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UAZA's statement on the meeting between American leaders, the media, and the Ukrainian president

#russiaisaTerroristState

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March, 1 2025

The Ukrainian Association of South Africa and the Ukrainian global community **stand firmly with President Zelensky and the people of Ukraine** as they continue their heroic defence against Russian aggression. Ukraine's fight is not just about its own sovereignty—it is about defending democracy, global security, and the right of nations to exist free from tyranny.

Diplomacy is essential in preserving and restoring peace. President Volodymyr Zelensky, elected by a decisive majority (73%) in a democratic vote, represents the people of Ukraine in their pursuit of a just and lasting peace. While elections in Ukraine are prohibited under martial law, Ukrainians will continue holding democratic elections as soon as the Russian military aggression is stopped.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014, Ukraine has held two democratic presidential elections (May 2015; April 2019), both of which were recognised as free and fair. Despite presidents from different parties being elected, Russia's military aggression continued — because while **Ukrainians seek peace, Putin and Russia do not.**

Russia must be stopped otherwise its aggression will expand to other countries. 24 February 2025 marked three years since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. During this time, Russian military forces, headed by Putin, have committed over **140,000 documented war crimes**. Russia is a terrorist state and must be stopped. Any attempts to appease the terrorist result in more violence. This is why 200 rounds of negotiations with Putin since his military invasion of Ukraine in 2014 resulted in the full-scale invasion and not peace for Ukraine.

Without a clear vision of how Russian aggression can be stopped, Ukrainians cannot start negotiations for a ceasefire, as Putin has broken over 200 previously negotiated agreements. **Ukraine needs a just, lasting peace**, which requires security guarantees to defend its territorial integrity and people. Ukraine, as a country that gave up nuclear weapons and is withstanding the unjust, unprovoked aggression of a 30-times-larger aggressor, needs international support.

Occupation is not peace! Occupation of Ukrainian territories is not peace. Civilians in **Russia-occupied territories** are enduring arbitrary detentions, torture, enforced disappearances, rape, political persecution and systematic human rights violations. **Occupation**

authorities restrict freedom of movement and expression, suppress peaceful protests and target those suspected of opposing the occupation.

The horrible proof of this is that during **33 days of Russian occupation of Bucha**, a small town outside Kyiv, **Russian forces killed 458 civilians**, women were raped and their bodies burned. Many civilians were executed with their hands tied behind their backs.

Thank you for international support and solidarity. The Ukrainian community in South Africa appreciate the support of every country, including the U.S. We remain confident that all people who share the values of democracy and freedom will continue standing with Ukraine. **The American people are friends of Ukraine.** We appreciate the U.S.'s support and remain confident that the American people will continue to stand with Ukraine. Our message is clear: We must not let Russia succeed in dividing us.

Democracies must stay united, as division only helps Putin to create more chaos and suffering. **A Ukrainian victory is essential for global stability**—it will prevent future wars and send a clear message that aggression will not be tolerated.

Ukraine is not just fighting for survival—it **is a key partner in global security and economic stability**. A strong, sovereign Ukraine benefits the entire free world. Ukraine will win through unwavering solidarity and decisive action.

We call on all countries, including South Africa, to take strong, decisive action to ensure Ukraine has the military, economic, and diplomatic support needed **to win this war and secure a just, long-lasting peace**.

#StandWithUkraine!