

Réseau Européen de Solidarité avec l'Ukraine European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine Red Europea para la Solidaridad con Ucrania

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On arming Ukraine and the struggle against militarism

The European Network for Solidarity with Ukraine (ENSU) has denounced the Russian invasion of Ukraine from the very beginning and fully supports the Ukrainian right of self-defence.

The Ukrainian people's armed resistance is just. It is not taking place as part of military aggression by NATO, the United States or any Western country, but as defence against the declared war aim of Russian president Vladimir Putin: to reconquer the fictitious "Russian world" supposedly lost with the 1991 dissolution of the Soviet Union.

Since Ukraine's armed resistance is legitimate, all states that regard themselves as democratic and upholders of law-governed international relations have the responsibility to help the Ukrainian people defeat the Russian invasion.

ENSU therefore demands of all governments opposed to Russia's unlawful aggression (and whether NATO members or not) that they provide Ukraine with the weaponry, ammunition and financial support required to expel invading forces from the country's internationally recognised territory.

At the same time, ENSU's founding declaration defines its overall orientation as anti-colonial and opposed to "militarism and imperialist competition for power and profit that destroy our environment and our social and democratic rights". Like peace-loving people in all countries, we feel the absolute urgency of ending great power rivalry and the lethal militarism and environmental devastation it unleashes.

Providing Ukraine with the support needed to defeat the Russian great power that has seized its territory, destroyed its infrastructure, murdered its people and poisoned its lands and rivers does not contradict that perspective. Nor does supporting a free and independent Ukraine require a permanent increase in global military expenditure, the entrenchment of rival military blocs or the social and political promotion of militarism—even if that is the agenda of some reactionary forces who parade as champions of Ukraine.

To support Ukraine without setting off a wave of militarism, chauvinism and war profiteering, ENSU sees its solidarity with the Ukrainian people in an antimilitarist perspective opposed to the rearmament of the imperialist powers. ENSU says that:

- Military aid to Ukraine can initially be sourced from stockpiles and from weaponry presently supplied to governments conducting wars of aggression condemned by the United Nations.
- The production of all forms of weaponry can, and should, be nationalised. This would enable an end to obscene war profiteering and arms trafficking, and the production and delivery of war material would have to comply with the internationally recognised rights of national sovereignty and the need to oppose those wars that violate them.
- In the case that countries truly need to expand military budgets to help Ukraine or to defend themselves against the threats of the Putin regime, the increase should be funded by increased taxation of the wealthiest layers in society. Supporting Ukraine must not become a pretext for austerity that hurts the social majority.

ENSU also emphasises the need for public ownership of the arms industry to make possible its conversion—on the back of defeating wars of aggression—into an invaluable tool of socially and ecologically useful production.

Such is the democratic, socially just and internationalist approach to helping the Ukrainian people win.

It is also the approach that most helps the anti-war opposition in Russia, by showing that the goal of military aid to Ukraine is not invading the Russian Federation or boosting NATO but simply the defeat of Putin's aggression.

It is the only approach compatible with the goal of advancing beyond militarism and war towards the only desirable horizon for humanity: that of peoples and nations peacefully coexisting on a sustainable planet.

October 30, 2024