

Issue #1, 2024

# NEWSLETTER

**PUTIN'S RUSSIA KILLS CHILDREN  
PUTIN'S RUSSIA DESTROYS LIVES  
PUTIN'S RUSSIA COMMITTED  
GENOCIDE AND PERPETUATES  
GENOCIDE IN UKRAINE  
HOW TO STOP HIM?**



CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM  
ПАРЛЯМЕНТАРНА ПРОГРАМА КАНАДА-УКРАЇНА  
PROGRAMME PARLIAMENTAIRE CANADA-UKRAINE





## CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (CUPP) FROM 1991 to 2025

The Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program is an internship program, established by the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation. CUPP provides an opportunity for Ukrainian students to learn about the principles of democratic government and parliamentary procedures of Canada. During the Program, Ukrainian students work at the Parliament of Canada in the offices of Members of the House of Commons.

On July 16, 1990, the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian SSR adopted the Declaration of Sovereignty, which declared that Parliament recognized the need to build the Ukrainian state based on the Rule of Law.

On August 24, 1991, the Ukrainian Parliament adopted the Declaration of Independence, which the citizens of Ukraine endorsed in the referendum of December 1, 1991.

Also, in 1991, Canadians celebrated the Centennial of Ukrainian group immigration to Canada. To mark the Centennial, Canadian organizations planned programs and projects to celebrate this milestone in Canada's history. The Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation of Toronto marked the Centennial by establishing the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) for university students from Ukraine in the Canadian Parliament. Since 1991 over 1,000 university students have participated in the CUPP internship programs.

### Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation

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*Ihor BARDYN, Director of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP)*

## **INTERVIEW WITH IHOR BARDYN**

### *IHOR BARDYN IS THE FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR OF THE CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM*

Ihor Bardyn has found great satisfaction volunteering his time in numerous programs and projects. In the past he was an Ontario Director of the Council for Canadian Unity, representative of Amnesty International-London UK to the trial of Ukrainian parliamentarian Stephan Khmara, author of the proposal to establish the Chair in the history of Ukraine at the University of Toronto, Canadian Director of the Ukrainian Legal Foundation-Kyiv, member of the Council of Administration of St. Paul University-Ottawa, and President of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation. He is a lifelong member of the Ukrainian Scouts Organization PLAST.

He earned a BA degree in history at McMaster University and a law degree at Osgoode Hall Law School. He has practised law for over 50 years.

In 1991 he established the Canada Ukraine Parliamentary Program after his first trip to Ukraine. Recently when he was asked about his age, he replied that he prefers to measure his age by his years as director of CUPP, as this calculation would give him more time to be involved with Ukraine's youth and would add another 35 years of life. He is 84.

**Mr. Bardyn, the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program exists for over three decades. How did the idea for the program first come about, and what were the initial challenges you faced when launching it?**

In the 1960s Michigan Governor George Romney, established the "Michigan Program" with the agreement of the Speaker of the House of Commons. Students from Michigan universities could serve an internship with a Canadian Member of Parliament. Eventually the Michigan Program was opened to university students from across the USA.

Through the decades Canadian university students have been serving internships in the House of Commons to observe firsthand how Canadians govern themselves. Most recently students from France's Sciences Po university have also served internships in the Canadian Parliament, as have students from NATO countries, Poland, and the Philippines. Canada's Parliament is one of the more welcoming parliaments, which allows foreign students to serve an internship in the country's seat of power.

In 1991 Canadians were celebrating the Centennial of group settlement by Ukrainians of Canada. As well, Ukraine reclaimed its independence by an overwhelming vote in a Referendum in 1991.

To mark these historical events the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation (CUSF) established the Canada Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) an internship program for Ukrainian university students. As president of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation I negotiated with the Speaker of the House of Commons John Fraser and the Party Whips of the Liberal, Conservative and NDP Parties, to establish CUPP.

In Spring of 1991 the first 3 Ukrainian students arrived on Parliament Hill to begin their internships in the Parliament of Canada.

**What do you consider to be the most significant long-term outcomes of the program, not only for the participants but also for the future of Ukraine as a whole?**

CUPP has made it possible for some of Ukraine's brightest students to serve an intern

ship and gain an understanding of how Canadians governs itself, how parliamentarians prepare legislation how they interact with their constituents, how elections are conducted in Canada. The knowledge and information garnered by the Ukrainian students will hopefully play a positive role in how Ukrainians will govern themselves. The Westminster Model of Parliament, which is the model upon which most English-speaking countries, have developed their system of government has been a successful model. Understanding this model of government is beneficial to Canadians, Americans, French, and hopefully Ukrainians.

**In your opinion, how has CUPP contributed to strengthening the relationship between Canada and Ukraine, especially in the context of democratic values and governance?**

Every CUPP intern serves his/her internship in the office of a Canadian MP. After receiving their Security Pass, which allows access to the House of Commons, the intern joins the staff of their designated member of parliament. The Intern conducts research, prepares correspondence to constituents, attends committee meetings, meet Cabinet ministers, government officials and interns from other countries and programs. The influence which each Ukrainian Intern exerts on their MPs and staff is immeasurable. That influence is important in gaining for Ukraine, friends and supporters. The establishment of strong relations between Canada and Ukraine can be seen through the number of members of parliament who have travelled to Ukraine to visit their Ukrainian Interns, visit Ukrainian cities and towns and write about their trips to Ukraine in their Householder/Newsletters to their constituents.

**How would you describe the broader impact of CUPP on Canadian society? Have you seen any changes in how Canadians view Ukraine and its youth over the years as a result of this program?**

There are currently 9 CUPP alumni who are working as assistants to MPs and Senators. CUPP interns have been the authors of research papers and White Paper Submissions on important topics, such as veteran's affairs, gun control, digitization, and international trade.

*interview conducted by Uliana Hnatyshyn*

Some of these research papers became the basis of submissions by their MPs, now recorded in Hansard, the House of Commons official record of proceedings.

In 2004 CUPP Interns were invited to write an article for the Canadian Parliamentary Review. Seven CUPP interns collaborated on writing the article which was published in the vol.27, number 4 of the review. An example of results of the program is that today CUPP alumni are working as assistants to MPs and senators, something that could not have been predicted prior to 1991.

***Looking back at the program's history, are there any particular moments or achievements that you are most proud of? Can you share any memorable success stories from the program of from the former participants?***

In their article in the Canadian Parliamentary Review the CUPP interns wrote, in part; "The experience and knowledge gained during the CUPP internship opens new horizons for many alumni upon the program's completion. Over the years former participants have been proving by their work and progress how effective the CUPP program has been. Graduates of CUPP are now diplomats in Ukraine's Foreign Service, professors at universities, advisors to Cabinet Ministers, financial institutions, multinational institutions, as well as assistants to members of Ukraine's parliament, the World Health Organization, the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund. The current Minister of Defence of Ukraine is a CUPP Alumnus.

***With 34 years of experience, what is your vision for the future of the CUPP program, and how do you see it continuing to benefit Ukrainian youth in the years to come?***

CUPP is a constructive and essential tool in the education of Ukraine's youth who will take part in the governance, civil society and democratic development of Ukraine. CUPP allows Ukraine's youth to gain knowledge, information, experience and confidence in taking on the responsibilities and stewardship of their country. Just as American, French, Canadian, German and Dutch youth benefit by observing how Canadians govern themselves, Ukrainian youth can continue to benefit by the experience

of observing how Canadians govern themselves, so they can take the good decisions in governing Ukraine.

***What advice would you give to Ukrainian youth today who are aspiring to become leaders in their country or in the international community, especially in light of the current global challenges facing Ukraine?***

Ukraine, as all other nations who were boxed into the soviet authoritarian container called the Soviet Empire, emerged from this twilight into a modern world. Ukraine had few English language speakers who could communicate with the rest of the civilized countries. It had no experience in open, transparent government. It began its post-Soviet journey with a neighbour which fed off the resources of Ukraine for decades, and into a world which saw Ukrainians as Russians or little Russians, Currently, Russia's war on Ukraine is the backdrop to the mission for Ukraine's youth, to work diligently, constructively and wisely to position Ukraine in a safe and secure place. Do Vysot!!







Lucy Hicks, Coordinator of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP)

I graduated from Central Commerce High School and immediately thereafter started working in the law office of Ihor Bardyn. I attended Humber College where I received my Estates Clerk certificate while still working full time with the expanded law firm of Mitchell, Bardyn & Zalucky LLP.

**How did you first get involved with the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP)?**

Ihor Bardyn was always involved with the Ukrainian community and all things Ukrainian. In fact, most of his friends claimed that he was always “trying to save Ukraine”. The Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program was Ihor’s initiative which was established in 1991.

## INTERVIEW WITH LUCY HICKS

*Coordinator of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program*

I, together with a number of Directors of the Chair of Ukrainian Studies Foundation worked with Ihor in nurturing and bringing the program forward. Technology then was not what it is today and most interaction with the CUPP applicants was done by mail. The applicants would mail in their application and assignments, and we would painstakingly read through each and every one of them.

***In your opinion, what makes CUPP unique compared to similar programs?***

CUPP is unique because Soviet Ukraine’s government was a communist regime or dictatorship. The American, Canadian and French interns come from governments with democratic forms of government. The Ukrainian interns have an opportunity to learn for the first time how a normal democratic government governs its people. Since independence, Ukrainian interns can learn about democratic government in Canada and bring their knowledge back to Ukraine.

***Could you share any memorable experiences or moments you have had with CUPP participants?***

There are many memorable experiences and moments. I started going to Ukraine in 2000 to help with the interview process and most of the applicants were very young, came from villages and towns and almost all of them came to the interviews with their parents. They were very nervous, but little did they realize that I was just as nervous as they were. They came bearing small gifts (souvenirs) to show their appreciation in being given the opportunity to travel to Kyiv and hopefully to be selected to travel to another country and work in the Canadian Parliament. Most of the applicants never travelled outside their own villages and towns.

***Can you share a bit about yourself and your professional background for our readers?***

*interview conducted by Valeriia Kohut*

One year one of the applicants lost their return ticket to Ukraine and I took her home with me to spend the night until we were able to get a replacement ticket for her. She was overcome by the generosity and warmth she received from me and my family. It was lasagna for dinner that night and her first introduction to Italian cuisine. We have remained friends ever since.

CUPP has become my second family, and it brings me great pleasure in seeing the accomplishments of many of our graduates and the roles they are now involved with in Ukraine's government, healthcare, legal system, etc.

***What advice would you give to current CUPP participants as they prepare for their future careers?***

Absorb all the knowledge, experiences and information you gain through your internship and adopt it into your daily and professional life. Maintain the friendships you establish during your internship and keep your lines of communication open with your new acquaintances and support each other.

***How do you see programs like CUPP contributing to strengthening the relationship between Canada and Ukraine***

CUPP is one of the longest standing exchanges between Canada and Ukraine and because the interns work directly in the offices of their MPs, it builds bridges on a very personal level.

