

21st September 2022

Sent by Email

An open letter to Jacinda Ardern: invitation to visit Kyiv.

Dear Rt. Hon. Jacinda Ardern,

We, the undersigned herewith, would like to request your consideration to visit Ukraine and meet with President Zelenskyy soon.

Firstly, we like to take the opportunity on behalf of NZ Ukrainians and their affiliates to express our heartfelt and sincere gratitude for the support to date that New Zealand has provided to Ukraine.

It is our understanding that there is an open invitation from the Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy for you to meet with him in Ukraine and to see and hear first-hand Ukraine's plight and their needs. While during your recent trip to Europe you haven't planned such a visit, we sincerely hope that you will do so in the nearest future.

We know that you are fully aware of the terrible consequences of Russia's unjust invasion of Ukraine, so we do not elaborate on those here. We would, however, make the point that Russia's actions constitute an existential threat not just to Ukraine but to democracy itself, Europe as we know it today and other free nations, those that uphold the values of integrity, justice, democracy, international rules, the sovereignty of nations and humanitarian care. New Zealand is universally recognised as upholding those values, Russia demonstrably does not. The war in Ukraine is a test of whether a tyranny that claims to be a democracy can triumph.

Rt. Hon Jacinda Ardern, with the deepest conviction, we appeal to you to take up Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy invitation.

Many of global leaders have done so and have been deeply moved not just by the destruction and loss but also by looking into the eyes of Ukrainian's and connecting deeply with their emotions, not just of loss but also of hope that they will prevail with the support of the free world. A much-needed support that inspires Ukrainians to stay unwavering in their tracks to victory. A Ukrainian victory would confirm the principle of self-rule, allow the integration of Europe to proceed, and empower people of goodwill to return reinvigorated to other global challenges, that New Zealand is also so passionate about. We hope that you do not underestimate the positive impact on the Ukrainian people's morale seeing that New Zealand has the utmost compassion for them and that we are not looking away from their suffering and hardship. As well as significance of the rest of the free world seeing the New Zealand's leader standing firmly with Ukraine.

We appreciate that New Zealand's resources are limited compared to many other nations but here Aotearoa can lead by example in showing that much needed support for Ukraine. New Zealand's reputation and influence internationally in such matters has always been sizeable and has significantly grown in the recent years with its Prime Minister's resolve and your international reputation as a compassionate leader of a free democratic nation reaching the highest standing.

Russia's aggression and its consequences are unprecedented since WWII and it requires our unprecedented response. None of us would wish to look back in the future and say we did not do everything that we could.

Again, Prime Minister, we implore you to please to take up Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy invitation.

Ngā mihi nui and Слава Україні!

Yurko Gladun (Chairperson)

Ukrainian Association of New Zealand (North)

Renata Marhevka (President)

Ukrainian Association of New Zealand (South)

Lana Burns (Chairperson)

Ukrainian Association of New Zealand (Wellington)

Jeffrey Sanders (Chairperson)

Ukrainian Educational and Support Trust

Kate Turska (Co-founder/ Spokesperson)

Mahi for Ukraine