation lines.