***What role do you think CUPP Alumni can play in supporting Ukraine during the Russo-Ukrainian War***

CUPP alumni are already playing very important roles during this time in fighting on the front lines, providing medical assistance to the wounded soldiers and serving in the Ukrainian parliament.

***What inspires you most about working with talented young individuals from Ukraine?***

I take great pleasure in maintaining close contacts with CUPP alumni and reading about their accomplishments and what roles they are playing in ensuring that Ukraine builds a strong, democratic country.

***What are your hopes for the future of CUPP?***

In 2022 the daughter of a 1994 CUPP alumnus served an internship in parliament. I hope that there will be many more children and grandchildren of CUPP alumni who will serve an internship in the Canadian Parliament.



interview conducted by Valeriia Kohut



# CUPP PARTICIPANTS FROM 1991 to 2025



# MYKHAYLO KORCHYNSKY

## THE CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (CUPP) ALUMNUS 2020, LAWYER, AND SENIOR LIEUTENANT

*Mykhaylo Korchynskyy is a lawyer and senior lieutenant of the Armed Forces of Ukraine*



*Mykhaylo Korchynskyy the Canada-Ukraine  
Parliamentary Program (CUPP) intern 2020*

Ukraine is showing the world what bravery and patriotism look like. Ukrainian soldiers, volunteers, diplomats are warriors of light and justice. They are the heroes that fight for the future of humanity, for a clear sky where no evil is abusing morals and humaneness.

Each participant of our CUPP family has been involved with applying all their skills in the fields where they can help Ukraine fight back. One of our prominent CUPP interns Mykhaylo Korchynskyy is senior lieutenant, rifle platoon leader of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. We are proud of having such bright defenders like Mykhaylo. There is no doubt justice will win in this war, because we have our best people protecting us.

***Could you please tell us a little more about yourself? What is your occupation? Where are you now?***

I am currently serving in the Armed Forces of Ukraine as a senior officer in the Main Directorate of Military Justice. My primary focus at the moment is on international arbitration cases.

***How long have you been in the military, and why did you decide to join the Armed Forces of Ukraine?***

I joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine in March 2022, shortly after the full-scale invasion by Russian forces. Initially, I served as a platoon commander and spent over seven months performing my duties directly on the battlefield. Later, due to my civilian background as a lawyer with expertise in arbitration, I was transferred to my current role as a senior officer in the Main Directorate of Military Justice. This change allowed me to leverage my legal skills to support the military in crucial arbitration and legal matters.

***In which year did you participate in the CUPP program, and why do you think the program is important today?***

I was selected for the CUPP program in 2020. However, due to COVID-19 and the subsequent invasion of Ukraine, I have not yet had the opportunity to visit Canada or participate in the program.

Despite my delayed participation, I strongly believe in the program's importance. CUPP provides participants with unique opportunities to advocate for critical issues facing Ukraine.

*interview conducted by Uliana Hnatyshyn*

For example, current participants are engaging with Canadian MPs, ambassadors, and other key figures to raise awareness and support for Ukraine's needs.

War has flipped our reality upside down. Many plans for the future have been rewritten, a new story is being carved while we live through the most destructing times of the 21st century.

These meetings allow participants to build understanding and solidarity between Canada and Ukraine. The program is vital for fostering connections and advancing Ukraine's interests, and I believe it must continue to thrive.

***How do you see Canada's assistance to Ukraine, and which areas of cooperation are most critical now?***

Canada's military assistance is paramount. As I understand, Canada has already provided military equipment to Ukraine, but I believe even more support is needed to sustain our defense efforts.

Beyond military aid, Canada's financial support is also crucial. Ukraine's national budget is entirely directed toward military needs, so financial assistance from our allies covers essential sectors like education, healthcare, and public sector salaries.

The areas of cooperation between Canada and Ukraine are vast, and any form of help—whether military, financial, or diplomatic—is invaluable. Even words of encouragement and solidarity matter greatly during these challenging times.

***How do you envision Ukraine's future, for example, in the year 2030?***

First and foremost, I see Ukraine as the victor in this war, defeating the significant threat posed by the Russian Federation with the help of our allies and friends.

By 2030, I envision Ukraine as a proud member of both the European Union and NATO. Joining these organizations will solidify Ukraine's position as a democratic and prosperous nation, ensuring a bright and secure future for our country and its people.



# ARTEM BARABASH

## THE CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (CUPP)

### ALUMNUS 2020



Artem Barabash, the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) intern 2020

**Dear Artem, tell us a little bit more about yourself. What is your occupation?**

I began my legal career in 2017, but my path shifted dramatically with the onset of war. In autumn 2023, after Russia announced its partial mobilization, I realized the war would play a significant role in my life. My interests in politics, history, and military strategy further fueled this decision.

To quickly contribute, I joined a four-month officer training course in mechanized infantry, which was the fastest option to earn an officer rank. In March 2023, after completing additional training, I was mobilized into the Armed Forces of Ukraine. While initially set to become a deputy company commander, my brigade decided I was better suited for the role of a Political Officer, given my background and skills. As a Political Officer in the 22nd Mechanized Brigade, my responsibilities include providing informational support to our units, analyzing and countering enemy propaganda, and drafting orders and decisions to ensure our military understands and rejects harmful narratives propagated by the Russian side.

This role allows me to contribute significantly to maintaining morale and ensuring unity within our forces.

**How do you think Canada can help Ukraine?**

Canada's support has been invaluable, and I hope it continues as strongly as it does now. I believe the production and supply of drones —

*Artem Barabash is a Political Officer of the Armed Forces of Ukraine*

particularly reconnaissance and strike drones — are critical for our military efforts. Reconnaissance drones provide essential intelligence, while strike drones enhance our offensive capabilities.

Additionally, artillery munitions, especially 152mm shells, are in urgent need for our brigade and other units. I hope Canadian businesses and politicians recognize the importance of these supplies and consider supporting Ukraine's defense production, particularly in drone manufacturing. Such contributions would significantly bolster our ability to defend against and counter Russian aggression.

***I would like to ask you about Ukraine in the future. How do you see Ukraine in 2030?***

By 2030, I hope to see a victorious Ukraine — one that has reclaimed Crimea and southern Ukraine and delivered a decisive blow to the Russian military machine. The strength of our future depends on our ability to dismantle Russia's military capabilities, rendering them incapable of launching further campaigns for at least a decade.

If we achieve this, Ukraine will be well-positioned to rebuild and thrive. Reclaiming our territories will allow us to focus on reconstruction, economic growth, and strengthening our national resilience. However, much depends on the strength of our final efforts against Russia and the support we continue to receive from our allies.



*interview conducted by Uliana Hnatyshyn*



*Solomiia Bobrovska, the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) intern 2010, a Ukrainian politician and civic activist*

***You served your 2010 CUPP internship with Andrew Kania, MP for Brampton West, Ontario. What is the experience you took back with you? Did CUPP play any part in your involvement in the life of Ukraine, after your return home?***

I have my internship in the Canadian Parliament in 2010, when I was a fourth year student at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Ivan Franko National University of Lviv. It was actually the first big, thorough, fundamental acquaintance of how the democracy of the Western model works, and especially parliamentarism. And it was a wonderful and exemplary example of elitist parliamentarism. It was an example of dedicated work of deputies in the districts, the respect and ethics at work in the parliament. It was a work that showed that politics is a professional direction in which you have to learn, and in which you have to work 24 hours a day. Because it's not just work, it's also art. It's a combination of state governance, politics, and it's how the elite of the state is formed. It was a very inspiring internship, especially for us Ukrainians, both in the Senate and in the Parliament.

*interview conducted by Olha Okhrimenko*

## SOLOMIIA BOBROVSKA CUPP ALUMNA 2010

*Solomiia Bobrovska - People's Deputy of Ukraine*

And for me, it was the first big push, towards what our parliamentarism, politics, and state governance in Ukraine should look like. That's why I never thought about any post-Soviet and Soviet methods and style of politics and governance. Because I was already based on the Canadian institutions, with their approaches, but not with Soviet and post-Soviet ones. When I was working in the State Administration, in the Cabinet of Ministers, in the Government, in the Vice-Premier's Office, in the Odesa Administration, or when it is now in the Parliament there was a lot of foreignness to me. Because there are some things, that are still considered fashionable in Ukraine, and that are copied and continued these post-Soviet traditions. And this is a huge mistake. That's why the Canadian internship in the Parliament gave me an idea of how it should be. In fact, the biggest contribution of the CUPP is the worldview of how politics should be in civilized countries, and how it cannot be categorically in the country that we are going to.

***Is CUPP worth maintaining for another 34 years?***

CUPP is important and deserves to be an ongoing program with long-term traditions, traditions that I hope will grow into centuries-old traditions. Why? Because it is the formation of a personnel reserve of Ukrainians who are obliged to return to Ukraine and take part in social and political life. CUPP has raised a plethora of ministers, parliamentarians, diplomats, civil servants, business leaders, who today form a powerful community of graduates who now bear the fruits of the program that was initiated in the 1990s. We now hold important positions, and in fact, fulfilled our constitutional and civic duty to serve Ukraine. But we got this example through participation in the Canada-Ukraine parliamentary program. Because it has shown how old democracies work. And how people relate to their political and electoral work, people who show an example of service and work 24 hours a day. This people were not born and did not live the Soviet colonial nest. So they have a long tradition of parliamentarism.

***Does Canada, the diaspora, play any role in your life?***

I don't imagine if the diaspora, Mr. Ihor Bardyn, Lucy Hicks and many, many Ukrainian families in Canada or Canadian Ukrainians have not invested in this program. Because, in fact, the contribution to education, especially political and civic, is a marathon. You will not see feedback in a year or two or three. It is a marathon that gives feedback in 10, 15, 20 years. And it seems to me that today we all: deputies, ministers, diplomats, are now showing feedback, investing this program in us, in our personal development. I want to thank every family, Mr. Ihor for such strength and courage to conduct this program. Because it is just a sacrifice and service to your native country, land, nation. And we will probably be grateful and remember for a very, very long time for the role you all played in our formation of consciousness as a responsible citizen and a responsible politician or civil servant or someone who takes any other position.

***You were one of the delegation representatives that came to the Canadian House of Commons in October 2024. Please tell more about this trip?***

It was extremely moving to return to Parliament after 14 years, after an internship with Andrew Kania, who was a member of the Security and Defence Committee. Today I also represent the Security and Defence Committee of Ukraine. And this is really a great symbolism for me. Andrew's assistant and I still keep in touch, and we are very close. I went through the whole war with the support of Andrew's assistant. This fall in Canada we actually had several days, which were full. It was entirely work in the security and Défense sector. It was an introduction to the work of the security and defence sector of Canada. There were meetings with the specialized security committees of the Senate, the House of Commons. There were meetings on veterans' policy, a meeting with the Minister of Defence, Ukrainian integration into NATO and Canadian support, on the return to Ukraine of the UNIFIRE program. It was 5 days of very intensive, close work with the security and defence sector, sharing the experience of democratic and civilian control over the security and defence sector, which we are implementing in Ukraine. It is important for us to hear from our partners, especially the Canadians.

