

MEDIA RELEASE:

**UKRAINIAN ORGANISATIONS OF NEW ZEALAND DEPLORE RUSSIAN
FEDERATION AS VIDEO EMERGES OF A RUSSIAN SOLDIER
DECAPITATING A UKRAINIAN SOLDIER**

The undersigned Ukrainian Organisations of New Zealand, in the strongest terms deplore the Russian Federation, and all people that support it, following the release of a video showing the brutal beheading of a Ukrainian soldier, originally shared in a private pro-Russian Telegram channel.

Over a period of 100 seconds, the video shows Russian soldiers slowly and gruesomely hacking away at the neck of a Ukrainian soldier with a combat knife. For the first few seconds, the Ukrainian soldier exclaims “It hurts, it hurts” as the Russians start cutting into his neck. For the duration of the video, the cameraman provides a commentary of their activity and their hate for Ukrainians. The voice instructs the soldier to cut off the head and sever the victim’s spine, urging him to complete the job since he has supposedly performed such acts before. The Russians, wearing white arm and leg bands, hold up the chest rig of the Ukrainian, showing the patches of the Ukrainian soldier before holding up his decapitated head.

It is important to remember that since Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, other similar videos have emerged, seemingly showing atrocities such as a Russian soldier castrating a Ukrainian soldier, a Russian soldier raping a Ukrainian infant, and a Russian “Wagner” soldier being executed by sledgehammer by another “Wagner” soldier for having become a Prisoner of War.

We express our outrage and despondency at the inhumane act committed against the Ukrainian soldier, slaughtered for defending his country’s sovereignty. This act of barbarism is a clear violation of international law and basic human decency.

It is appalling that a society that breeds such heinous barbarism is permitted to have any kind of position of international authority – especially as the Russian Federation is currently chairing the UN Security Council.

We call upon the New Zealand Government, and any other nation that respects the fundamentals of human dignity, to cease all interaction with the barbarous Russian Federation and to supply Ukraine with all appropriate assistance required to decisively remove all Russian troops and influences from Ukraine's sovereign territory.

We also believe it is important to stress that the barbarism exhibited by Russian soldiers is not in line with New Zealand values.

We acknowledge the government's efforts at the UN to support investigations and referral of war crimes to the International Criminal Court. We must continue these efforts **by recognising the massacres and genocide**, by supporting our allies (US and Australia) claim that **president Putin is a war criminal**, and that he should be prosecuted for the war crimes committed in Ukraine.

Given the overwhelming evidence of war crimes, as recognised internationally, we should **follow the lead of the international community by expelling Russian diplomats**. Additionally, given Russia's failed promises and its attempts to use the UN to attribute blame for civilian violence to Ukraine, **expel the Russian Ambassador**, as the value of any ongoing dialogue has proven to be limited and only provides legitimacy.

We call on the New Zealand Government to **create a platform to condemn and counter the misinformation by the Russian Federation**.

And **declare Russia as a terrorist state and a state sponsor of terrorism**. (Mahi for Ukraine Petition, currently with the Petitions Committee).

We call on the international community to unite and condemn this heinous act. The Russian Federation, and all complicit in supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine, must be held accountable for their actions.

The countless atrocities and crimes against humanity orchestrated by Russian soldiers and intelligence services across the world in the last 30 years have demonstrated that no amount of good faith diplomacy will rid them of their brutal methods. If other nations will not form a coalition of the willing to halt Russia's barbarity in Ukraine, then Ukraine should be

provided with the means to do so. Every hesitation, every pause and every attempt to negotiate just sees the suffering of Ukrainians prolonged.

We emphasise the need for solidarity with the people of Ukraine during these difficult times. We call on the New Zealand public to stand together and support Ukraine in its fight for freedom and independence.

Our hearts are with the soldiers and people of Ukraine and the family of the yet to be identified Ukrainian soldier who was killed in such a horrific manner.

Signed

Ukrainian organisations of New Zealand:

- Ukrainian Association of NZ (Southern)
- Ukrainian Educational and Support Trust
- Ukrainian Association of NZ (Northern) Incorporated
- Ukrainian Gromada of Wellington
- Ukrainian Association of NZ (Wellington)
- Tautoko Charitable Trust (Nelson)
- Mahi for Ukraine

ENDS

For further information or to organise an interview, please contact:

Mahi for Ukraine contact@mahiforukraine.com