



Dear New Zealand media!

The Ukrainian community of New Zealand and Mahi for Ukraine would like to thank all the media, without exception, for their attention to the events in Ukraine.

Concomitantly, representatives of the Ukrainian community note that the coverage of events in and around Ukraine by the press sometimes uses terminology of subjectivity and events that do not quite correspond to reality, which in turn affects the objective perception of the events. This inconsistency of terminology could be due to the difficulties with translation when the non-native Ukrainian is translating without considering the mentality and other such characteristics of regional origin. From our point of view, this isn't critique, as we appreciate this happens when translating from any language. This could also be due to normalisation of widely spread Russian propaganda sound bites.

Therefore, we cordially ask permission to offer you some suggestions on the use of terminology (regarding subjects and events) that can be used in covering the situation in Ukraine and around it moving forward:

- **Russian Federation, Russia** - occupier, aggressor, violator of international law.
- **Crimea** - as a result of violation of the Budapest Memorandum, the territory of Ukraine temporarily and illegally occupied by Russia; NZ official position – New Zealand does not recognise the annexation of Crimea. Any maps showing Ukraine on NZ TV/print or online articles should depict Crimea as part of Ukraine, per NZ's official position.
- **DNR, Donetsk People's Republic** - a terrorist group created and financed by the occupier - Russia.
- **LNR, Luhansk People's Republic** - a terrorist group created and financed by the occupier - Russia.
- **Army of DNR or LNR** - illegal military formation of a terrorist group created and financed by the occupier - Russia, and headed and led by separatists and collaborationists, citizens of Ukraine, as well as instructors - servicemen of the Russian army.
- **Separatist** - a citizen of Ukraine who under the Russian influence seeks to violate the territorial unity of Ukraine against the law.
- **Collaborator** - a citizen of Ukraine, who for a fee cooperates with a terrorist group (DPR or LPR) created and funded by the occupier – Russia, or the RF directly.
- **Holodomor** - genocide of Ukrainian people (1930-1933).
- **Ukraine** (not **The Ukraine**) - a sovereign state.
- **The War in Ukraine** – began in February 2014, when Russian armed forces invaded, occupied, and then illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimea via a fake referendum. Whereas the **full-scale invasion** started on 24 Feb 2022. It is NOT a mere conflict/territorial dispute/proxy war.

We also encourage you to note [\\*this guide](#) created by a historian Timothy Snyder when writing about Ukraine as an example. And please refer to the following publications for further context on why **language matters**:

[War against Ukraine, not conflict in the Ukraine: Why the language we use matters | The Spinoff](#)

[Language Matters: Recognising Ukraine's sovereignty through language | Stuff.co.nz](#)

[Ukraine: Language Matters | The Hague Peace Projects](#)

[Blog: Language matters – a guide to talking about Ukraine - EU NEIGHBOURS east](#)

Additionally, for the purpose of prompt coverage of the events in Ukraine, Mahi for Ukraine offers interested media to organise interviews with our Spokespersons, representatives of regional Ukrainian Organisations of NZ, members of the NZ Ukrainian community in general, Ukrainian new arrivals on the Special Ukraine Visa, residents of various cities of Ukraine in real time with professional translation. Please contact Kate Turska to arrange.



**\*Timothy Snyder guide** (referring to the Kakhovka Dam explosion, see also [this useful post](#) for context):

1. Avoid the temptation to bothsides a calamity. That's not journalism.
2. When a Russian spokesperson claims that Ukraine did something (e.g. blow a dam), **this is not part of a story of an event in the real world. It is part of a different story: about all the outrageous claims Russia has made about Ukraine since invading in 2014.**
3. Citing Russian claims next to Ukrainian claims is unfair to the Ukrainians. What Russian spokespersons have said has almost always been untrue, whereas what Ukrainian spokespersons have said has largely been reliable. The juxtaposition suggests a false equality.
4. If a Russian spokesman (e.g. Dmitri Peskov) must be cited, it must be mentioned that this specific figure has lied about every aspect of this war. This is not insult but context. Readers picking up the story in the middle need to know the background.
5. If Russian propaganda for external consumption is cited, so must that for internal consumption. Propagandists long argued that Ukrainian dams should be blown. A Russian parliamentarian takes for granted Russia blew the dam and rejoices.
6. When a story begins with bothsidesing, readers are instructed that an object in the physical world (like a dam) is just an element of narrative. They are guided into the wrong genre (literature) right at the moment when analysis is needed. This does their minds a disservice.
7. Dams are objects. How they can be destroyed is a subject for experts. This NYT story has the merit of treating dams as physical rather than narrative objects. It becomes clear that the dam was likely destroyed by an explosion from the inside.
8. Russia was in control of the relevant part of the dam when it exploded. This is an elemental part of the context. It comes before what anyone says. When a murder is investigated, detectives think about means. Russia had the means. Ukraine did not.
9. The story doesn't start at the moment the dam explodes. For the last fifteen months Russia has been killing Ukrainian civilians and destroying Ukrainian civilian infrastructure, whereas Ukraine has been trying to protect its people and the structures that keep them alive.
10. The setting includes military history. Armies that are attacking do not blow dams to block their own path of advance. Armies that are retreating do blow dams to slow the advance of the other side. Ukraine was advancing, and Russia was retreating.
11. **Objectivity does not mean treating an event as a coin flip between two public statements.** It demands thinking about the objects and the settings that readers require for understanding amidst uncertainty.

Follow our [Facebook](#) & [LinkedIn](#) pages for updates on our advocacy and statements from the NZ-Ua community.