***Also you took part in 70th NATO Parliamentary Assembly in Montreal in November 2024. Could you please tell more about this event?***

Almost half a thousand deputies from all over the world, members of the Alliance and their associated members took part in it. And such international events are fundamentally important. Without technical, military and financial support, Ukraine will not stand today in the confrontation against the Russian Federation. This war is about the influence and division of the civilized world and the threat that has not been there for the last 100 years. These meetings help to understand, first of all, the state of the front, the moral state of Ukrainians, their needs, including the latest updates on the war. Because Ukraine is more and more moving away from the news. And here it is not only important for us that Ukraine stands, because it hurts us, but it is also important that partners understand that the failure of Ukraine will be their failure. And without exaggeration, if Ukraine fails, then, this war will hurt starting from Poland and the Baltic States, and all over Europe, all over the Alliance, and that is hurts European integration as well.

***In your opinion, how can CUPP interns and Alumni who remained in Canada help Ukraine?***

Interns who stayed in Canada can be a powerful tool for the advocacy campaigns of Ukraine in Canada. It must be a close work with the embassy, because you are our ambassadors. You are our ears, legs and hands in the Canadian Parliament, government, business and so on. Because your voice must be audible, just like the voice of the diaspora of the second, third I and fourth wave of immigration. You must form the backbone and strive to take the positions, build not only a strong Canada and their security and defence component. You must also be a great advocate of Ukraine in Canada, starting with the support of the material and technical direction, and then humanitarian as well. Because you are responsible for the preservation of Ukrainian culture and make sure that the voice of Ukrainians, as one of the great diasporas, was audible, loud, smart and wise. This is precisely what the Ukrainians of previous waves managed to do and why Canada is the way it is today in relation to Ukraine.

# ROMAN LOZYNSKY

## THE CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (CUPP)

### ALUMNUS 2016

*Roman Lozynskyi is a Ukrainian politician and public figure*

***Reflecting on your time as a CUPP intern, how did that experience influence your decision to pursue a career in politics and public service in Ukraine?***

CUPP is not just an internship; it's an environment, a community, and a transformative experience. It provides hands-on exposure to how politics works, allowing participants to confront the critical question: "Is politics my calling?" For me, the answer was a resounding yes. Beyond the experience, CUPP fosters a community of like-minded, passionate individuals.

Many of my closest friends and colleagues today are CUPP Alumni—people who inspire, support, and push each other to make a difference. This network has been instrumental in shaping my journey in public service and politics.

***As a Member of Parliament, how do you assess Canada-Ukraine relations? What is important to do to strengthen these ties?***

Canada and its people are not just allies—they are our friends and brothers in spirit. Canada values democracy, prioritizes human rights, and recognizes the Russian Federation as a threat to the Western, democratic world and the shared values of Canada and Ukraine.

I personally experienced Canada's unwavering support during the counteroffensive in the Kherson region in 2022. On the battlefield, Canadian armored vehicles made a tangible difference, and we felt the solidarity of the Canadian people. Canada has consistently stood against Russian aggression, which underscores the importance of sustaining and deepening our relationship.

To strengthen our ties, we must invest in communication, cultural and public diplomacy, and diplomatic missions. With ethnic Ukrainians holding prominent political positions in Canada, the connection is already strong, but it requires continuous nurturing to remain effective.

*interview conducted by Uliana Hnatyshyn*



*Roman Lozynsky, the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) 2016 intern*

***Balancing your duties as an MP with your service in the Ukrainian Armed Forces is commendable. How do you manage these responsibilities, and what motivates you to serve both in the legislature and on the front lines?***

When the full-scale invasion began, I voluntarily joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine because any other activity seemed insignificant at that moment. I understood clearly: Russia would only stop where we stopped it. For over a year, I served on the front lines in the Southern direction, defending Mykolaiv and Odessa and participating in the liberation of territories in the Kherson and Mykolaiv regions. In the summer of 2023, after the military reserves were replenished, I returned to active work in parliament. Today, I balance my responsibilities by working both with my unit in the rear and in the legislature. As head of the Decolonization Subcommittee, I focus on derussification and decolonization efforts in parliament. I see this work as an essential continuation of the fight for Ukraine's freedom and identity.

# ALONA PALYENKA

## THE CANADA-UKRAINE PARLIAMENTARY PROGRAM (CUPP) ALUMNA 2022

*You served your 2022 CUPP internship with John Barlow, MP for Foothills, Alberta. You stated, "I am convinced that the great mission of CUPP will succeed and raise a new revolutionary generation." Has CUPP succeeded? What is the experience you took back with you?*

CUPP is an exceptional program that offers Ukrainian student leaders an invaluable opportunity to immerse themselves in Canadian politics, gain insight into a different governance system, and exchange values, ideas, and visions. This experience is more than a mere transfer of knowledge; it fosters a meaningful dialogue, allowing both sides to enrich one another. My work with MP John Barlow and his assistant provided genuine support and a profound interest in Ukraine—our traditions, daily life, and cultural identity. Simultaneously, learning about Canadian life and professional standards broadened my perspectives, enabling me to understand new approaches to leadership and governance.

The experience of working in the Canadian Parliament was truly remarkable. It combines responsibility, independence, and freedom of choice, offering a solid foundation for both personal and professional growth. CUPP is an unparalleled opportunity, providing insights and lessons that cannot be found elsewhere.

I am deeply grateful to MP John Barlow and his team for the opportunity to experience Canada from multiple viewpoints. They not only introduced me to the world of Canadian politics, but also to their culture, traditions, and daily joys. The experience was a complete immersion into Canadian life, characterized by engaging conversations and delightful culinary experiences. I distinctly remember moments such as savouring a perfectly grilled steak at a local fair while discussing Canadian customs and enjoying the simple pleasure of a McFlurry together. These seemingly small yet genuine experiences made my time in Canada unforgettable, leaving me with lasting memories.

Moreover, the program connected me with a network of like-minded individuals who share my values and aspirations for Ukraine's future.



*Alona Palyenka  
the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program  
(CUPP) ALUMNA 2022*

Together, we envision a nation that is not only functional but also comfortable for its citizens, where everyone enjoys a high quality of life—a place where people live, not merely survive. I vividly recall the admiration of Canadian MPs as they witnessed the intelligence, resilience, and capability of the many young Ukrainian women in the program, who confidently shared their ideas and stood firmly for their country's interests. On a personal level, CUPP has significantly enhanced my organizational and communication skills, as well as my confidence in advocating for my views. This experience has reshaped my perspective, teaching me that persistence and dedication can lead to real progress and success. Beyond professional and personal growth, CUPP provided me with cherished memories, new friendships, and invaluable connections with individuals who inspire change. It was a transformative journey, shaped by unique circumstances and exceptional individuals, leaving an indelible mark on my life.



**You were in your last year of medical studies when you came to Parliament Hill, and after completing your internship, you had an opportunity to remain in Canada and work in the medical field. Why did you choose to return home?**

I came to the realization that it wasn't my place. While I am deeply grateful for the incredible experience and the kindness of everyone I met, I felt that I could be more impactful elsewhere. Returning home was the right decision, as I now find myself in a position where I truly belong—doing meaningful work, saving lives, and experiencing a profound sense of fulfillment.

Despite the many advantages and the generous offer to remain in Canada—working in a Member of Parliament's office and receiving housing assistance—I recognized that it wasn't the path I wanted to take. I have different goals and aspirations, and I am committed to pursuing them. For me, this decision wasn't driven solely by logic; it was a deeply intuitive one. I trust my instincts, and they have rarely steered me wrong. While some may view my choice as irrational or even foolish, I firmly believe that my greatest contribution lies in the work I am currently doing.

Even amidst the ongoing shelling and the immense risks we face—especially in healthcare—I know I am in the right place. The work I am doing provides me with a sense of purpose and peace. This is my home, and it is here that I feel most needed. For me, that is my highest priority, even though the foundation of human life is safety.

The privileges and opportunities offered to me in Canada—a stable and promising career in the House of Commons and the chance to build a new life—were remarkable. However, I couldn't shake the feeling that it wasn't the path meant for me. I don't believe in occupying a space that doesn't feel like mine. Now, I am absolutely certain that I am where I am meant to be, doing work that aligns with my values and purpose. My goal is to contribute as much as possible during this critical time for my country. The impact I am making here, amid these challenges, far outweighs what I might have achieved had I chosen a different path in Canada.

**When did you start working in the hospital, and why did you decide to work there? On returning, you took up work at Poltava Hospital. What went into this decision?**

My first experience working in a hospital was during my second year of university in the neurology department at Poltava Regional Clinical Hospital, named after M. V. Sklifosovsky, where I served as a nurse. For a medical student, gaining hands-on experience early on is invaluable. It offers a deep understanding of hospital organization, the implementation of protocols, and how the healthcare system functions from within. This early exposure not only helps one appreciate the practical aspects of medicine but also plays a crucial role in shaping one's future career path. The experience I gained during this time was irreplaceable, providing a solid foundation for growth, decision-making, and professional development. After completing that initial program and gaining additional experience in Poland, I returned to Ukraine to work in the surgery department of a military hospital. This decision was made without hesitation—I knew it was the right place and time for me. During this period, I gained valuable knowledge, formed lasting friendships, and felt the deep significance of contributing to my country during such a critical time. I had no alternative options—I was exactly where I needed to be. The work was demanding and emotionally intense, but it led to incredible results, for which I am profoundly grateful. I owe a debt of gratitude to all those who mentored me and continue to perform extraordinary, courageous work under unimaginable circumstances—amidst shelling, intense pain, and life-threatening traumas. Finally, my heartfelt gratitude goes to the brave individuals who have sacrificed their safety and lives to ensure a future of freedom for all of us. Their unwavering dedication serves as a constant source of inspiration, motivating us to strive for excellence and reminding us of the true purpose of our work.



***You volunteered to work on the front line at Bakhmut. Why and what was your experience of working on the front?***

My experiences extend far beyond Bakhmut. I have also worked in Kherson and its surrounding villages, including Chornobaivka, as well as in Mykolaiv, Zaporizhzhia, Kharkiv, Odesa, and various towns and villages across the Donetsk region—Kramatorsk, Chasiv Yar, Pokrovsk, Kostyantynivka, Druzhkivka, and Sloviansk. Many of these areas remain hazardous to this day.

This journey began in an unexpected manner. While volunteering with a charity foundation in Poland, I joined a mission to deliver supplies to Ukraine. Upon arrival, I realized I could be of even greater assistance on the ground. Using my connections and organizational skills, I merged volunteering with hospital work, which felt like the natural path for me at the time. It was a seamless integration, driven by both purpose and necessity.

Throughout this period, I had the privilege of meeting remarkable people. Each encounter, though seemingly spontaneous, was profoundly meaningful. Together, we achieved significant volunteer work, focusing on delivering essential military and humanitarian supplies: drones, radios, helmets, gloves, clothing, medical equipment, children's necessities, pet food, and more. Our priority was to reach the most critical and accessible areas, often pushing the boundaries of what was possible.

There were moments when our efforts unfolded entirely unplanned, driven by chance encounters. Whether meeting someone in a café, on the street, or at a gas station, we would offer immediate support and, over time, establish ongoing assistance for families or units in need. It often felt as though fate had a hand in guiding us, and these connections blossomed into enduring collaborations. One mission that stands out involved delivering food from a Polish foundation to a family in a small village in Odesa. In return, that family later assisted us with accommodations—an illustration of how acts of kindness can come full circle. There were also challenging moments. We occasionally slept in soldiers' quarters, sharing wooden desks covered in black plastic as makeshift beds. But at the front, simply being alive was the most important thing; comfort became secondary.

In high-risk areas near active fire, the adrenaline was palpable, sharpening our instincts and amplifying our skills. These extreme conditions revealed true character, offering a clear understanding of who could be trusted as close friends and allies.

The atmosphere in those places was unlike any other—colourless, filled only with the stark contrast of life and death. It taught me to live fully in the present and to appreciate each moment for what it is.

I valued each mission, each one unique, defined by its own challenges, adventures, and companions. Together, we made a meaningful impact—whether by saving lives, bringing smiles, or offering hope. Even the smallest gestures can set off ripples of change.

I am deeply grateful for these experiences. They shaped me, taught me resilience, and underscored the profound impact we can have when we act with purpose and compassion.

***In June 2022, you presented the Ukrainian flag signed by the soldiers of the 93rd Separate Mechanized Brigade "Kholodniy Yar" to the Canadian Minister of National Defence. What was the purpose of this gift?***



After completing my internship with CUPP in 2022, I maintained strong connections with the individuals I met in the Canadian Parliament and fellow participants. These relationships developed naturally, with many of us staying in touch and keeping each other informed about our lives. During one of my visits to the brigade, I spontaneously requested a flag from the soldiers as a souvenir for my friends in Canada. The gesture was simple, yet meaningful, and the soldiers were genuinely happy to share their brigade's story and express their gratitude for the support they felt from abroad.

At that moment, there was no specific purpose behind the request—it was simply an act of respect and appreciation. However, when I later shared a video of the Canadian Parliament receiving the flag, the response was extraordinary. The soldiers who signed the flag—infantry, tank operators, sappers, mechanics, and others who form the backbone of Ukraine's defence—were deeply moved. It was unexpected for them to see their signatures and messages valued and honoured on such an international stage.

Similarly, the Canadian parliamentarians were equally honoured to receive such a meaningful gift. The flag symbolized more than just an object; it served as a bridge of mutual respect and solidarity between those fighting for freedom and those supporting them.

In the end, this exchange was a simple yet powerful act of appreciation. While the soldiers and parliamentarians may not know each other personally, perhaps one day, their paths will cross. Until then, the flag stands as a symbol of shared values, courage, and unwavering support.



### **How can we help?**

Firstly, we must not forget that there is still ongoing conflict, a state of survival, and the pain that continues to affect so many. Sometimes, even the simplest words of support can be the most significant, letting people know they are not alone.

There are protests where we can stand in solidarity to honour those who have fallen and those still imprisoned by the Russian forces. It is vital not to turn a blind eye to these complex issues, but to openly discuss and address them. Silence, after all, is also a choice.

Alongside our daily work, I believe it is crucial to support those who are enduring dangerous and frightening conditions near the frontlines. This help doesn't always need to involve military equipment—often, the most urgent needs are simple, essential items such as water, hygiene products, clothing, shoes, and medicine. These are needed not only at the frontlines but also in hospitals caring for the wounded.

While donating to large charities or participating in major fundraising campaigns is admirable, we must be mindful of the potential risks of scams or mismanagement. Not all organizations operate transparently, and this is why I prefer to provide assistance directly to individuals I know personally or those introduced to me through trusted friends. This approach ensures that the support reaches the right hands, and it allows me to see the tangible impact of my efforts.

Even now, I continue to support soldiers and individuals I met during earlier volunteer missions. I avoid contributing to large-scale initiatives where the outcome is unclear. Instead, I focus on addressing immediate, specific needs—whether purchasing supplies or delivering them directly to those who need them most. Over time, my volunteer work has introduced me to a network of individuals whose lives and struggles I know personally, allowing me to address their needs with confidence and certainty.

I have witnessed people who, despite not being able to donate money, offer their skills as a form of support—hairdressers, massage therapists, and others who volunteer their time to visit special zones or provide services to soldiers in hospitals.

For example, I sometimes travel by train to Kramatorsk to deliver supplies that I've collected or purchased with friends. Many of us know someone directly connected to the military, whether it's a friend of a friend or a wounded soldier in the hospital, or even animal supporters who are deeply involved in this cause.

In my opinion, this direct, personal approach is the most effective and meaningful way to help. It ensures that every effort, no matter how small, provides real relief to someone in need.



QUOTE OF

**PAVLO SOROKIN**  
2014 Alumnus, Intern to MP the Hon. Jason Kenney

CUPP is definitely about meeting new people who may change your life. In my case, I developed the most important and life-changing contact- I met my wife during our internship. Another person became a valuable member of my group for Young generation will change Ukraine program. Needless to mention that some connections might help in your future day-to-day work.

Conducted by Olha Tolmachova and Ivana Sysak, CUPP 2024-2025 applicants

QUOTE OF

**RUSLAN DEYNYCHENKO**  
CUPP 1996 Alumnus, Intern to Joe Fontana

The scholarship I received for participating in the CUPP program, along with my involvement in the program, convinced me that the knowledge and skills I gained through the generosity of donors must be passed on to others. In addition to my main job, I have been teaching at Kyiv-Mohyla Academy for 20 years and actively participating in the country's public life.

Conducted by Diana Havhun, CUPP 2024-2025 applicant



QUOTE OF

**OLGA MELYKH**  
2008 Alumna, Intern to Patrick Boyer

I have built my career based on one simple and yet very important rule – no matter in what economic sector I work, my main focus should be on contributing to the development of Ukrainian society. This rule originated from my family's values and was taken onto the new level due to participation in various international programs, particularly in CUPP.

Participation in CUPP has broaden my world perception. It changed the way I saw Ukrainian and international politics, economic relations, and has impacted my attitude towards my country, my people and myself.

Conducted by Yulia Odynets, CUPP 2024-2025 applicant



QUOTE OF

**SERHIY YAROSHENKO**  
2013 Alumnus, Intern to MP James Bezan

I am immensely grateful to the Programme leadership team, first and foremost pan Ihor and pani Lucy, my backer then and a good friend now, CUPP alumnus herself Ulyana Khromyak, and my MP James Bezan and his team. Thanks to all, I had unparalleled work experience on the Hill. The diverse internship tenure inspired me to develop professionally in areas that would prevalently include building relationships with people and delivering tangible value.

Conducted by Olha Tolmachova and Ivana Sysak, CUPP 2024-2025 applicants





QUOTE OF

**OLEH SHEMETOV**  
**2016 Alumnus, Intern to The Hon. Chrystia Freeland**

Did CUPP play any part in your involvement in the life of Ukraine after your return home?

"I joined the initiative "I tak poymut!" and wrote many hundreds of complaints about violations of the language rights of Ukrainians, mostly online, but certainly a few dozen to government agencies (in particular, to the State Service of Ukraine on Food Safety and Consumer Protection). However, in September 2012, a year after my participation in CUPP, I moved to Poland to study, where I still live and work. This, however, did not prevent me from continuing to fight for the language rights of Ukrainians remotely and during my frequent trips to Ukraine".

Conducted by Mariia Vakariava, CUPP 2024-2025 applicant

QUOTE OF

**OKSANA RUDIUK**  
**1996 Alumna, Intern to MP Bonnie Hickey and Brent St. Denis**

CUPP gives you an acute awareness that you can change the world for the better, as well as a sense of belonging to a large family of Ukrainians scattered around the world due to the historically difficult fate of the country. Scattered and simultaneously united by a common goal - to work for Ukraine even from a distance. After the programme, I returned as a different person, more conscious and ready to respond more actively to injustice. That's why we were all part of the Orange Revolution, not wanting to accept the elections that were stolen from us.

Conducted by Andriana Hamar, CUPP 2024-2025 applicant



QUOTE OF

**SERGIY PETUKHOV**  
**2005 Alumnus, Intern to The Hon. Dan McTeague**

After returning from the program, it was easier to understand in which direction I would like to see changes and reforms in Ukraine and the model we should strive for. I spent a lot of time in various positions in the Ministry of Justice and the National Agency for the Prevention of Corruption to make these changes happen.

Many times along the way, CUPP alumni and I helped and supported each other.

Conducted by Mariana Vasylyk, Olesia Labyk, Volodymyr Ksienich and Danylo Moiseienko, CUPP 2024-2025 applicants



QUOTE OF

**BRYLIAK PAVLO**  
**CUPP 2019 Alumnus, Intern to Cheryl Gallant**

CUPP is this extraordinary program where your experience completely depends on yourself. Each intern had a possibility to tailor the experience for themselves and make it as cool as possible. Thus, my first meeting with an MP started from discussing what am I studying, where are my professional interests lying and which type of work would I like to do. That hugely shaped my Parliament Hill experience as I had a real possibility to apply my knowledge to real-world challenges.

Conducted by Andriana Hamar, CUPP 2024-2025 applicant



# CUPP 2024 EVENTS

Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program 2024

*The 9th Annual Prayer for Peace in Ukraine and Throughout the World took place on Parliament Hill on November 20, 2024*

To stand in solidarity with Ukraine, Ukrainian-Canadians, the Ukrainian (Catholic, Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, and more) community, and countries facing attacks worldwide, conducted to the 9th Annual Prayer for Peace in Ukraine and throughout the World.

Since 2014, this gathering has been held under the patronage of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP), Canada's longest-running initiative supporting Ukraine.

CUPP alumni include parliamentarians, ministers, and officials in Ukraine's government, working for a brighter future.

The prayer was preceded by an immersive audio exhibition "1000+ days of War: Hear the Sound of Ukraine".



PRAYER FOR PEACE



PRAYER FOR PEACE



PRAYER FOR PEACE



PIZZA PARTY



PIZZA PARTY

Pizza Party aims to exchange experiences and provide an opportunity to share insights about Ukraine's current challenges and prospects with the younger generation. It was a wonderful opportunity to exchange experiences on Parliament Hill and share insights about our respective programs.



MEETING WITH SENATOR STAN KUTCHER



MEETING WITH THE UKRAINIAN CANADIAN CONGRESS

# OTHER ACTIVITIES

Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program 2024



DURING THE EVENT HOSTED BY EMBASSY OF UKRAINE

Panel discussion “Impact of a full-scale invasion on mental health in Ukraine. Building mental health services as a prerequisite for Recovery”



MEETING WITH MYKOLA KULEBA AND SENATOR KUTCHER

Meeting with Mykola Kuleba, a Ukrainian statesman, children’s rights advocate and humanitarian and senator Stan Kutcher



RESEPTION AT SPEAKERS’ HOUSE

Special meeting with the Speaker of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ruslan Stefanchuk at the official residence of the Speaker of the House of Commons MP Greg Fergus



1000 DAYS OF WAR

1000 Days of War was hosted by Russian Embassy Protesters - Canada Stands with Ukraine ra Maple Hope Foundation



1000 DAYS OF WAR, HOSTED BY EMBASSY OF UKRAINE

A solemn ceremony of raising the Ukrainian flag near the main tower of Canada - the Parliament Peace Tower in connection with 1000 days since the beginning of Russia’s full-scale aggression against Ukraine



91st ANNIVERSARY OF THE HOLODOMOR

A Solemn Commemoration of the 91st Anniversary of the Holodomor (Ukrainian Famine-Genocide of 1932-33) hosted by The Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Friendship Group, the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and the Embassy of Ukraine in Canada



MEETING WITH MP HEATHER MCPHERSON



CHABURSKY’S FAMILY DINNER



# VALERIA KOHUT

*Intern to Heather McPherson MP for Edmonton Strathcona, Alberta*

**BORN IN:** Okhtyrka, Ukraine

**HOMETOWN:** Kyiv, Ukraine.

**EDUCATION:** Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Institute of International Relations (bachelor's degree in International law and a master's degree in International Litigation) Sciences Po (Master in Economic Law - one-year academic mobility program)

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** English (fluent), Russian (fluent), French (upper-intermediate)

**LAST BOOK READ:** George Orwell «1984»

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY UKRAINIAN AUTHOR:**

“Життя справді складне, і єдиний у нього підручник – досвід” - Григор Тютюнник

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY FOREIGN AUTHOR:**

““Extreme justice is extreme injustice” - Cicero "On Moral Duties"

**FAVOURITE MUSICAL RECORDING:**

Chris Isaak “Wicked Game”

**FAVOURITE UKRAINIAN LANDSCAPE:**

Lviv's Old Town. It captivates me with its blend of history, culture, and timeless beauty. I love how every street seems to tell a story, with charming cobblestones, intricately detailed facades, and the echoes of centuries past. The cozy atmosphere, filled with the scent of fresh coffee from local cafes, creates a unique and welcoming vibe. Walking through the narrow alleys, I admired the harmonious mix of different architectural styles – Gothic, Baroque, Renaissance – which reflect the city's rich heritage. The vibrant cultural scene, with its theaters, museums, and street performers, adds a dynamic energy to this historic setting, making Lviv a place of inspiration and endless discovery.





Black Cheremosh River



# OLHA OKHRIMENKO

*Intern to Ben Lobb MP for Huron-Bruce, Ontario*

**BORN IN:** Obukhiv, Kyiv region, Ukraine.

**HOMETOWN:** Kyiv, Ukraine.

**EDUCATION:** Kyiv University of Tourism, Economics and Law, Master of International Economic Relations

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** English, Russian

**LAST BOOK READ:** Hans Fallada "Every Man Dies Alone"

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY UKRAINIAN AUTHOR:**

"І все на світі треба пережити,  
І кожен фініш – це, по суті, старт", - Ліна Костенко

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY FOREIGN AUTHOR:**

"Falling down is not a failure. Failure comes when you stay where you have fallen." - Socrates

**FAVOURITE MUSICAL RECORDING:**

Beethoven - Moonlight Sonata

**FAVOURITE UKRAINIAN LANDSCAPE:**

One of my favourite landscapes in Ukraine is Black Cheremosh River. The Black Cheremosh is a wayward, rapid river that starts to the southeast of the village of Burkut (Ivano-Frankivsk region) on northern-east slopes of the Chyvchynski mountains, which belong to the Marmarosy Massif of the Ukrainian Carpathians. The river is sung in lots of Hutsul legends and stories. The Black Cheremosh flows through a scenic Carpathian valley with steep slopes. According to some versions of local inhabitants, the name of the river comes from dark water being brought by the flow.



Polonyna Borzhava



# ULIANA HNATYSHYN

*Intern to Carol Hughes MP for Algoma – Manitoulin – Kapuskasing, Ontario*

**BORN IN:** Ternopil, Ukraine

**HOMETOWN:** Kyiv, Ukraine.

**EDUCATION:** National University of „Kyiv-Mohyla Academy“ (Ukraine) Bachelor of Laws 2022; Europa-Universität Viadrina (Germany) Master of Laws (LL.M.) in European and International Business Law)

Humboldt Universität zu Berlin, International Parliamentary Scholarship of German Bundestag

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** English, German, Russian.

**LAST BOOK READ:** Boris Johnson, „The Churchill Factor: how one man made history“

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY UKRAINIAN AUTHOR:** Так багато на світі горя, люди, будьте взаємно красивими!» - Ліна Костенко

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY FOREIGN AUTHOR:** „After climbing a great hill, one only finds that there are many more to climb“ – Nelson Mandela

**FAVOURITE MUSICAL RECORDING:** Myroslav Skoryk: Melody; Ivasyuk «Song will be between us“

**FAVOURITE UKRAINIAN LANDSCAPE:**

There is one place in Ukraine where I am filled with strength and inspiration, and my breath is taken away. It's Polonyna Borzhava in the Ukrainian Carpathians. It stretches between the rivers Vicha, Borzhava and Rika in the Transcarpathian region. These are the most picturesque landscapes of the Ukrainian Carpathians that I have ever seen. I try to get there every year and always enjoy the memories!



The Arboretum Oleksandriya in Bila Tserkva



# RUSLAN HRABOVSKYI

*Intern to Yvan Baker MP for Etobicoke Centre, Ontario*

**BORN IN:** Bila Tserkva, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine.

**HOMETOWN:** Bila Tserkva, Kyiv Oblast, Ukraine.

**EDUCATION:** National university of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Faculty of Law, Bachelor of Law, 2023

Jagiellonian University, School of Ukrainian Law, 2022

University of Glasgow – Faculty of Law, 2022

University of Toronto – Faculty of Arts & Science, 2023 (The Temerty scholarship recipient)

University of Waterloo – Research, 2023

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** English, Russian, Croatian, basic Spanish and French.

**LAST BOOK READ:** Peacemakers in Action: Profiles of Religion in Conflict Resolution by Tanenbaum Center for Interreligious Understanding

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY UKRAINIAN AUTHOR:** «Життя - єдина мить, Для смерті ж - вічність ціла» - Олександр Олесь

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY FOREIGN AUTHOR:** “Man can be destroyed but not defeated.” -Ernest Hemingway

**FAVOURITE MUSICAL RECORDING:** Lana Del Rey - Summertime Sadness

Taras Chubay – Вона

**FAVOURITE UKRAINIAN LANDSCAPE:**

The Arboretum Oleksandriya in Bila Tserkva. This huge 400-hectare arboretum was my place of power until the day I left for Scotland to study. Built in the late classicist style, this park saw my first steps, meetings with my family, and many happy moments. For me, this park is the personification of my hometown.



Synevyr Lake



# MARYNA GEREGA

*Intern to James Maloney MP for Etobicoke – Lakeshore, Ontario*

**BORN IN:** Zhytomyr, Ukraine.

**HOMETOWN:** Zhytomyr, Ukraine.

**EDUCATION:** B.A. in International Relations Ivan Franko National University of Lviv, Ukraine (2018-2020).

B.A. in International Relations with a Minor in Women's and Gender Studies, University of Windsor, Canada (2021-2024).

Masters of International Affairs, Norman Paterson School of International Affairs, Carleton University, Canada (2024-2025)

**FOREIGN LANGUAGES:** English

**LAST BOOK READ:** George Orwell "Animal Farm"

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY UKRAINIAN AUTHOR:**

"Ніяка в світі сила нас не зламає, бо нас коріння наше в землі тримає" (Г. Дудка)

**FAVORITE QUOTE BY FOREIGN AUTHOR:** "How wonderful it is that nobody needs to wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."

— Anne Frank

**FAVOURITE MUSICAL RECORDING:** Gloria Gaynor's "I will survive"

**FAVOURITE UKRAINIAN LANDSCAPE:** My favourite Ukrainian Landscape is Synevyr Lake which is a large lake located in the Carpathian Mountains in Ukraine. This lake is a majestic natural wonder with pristine emerald waters and enchanting forested shores. Aside from its beauty, the lake is steeped in legends that add an air of mystery and intrigue. According to local folklore, it is believed that the lake was formed from the tears of a grieving shepherdess whose love was tragically lost.



Central Kyiv



# HELENA GELDHOF

**Born in:** Antwerp, Belgium.

**Hometown:** Antwerp, Belgium.

**Education:** UGent and VUB, Bachelor Social Sciences

**Foreign Languages:** English, Dutch.

**Last Book Read:** Toshikazu Kawaguchi, Before we say goodbye.

**Favourite Quote By Ukrainian Author:**

"When I am dead, then bury me  
In my beloved Ukraine,  
My tomb upon a grave mound high,  
Amid the spreading plain,  
So that the fields, the boundless steppes,  
The Dnipro's plunging shore  
My eyes could see, my ears could hear  
The mighty river roar."

- Taras Shevchenko

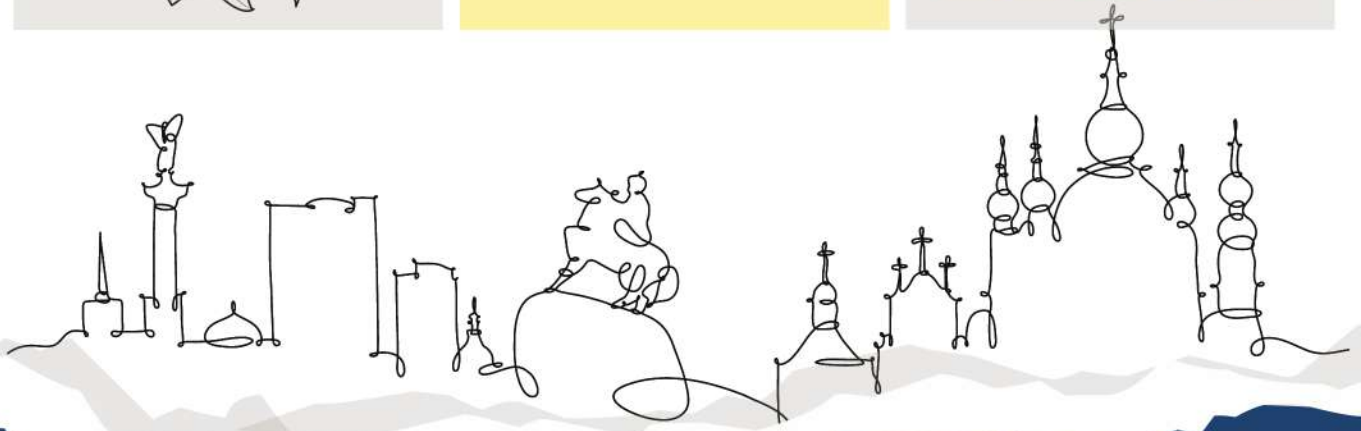
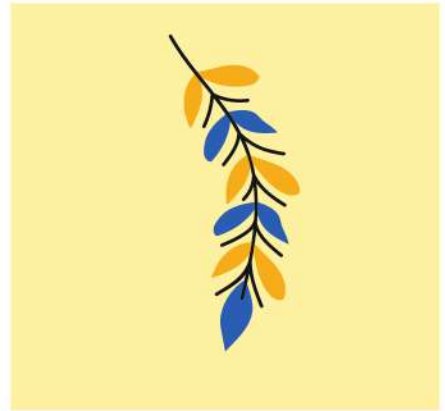
**Favourite Quote By Foreign Author:** "Believe in truth." - Timothy Snyder

**Favourite Musical Recording:** Piero Piccioni - Endless Love

**Favourite Ukrainian Landscape:** I have only had the privilege of seeing central Kyiv in my life, as I only partly grew up in Ukraine. On my last trip before the full scale invasion, I remember standing with a stunning view of the Dnipro River, frozen over as snow gently fell, with the sky a gorgeous blue. It's a memory I treasure. Other than that, the river played a huge role in Ukraine's history and in Ukrainian poetry usually symbolises the soul of Ukraine.



# CULTURE & WAR





***Film Hive serves as a guide to Ukrainian modern cultural content in Canada. What does it mean for your organization to be the voice of Ukrainian cinema in this country?***

First and foremost, on behalf of our team, we want to thank you for giving us the opportunity to be heard. Cinema is one of the most influential, popular, and vibrant branches of culture, capable of telling much about the society in which it was created. We believe the films we select for screenings in Canada are a vivid reflection of contemporary Ukrainian culture. Therefore, we feel a deep responsibility for the content we present. It is important to us that newly arrived Ukrainians in Canada maintain their connection to their roots. Equally, it is vital for Ukrainians of the second, third, and fourth generations to recognize the advanced development of modern Ukrainian culture and take pride in it. Our plans include continuing to promote Ukrainian cinema, touring Ukrainian theater productions, organizing gallery exhibitions, and exploring select musical projects. We feel the support of Ukrainians and see a growing wave of interest among Canadians. It is this sense of responsibility, the enthusiasm, and the drive we gain from feedback on our work that propel us forward, enabling us to create new projects and build ambitious plans.



*interview conducted by Maryna Gerega*

## FILM HIVE ENTERTAINMENT

***From your observation, how does the Canadian audience respond to Ukrainian films? Are there any particular themes or stories that resonate strongly, especially given the current war in Ukraine?***

Yes, of course, the topic of the war in Ukraine is of interest to Canadians. They want to understand the true causes of the war. It is difficult to believe that the population of the world's largest country supports an unjust terrorist war. Yet, the maddening truth is that they do. At the same time, we notice that Canadians' interest extends beyond the war itself.

The number of attendees at our screenings continues to grow. Ukrainian cinema often features high-quality, dramatic, and profound stories, and in contrast to the more spectacle-driven Hollywood films, the emotional depth of Ukrainian films attracts Canadian audiences. They appreciate the artistic essence of the films, not just their subject matter. That said, our repertoire in recent years has included films like "Mavka" and "Dovbush", which could easily rival Hollywood blockbusters in broad distribution.

However, we are not seeking to compete—we aim to share high-quality cultural products and demonstrate that even amidst war, and especially because of it, we prioritize creativity. Creativity is our story; it is our lifeline.

***Recently, during the Toronto International Film Festival 2024, a Russia-backed film, Russians at War, was screened, raising concerns over the spread of Russian narratives in Canada. In your view, what are the implications of including this film in cultural festivals like TIFF, particularly considering that there is an ongoing war in Ukraine and an urgent need to support Ukraine?***

The impact of propaganda infiltrating high culture is catastrophic. Propaganda is Russia's primary weapon. Historically, they have used culture, particularly cinema, as an effective tool for influence since the Soviet Union's inception. A documentary by Korniy Hrytsuk, "Zinema", examines how propaganda films are created, at what scale, and for whose interests. It reveals that figures like Trofimova employ classic propaganda techniques, promoting narratives beneficial to Moscow to foster loyalty, justify, and soften isolation. This is no exaggeration—films are their most effective medium for disseminating lies, as other propaganda channels are often met with skepticism or fail to achieve widespread reach and credibility. Russia uses film festivals as a cover, leveraging their prestige and viewer trust. This system is supported by vast resources and personnel in Russia. Screening such films increases the risk of more individuals becoming victims of propaganda, which could ultimately destabilize societies. Victims of propaganda may begin doubting their governments' decisions to support Ukraine, leading to internal conflicts or a gradual withdrawal of support, thereby giving Putin's dictatorship a path to victory.

***How do you see Film Hive's role in providing Canadian audiences with a counter-narrative or deeper understanding of Ukrainian perspectives in light of films like Russians at War?***



In essence, we serve as a source of Ukrainian cultural products. Anyone interested is welcome to join our screenings, propose new ideas, or suggest new formats. We are happy to take up initiatives that benefit society. Additionally, we strive to keep Ukrainian culture at a high level, making it appealing not only to Ukrainians in Canada but also to the broader multicultural nation. Though we lack the financial resources of Russian propaganda, we have committed to spreading the truth about our centuries-long struggle for freedom as one of our primary missions. Films like "Dovbush", "Budynok Slovo", and "Diagnosis: Dissident" are invaluable tools for this. Special events for Canadian audiences often include extended programs. For example, we organized screenings of "Life to the Limit" with director Pavlo Peleshok, a military volunteer since 2014, who explores the causes and events of Ukraine's 2013-2014 revolution, the initial occupations, and Russia's insidious imperial war. We also held a photo exhibition by Yevhen Maloletka, Pulitzer Prize winner and World Press Photo of the Year recipient in 2023, who joined online to discuss his works while reporting from the front lines. With the Ukrainian Embassy, we screened Mstyslav Chernov's Oscar-nominated documentary "20 Days in Mariupol" at the War Museum in Ottawa, accompanied by Ruslan Kurt's art installation "Doors of War". Our upcoming plans include a closed screening of "Zinema", organized in collaboration with the Ukrainian Embassy. We continue to support great initiatives and craft our own ambitious plans.

***Do you believe it is important to have Ukrainian voices represented in Canada through initiatives like Film Hive and programs such as the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP)?***

Undoubtedly, in a world where communication plays a decisive role, the ability to speak and be heard is invaluable. We cannot avoid discussing the war. Ukrainian culture is also a victim of this war—it cannot fully manifest, develop, or thrive. Should Ukraine fall, its culture will be the first to face eradication. Therefore, here and now, we focus on the war. But I am confident that before and after the war, we will bring a wealth of engaging topics for Ukrainian-Canadian dialogue, numerous initiatives, and collaborative formats. Reliable and established communication channels are essential.






In September 2024, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) showcased two films that focused on the war in Ukraine: Olivier Sarbil's "Viktor" and Anastasia Trofimova's "Russians at War." Both films sought to shed light on different aspects of the armed conflict. However, they received significantly contrasting levels of media attention, raising questions about the effectiveness of strategies aimed at drawing world attention to atrocities in Ukraine.

French documentary filmmaker Olivier Sarbil's film "Victor" tells the story of a deaf Ukrainian who dedicated himself to defending his nation. The film received modest coverage, even given the poignancy of the narrative and the potential to humanize and promote the Ukrainian struggle for existence. On the other hand, Anastasia Trofimova, a Russian Canadian, received significant media attention for her film "Russians at War" despite the controversy surrounding it. The Ukrainian Canadian community initially protested the scheduled screening of the film, accusing it of being a sympathetic portrayal of Russian soldiers without proper attention to documented war crimes and aggression against Ukraine. Despite this, the film was screened two days later than the official festival dates, enhancing its visibility.

The film "Russians at War" unwittingly became the centre of attention in the competition for the best media and public coverage. The controversy surrounding its screening sparked widespread debate in the international media, overshadowing "Victor." The debate centered on censorship, artistic freedom, and the ethics of portraying aggressors in a humanistic manner during an ongoing armed conflict.

## TIFF FESTIVAL. MEDIA COVERAGE OF UKRAINIAN WAR FILMS

*Volodymyr Ksienic, CUPP 2025 Applicant*

However, such attention did not necessarily lead to a deeper understanding of war atrocities but highlighted the complexities of shaping media narratives.

The main lesson for the Ukrainian community is the importance of strategic communication and engagement with media platforms. To effectively draw global attention to Ukraine's plight, it is critical to actively promote narratives that authentically and memorably represent the Ukrainian experience of war and resonate with international audiences. This includes finding and framing emotionally engaging stories that reach a wide range of media channels.

Moreover, the reaction to the film "Russians at War" demonstrates the possible unintended consequences of protests that only amplify and popularize controversial works. While it is important to confront narratives that may distort or undermine the reality of armed conflict, it is also necessary to consider the most effective methods of counterpropaganda. Engaging in dialogue with festival organizers, participating in panel discussions, and using social media may be more constructive approaches to counter unfavourable and objectionable narratives. In conclusion, the TIFF experience emphasizes the need for the Ukrainian community to adopt a multifaceted media strategy. By drawing attention to authentic Ukrainian stories and responding thoughtfully to conflicting narratives, the diaspora can draw global attention to ongoing atrocities.



## TIFF FESTIVAL. MEDIA COVERAGE OF UKRAINIAN WAR FILMS

*Daria Stepanenko, CUPP 2025 Applicant*

The coverage of films dealing with the war in Ukraine at the Toronto International Film Festival highlights significant disparities in society. Olivier Sarbil's documentary "Viktor," which follows the life of a Deaf Ukrainian man eager to contribute to his country's defense, received limited coverage. In contrast, Anastasia Trofimova's film "Russians at War," which purports to present the human side of Russian soldiers, garnered extensive media attention despite facing protests from the Ukrainian Canadian community.

The difference in coverage raises important questions about the narratives that resonate with audiences. While the Ukrainian community continuously voices the urgency of acknowledging Russia's role as the aggressor in the conflict - highlighting the immense suffering endured by countless victims, including children - these messages often struggle to gain traction in mainstream discourse. This discrepancy suggests that the battle for media and popular attention is not merely about the content of the films but is heavily influenced by societal attitudes towards the war and the actors involved. One crucial lesson to draw from this experience is the necessity of elevating the voices and stories of those affected by the war. The focus on "Russians at War" reveals a troubling tendency for narratives that humanize the aggressor to overshadow the perspectives of those who bear the brunt of the conflict. The fact that the plight of a Deaf Ukrainian man - who, like many others, seeks to contribute to the war effort - was largely overlooked speaks to a broader societal tendency to disregard marginalized voices, even within one's own community. This is a situation faced not just in the context of the festival but reflects a wider cultural phenomenon where stories of individuals with disabilities or those in less-visible roles struggle for visibility and acknowledgment.

Moreover, the experience underscores a painful truth: the global community often only begins to understand the gravity of a situation when it encroaches upon their own borders.

This pattern reflects a tragic reality, as many individuals may not grasp the full implications of the war in Ukraine until they are personally affected. This is particularly disheartening for those like the protagonist of "Viktor," who embody the resilience and determination of the Ukrainian spirit yet remain unseen by a world that often prioritizes narratives of conflict over those of human struggle.

Within the Ukrainian community, there is a pressing need to advocate for greater recognition of diverse narratives, especially those of individuals with disabilities or those contributing in quieter, less visible ways. Many Ukrainians, including those with speech and hearing impairments, are actively supporting the war effort through donations, logistics, and other essential services. Yet, these contributions frequently go unnoticed, not only by the international community but also by their fellow citizens.

The divergent media responses to "Viktor" and "Russians at War" illuminate the challenges faced by narratives that seek to humanize the victims of the Ukraine conflict, particularly those from marginalized communities. The extensive coverage of Trofimova's film, which attempts to portray Russian soldiers as relatable figures, not only detracts attention from the Ukrainian perspective but also risks normalizing the aggressor's narrative. This phenomenon emphasizes the urgent need for the Ukrainian community to harness its voice and ensure that the stories of resilience, bravery, and everyday contributions - such as those illustrated in "Viktor" - are amplified and recognized. By actively promoting a diverse array of narratives and fostering greater empathy for the complexities of those affected by the war, the community can work towards reshaping public perception and garnering the international support needed to address the ongoing humanitarian crisis. Ultimately, this experience serves as a call to action for Ukrainians and allies alike to prioritize and champion the authentic voices of those enduring the war's consequences, reinforcing the idea that every story matters in the fight for justice and recognition.

## TIFF FESTIVAL. MEDIA COVERAGE OF UKRAINIAN WAR FILMS

Anastasia Mykhailiyk, CUPP 2025 Applicant

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) 2024 featured two films addressing the ongoing war in Ukraine: *Viktor* by French filmmaker Olivier Sarbil and *Russians at War* by Russian Canadian Anastasia Trofimova. Despite the relevance and urgency of the subject matter, the reception and coverage of these films present a stark dichotomy that raises important questions about media bias, audience engagement, and advocacy.

### Overview of the Films

#### Viktor

Olivier Sarbil's *Viktor* is a poignant documentary focusing on the life of a Deaf Ukrainian man determined to contribute to his nation's defense. Through its intimate portrayal, the film highlights the courage and resilience of ordinary Ukrainians against the backdrop of Russia's aggression.

#### Russians at War

Anastasia Trofimova's *Russians at War* aims to humanize Russian soldiers, presenting them as individuals grappling with the personal and psychological toll of war. Controversially, the film attracted widespread media attention, even amid protests led by the Ukrainian Canadian community.

### Media and Popular Coverage: A Contrast

The disproportionate media attention given to *Russians at War* over *Viktor* reveals troubling implications for how narratives about the war are consumed and prioritized. Trofimova's film, despite its contentious subject, dominated headlines and discussions, overshadowing *Viktor*, a film offering a critical perspective on Ukrainian resilience and struggle.

The success of *Russians at War* in garnering coverage can be attributed to several factors:

- Controversy sells. The protests against the film likely amplified its visibility, making it a topic of heated debate.
- Media priorities. The focus on sensational stories over meaningful ones often marginalizes films like *Viktor* that tell quieter, yet profoundly impactful, stories.

### Lessons for the Ukrainian Community

The outcomes at TIFF 2024 offer valuable lessons for the Ukrainian community in ensuring that narratives about Ukraine's struggle are not overshadowed:

- Amplify Advocacy Efforts. The Ukrainian diaspora, along with allies, must proactively engage with media outlets and festival organizers to promote Ukrainian-centered narratives. Protests alone, while necessary, may inadvertently boost the visibility of opposing narratives.
- Invest in Strategic Storytelling. Films like *Viktor* need better marketing, strategic timing, and partnerships to ensure they reach a broader audience. Engaging with prominent critics and leveraging social media campaigns can help amplify their impact.
- Leverage the Arts for Advocacy. Ukrainian filmmakers and storytellers should continue creating compelling works that capture the complexities of the war, balancing personal stories with broader geopolitical implications to attract both emotional and intellectual engagement.
- Counter Propaganda. Films like *Russians at War* can serve as subtle vehicles for Russian soft power. Ukrainian communities must counter such narratives by actively producing and promoting films, articles, and media that spotlight the real victims and perpetrators of the war.

### Conclusion: A Call to Action

The TIFF 2024 experience underscores the urgent need for Ukrainian voices to be heard more robustly on global platforms. While *Viktor* offers an authentic and deeply human narrative of Ukrainian resilience, its limited coverage reflects a broader challenge in shaping international discourse about the war. Meanwhile, the controversial reception of *Russians at War* highlights the risks of allowing narratives that obfuscate the realities of aggression to gain prominence. Moving forward, the Ukrainian community must focus on amplifying its stories, advocating for fair representation, and fostering a deeper understanding of the war's stakes among global audiences. Only through sustained efforts can the atrocities of the war on Ukraine be effectively communicated and addressed on the world stage.

## RUSSIAN CRIMES

# DESTRUCTION OF UKRAINIAN CULTURAL HERITAGE

*The non-governmental organization Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies (CISS) focuses on researching the state of protection of cultural heritage sites in the temporarily occupied territories of Ukraine and identifying the major trends in the course of events in this area through the lens of international humanitarian law.*

The Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies is an NGO that keeps an eye on the condition of the cultural assets in the occupied areas. Information on the unlawful transfers of collections, the destruction of over 1,000 cultural heritage sites, and the use of cultural institutions by Russian occupation authorities for propagandist purposes has been confirmed for 2024.

The first region that came into the focus of the NGO's attention was the [Autonomous Republic of Crimea](#) and the city of Sevastopol. Which were the fastest to be incorporated into the Russian government system, which also affected the management of cultural heritage. The most common violations by the aggressor country regarding Ukrainian cultural heritage sites in the temporarily occupied Crimea since 2014 are the following:

**1. Illegal archaeological excavations** are being carried out with the permission of the occupying Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation (more than 1,500 permits for excavations and explorations at 387 archaeological sites). Most of the illegal excavations are carried out for the implementation of infrastructure projects at the site of monuments. In 2023-2024, more than 20 burial mounds and the Bronze Age settlement "Bagai-1" were affected by the construction of the Simferopol-Mirny highway. 7 archaeological monuments were affected by the construction of a tourist complex on the shores of Lake Donuzlav: the East Belyauska and West Donuzlav settlements, the "Traktyr" settlement, and burial mound groups. The greatest destruction in 2022-2024 was suffered by the World Heritage Site "Ancient City of Chersonese and its Chora", the southern necropolis of which was completely destroyed

## Analytical material

*provided by The Non-Governmental Organization Crimean Institute for Strategic Studies (CISS)*



for the construction of the propaganda project "New Chersonese".

The illegal archaeological work and the renaming of monuments demonstrate the devaluation of the archaeologists who carry out this work. Crimean Tatar history of Crimea: instead of the historical names of settlements used in the names of monuments, those given after the deportation of Crimean Tatars in 1944 appear (only in 2023-2024: "Kurgan in the village of Hlinka" - instead of the village of Kingyl; "Kurgan in the village of Tunelne" - instead of the village of Kuchyuk-Orta-Mamay; "Group of 2 mounds in the village of Okhotnikove" - instead of the village of Dzhaga-Kushchu)

**2. Use of cultural heritage sites for military purposes.** The first such cases are known since 2014 at the medieval fortress of Arabat. But such violations are long-standing. Such as the construction of Russian fortifications on the territory of the Or settlement and the Or-Kapu fortress, which have been ongoing for 10 years.

**3. Illegal works on the modification of cultural heritage sites.** These works are presented by the Russian authorities as restoration measures. The Khan Saray (palace of the Crimean Khans) in Bakhchisarai suffers the most losses. After the destruction of the authentic appearance of the Biyuk Khan Jami (Great Khan Mosque) in 2017, illegal works

were carried out. This led to the destruction of the Secular Building in 2022, and an attempt is currently underway to destroy the historical division of the courtyard of the Khan's Palace into separate spaces. The Aivazovsky house and the Stamboli dacha in Feodosia have suffered significant losses.

**4. Illegal movement of museum objects from the territory of Crimea to the Russian Federation** (more than 40 such facts were recorded during 2014-2024), the last one - illegal export of objects from the collection of the Kerch Historical and Cultural Reserve to the Azov Museum-Reserve (Russian Federation).

Immediately after the occupation of Crimea in 2014, the Russian Federation began its invasion of **Donetsk and Luhansk regions**. A limited contingent and the capture of regional centers, which led to the seizure of museum collections of the Perevalsky District Historical Museum, the Park-Museum of Anthropomorphic Steles and Polovtsian Stone Statues (Luhansk), the Archaeological Museum and the Center for Archaeology "Heritage" of the Volodymyr Dahl East Ukrainian National University (Luhansk), the Museum Archaeological and Ethnographic Complex of the T. G. Shevchenko Luhansk National University. After the full-scale invasion of 2022, the occupation troops captured or destroyed museums in Mariupol, Stanytsia Luhanska, Severodonetsk, Novopskovsk, and Bilovodsk, along with their collections. In parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions that were occupied in 2014, museum institutions are used as tools for the propaganda of the "Russian world" and narratives of the occupation authorities. As for museums in the territories captured after February 24, 2022, most of them in the region have been destroyed along with their collections (Mariupol Art Museum, Mariupol Local Lore Museum, People's Museum of the village of Novomykhailivka, and others).

The most affected among immovable monuments during the period of limited military operations of 2014-2022 in Donetsk.

The most affected among the immovable monuments during the period of limited military operations in 2014-2022 in Donetsk and Luhansk regions are archaeological monuments (mostly burial mounds), which were used to build observation posts, field fortifications and artillery firing positions. Information about more than 160 destroyed



*View of the exhibition hall of the Mariupol Museum of Local Lore after shelling and fire. Holes in the western wall of the building from hits. Artillery fire was directed from the west towards the Azovstal plant. Spring 2022.*

burial mounds has been verified. With the beginning of the full-scale invasion in 2022, the facts of shelling of archaeological monuments were added to this: "Perebiyno-1 settlement" (Kreminsky district), a settlement in the southern part of the village of Borivske, the archaeological complex "Merzeleva gryada" near the village of Illyria, the cultural layer of the archaeological site of the summer residence of the khans of the Golden Horde of the 14th century ("Khan's Stavka"), a medieval necropolis near the village of Bilogorivka. The mass destruction of the region's architectural monuments began in 2022: with artillery fire and aerial bombing, the Russians destroyed the Belgian architecture of Lysychansk, the complex development of the historical center of Mariupol, Bakhmut, Severodonetsk, Popasna, and Kramatorsk.

The regions that came under occupation after the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022 – Kherson and Zaporizhia regions – still remain partially occupied and, at the same time, on the front line. This creates the prerequisites for the existence of several scenarios, namely the use of cultural heritage sites by occupation troops and administrations depending on their distance from the front line.

Starting from the second week of the full-scale invasion in 2022, when the Russians were stopped in Zaporizhia and Kherson regions, they used the archaeological monuments of the hillforts and mounds to build field fortifications, observation posts and artillery positions.

Archaeological monuments of national importance in the lower reaches of the Dnipro were subjected to such destructive impact: the late Scythian hillforts of Lyubimivske, Gornostayivske, Velykolepetyske (Kherson region). More than half of the archaeological monuments, from those that suffered from Russian aggression, are used by the Russians to build field fortifications.

The greatest damage to the immovable heritage of the Kherson and Zaporizhia regions was caused by **the destruction of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station dam**. In the Kherson region, the following were affected by the water:

**1. Archaeological sites:** late Scythian settlements – the Ponyativske settlement, ancient settlements – the Skelka settlement, the Glyboka Balka settlement, the Zolotoy Mys settlement, the Yahorlytske settlement; remains of the late medieval fortification “Place of the Tyagin fortress”; the location of the Cossack fortification of the first third of the 18th century “Oleshkivska Sich”. Newly discovered cultural heritage sites – archaeological sites of the Early Iron Age and ancient times – the settlements “Veliky Potemkinsky Ostrov”, “Antonivka II”, “Belozerske settlement”, “Settlement in the Bublykova Balka tract”, “Olexandriivske settlement”, “Sofiivka I”, “Stanislavske settlement”, “Krynki”, “Tyaginske settlement”; burial complexes of the 3rd – 2nd millennium BC. e.: burial mounds near the village of Vynohradove (12 mounds), the town of Hola Prystan (4 mounds), the village of Velyka Kardashynka (1 mound), the village of Zbur’ivka (19 mounds), the town of Dnipryany; soil necropolis of the 2nd century BC–3rd century AD “Poniativskyi burial ground”; “Ash-pit Velyka Kardashynka” (2nd millennium BC),



Oleshkivska Sich in June 2023 (flooded)



Illegal excavations of the northern part of the settlement "Bagaj-1"

**2. Objects of monumental art that are part of architectural and urban development complexes.**

The greatest level of destruction caused by water: Polina Rayko's House (artistic decoration) (Oleshky) and the monument of urban planning and monumental art of national importance "Historical Center of the City of Nova Kakhovka". The monument of urban planning and monumental art of national importance and the monument of architecture of local importance "Historical Center of the City of Nova Kakhovka", which contains more than 200 internally complex objects, is the most affected by flooding after the destruction of the dam of the Kakhovka hydroelectric power station, complex objects. The only urban development complex of 1951–1956, which is the historical core of the city, was flooded. The Ensemble of buildings of the Central Square of the city of Nova Kakhovka, the complex of buildings of the coastal zone of the city were flooded. Nova Kakhovka, development of blocks No. 8, 9, 24, 25, 26, 27 along Dniprovsky Avenue (according to preliminary information, more than 40 buildings).

However, the consequences of changing the water level for monuments are detrimental not only because of its rise, but also because of its fall. In the Vasylivka district of Zaporizhia region, the complex of archaeological monuments of Lysa Gora has found itself in a zone of increased erosion of the coastline: one of the sections of the coast most saturated with settlement structures of the past

Architectural monuments that are on the front line are constantly under fire from the Russian army. In the Kherson region, valuable historical buildings in the settlements of Davydiv Brid (a complex of estates and a distillery from the late 19th century), Arkhangel'sk (a complex of buildings of a real school and a hospital), Bobrovy Kut (a school from the early 20th century), Zmiivka (buildings of Protestant and Lutheran churches), Vysokopil'ya (a house of culture - a former church, a gymnasium building), Posad Pokrovsky (a school building from the early 20th century) were destroyed or significantly damaged.

In Kherson itself, more than 20 historical buildings were destroyed or damaged by shelling.

In the Zaporizhia region, historical buildings in the settlements of Gulyai Pole (the building of the Nadiya steam mill, the Krieger family museum-estate), Vasylivka (Popov Manor) were destroyed by shelling. In Zaporizhia itself, about 10 architectural monuments were damaged or destroyed (Zaporizhia-2 train station, residential buildings on Sobornyi Avenue and Mayakovsky Square).

The condition and fate of museum institutions and collections in the territories of Zaporizhia and Kherson regions that were or are under Russian occupation depends on their proximity to the front line. In the territories that were captured at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, museum institutions are subordinate to the Russian occupation administration and are used for propaganda purposes (Melitopol Local Lore Museum in Zaporizhia region, Skadovsk, Oleshkiv, Kakhovsky, Genichesk historical museums in Kherson region). Museums that were or are on the front line often become victims of theft of objects by the Russian army (Kamyana Mohyla Reserve in Zaporizhia region, Kherson Art Museum named after Oleksiy Shovkunenko, Kherson Regional Museum of Local Lore), or direct destruction by the Russian side (Museum of the History of the Village of Kozatske and the Memorial Complex of Z. P. Vydryhan, Beryslav District Historical Museum in Kherson region).

According to the Ministry of Culture and Information Policy of Ukraine, 12 museum institutions were in the zone of flooding and submersion by the waters of the Kakhovka Reservoir.

Among these museum institutions are the A.S. Gvdzinsky Art Gallery of the Novokakhovka



Illegal excavations on the territory of ancient allotment No. 102 (Chora of Chersonese)

City Council; Museum of the History of the City of Nova Kakhovka (a non-profit museum); Museum of the History of the Village of Kozatske of the Novokakhovka City Council (a separate subdivision of the Department of Culture of the Novokakhovka City Council); House-Museum of A.P. Bahuta of the Novokakhovka City Council; Municipal institution "Oleshkiv Local History Museum of the Oleshkiv City Council of the Kherson region; Museum of Battle Glory of the 87th Stalingrad, Perekop Orders of the Red Banner and Suvorov II degree Rifle Division, the town of Oleshki; The house where the writer O. Vyshnia lived, Oleshkiv district, the village of Krynki; Museum of the Hero of the Soviet Union Major General P.O. Pokryshev, the town of Hola Prystan; Museum of History of the Holoprystan district, the village of Chulakivka; Museum of History of the Holoprystan district, the village of Krugloozerka; Cossack Museum of the History of the Village and the Memorial Complex of the Family of P. Vydryhan, the town of Kozatske, Shevchenko Street, 29; Folk Museum of History of the Kakhovka district, the village of Mala Kakhovka.

The Russians also practice the destruction of monumental and historical monuments in the occupied territories, which are associated with important and traumatic events in Ukrainian history. In Kherson region alone, 8 memorials to the victims of the Holodomor of 1932–1933 were destroyed, in Donetsk region – 4, in Luhansk – 2, in Zaporizhia – 2.

# INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT





## INTERVIEW WITH VITALY PORTNIKOV



Vitaly Portnikov  
Journalist, laureate of the Shevchenko National Prize of Ukraine

*Vitaly Portnikov is a Ukrainian editor and journalist. A regular author of analytical articles in Ukrainian publications on political and historical topics.*

### **How could it help Ukraine and to what this can lead to?**

President Biden's decision to give Ukraine the ability to strike long-range missiles at Russian territory will undoubtedly improve the situation of Ukrainian troops currently on the defensive in the Donetsk region. However, in the main, this decision will not change anything, because there really is no miracle weapon that could change the course of this war. Without a strategic decision by the West, the war will continue for many more years without any real solution.

And we must understand that if it ends quickly, this will lead to the recognition of the Russian Federation's control over those territories that it has already occupied or is occupying at the time of the end of hostilities.

### **The war has been going on for quite some time now, how do you think Western aid has evolved?**

I cannot assess the calls for Western aid, but I see that war fatigue remains a major issue in many Western countries. At the same time, from the point of view of non-manual armaments, Western countries have advanced quite far in these three years. I hope that in the coming years the war will also be advanced by providing Ukraine with modern weapons.

But if Ukraine does not have enough demographic potential to continue the war, no weapons will replace it.

### **In the interview for Espresso TV, on November 19, 2024 you said:**

**"The inevitable continuation of the Russian-Ukrainian war is leading to the global escalation of conflicts worldwide. These will shape the confrontation between the civilized world and dictatorial regimes in the coming decades and will become a reality not only for**

### **International support. How can we shift the conversation from reactive aid to a long-term strategy that secures Ukraine's victory and post-war stability?**

First of all, we need to understand what a victory for Ukraine is. Many Ukrainians still believe that a victory is the restoration of the territorial integrity of Ukraine and the unawareness that the times when states had defined borders are long gone after the annexation of Crimea.

And, of course, in this situation, until Ukrainian society realizes that a victory for Ukraine is the preservation of Ukrainian statehood in general, which now remains under a big question mark. We will not be able to determine a strategy for further support for Ukraine in the coming years of the Russian-Ukrainian war and if this war resumes after years of truce.

**The New York Times (Nov 17, 2024) reports that President Joseph Biden has authorized Ukraine to use American long-range weapons to strike Russia, and permission has also been granted in the United Kingdom and France. What you think about Biden's decision?**

***Ukrainians, who are already participants and hostages of this conflict, but also for millions of people in other countries,"***

***In your opinion, is the start of a Third World War and the risk of using nuclear weapons possible?***

So far, I do not see the possibility of starting a third world war, and with the use of primarily strategic nuclear weapons, which will lead to the death of millions. However, the third world war may continue in local conflicts precisely on the territories of states that are not under the nuclear umbrella. Since their societies have proven unable to realize the importance of security in the times after declaring their own independence.

From this point of view, Ukraine looks like an ideal testing ground for new weapons and for confrontation between democracies and dictatorships so that it would be safe for both Russia and its allies, and for the West.

And that is why Ukraine needs to insist on such security guarantees that will allow Ukraine to benefit from the nuclear umbrella of the United States. Otherwise, there is no point in hoping for a quick end to the war in Ukraine and for the peace to be lasting.

***A new diaspora has emerged in Ukraine due to the full-scale war of Russia. How do you think those people should cooperate with old diaspora? And how can the diaspora help Ukraine?***

I think it is important for the Diaspora to cooperate with each other, at least so that we can create a Ukrainian world beyond the borders of Ukraine and realize that this world will be no less important a part of Ukrainian civilization than those people who will remain in Ukraine after the war. But for this, it is necessary to overcome a large number of civilizational and mental conflicts.

***Will those people who left Ukraine because of the war return to Ukraine? And is it important that they come back?***

Of course, Ukraine is interested in its citizens returning to the country after the war.

However, this will depend, firstly, on what security guarantees will be provided for Ukraine, and now it is very difficult to say whether they will appear at all. Secondly, how well these people will adapt in the countries they moved to, after the war. Obviously, a large number of Ukrainians will get a job and will consider it undesirable to return to a destroyed country. Thirdly, what will be the status of those people who will not have a job after the war ends. It is obvious that many people who will not find a place for themselves in new countries and will lose their temporary asylum status will have to return to Ukraine or choose other countries that will provide them with such an opportunity.

***What your advice for us as Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program interns / alumni that working with Canadian MPs?***

I think it is important for you to convince Canadian society that the war in Ukraine is not just a local conflict. And this is another part of the competition between the democratic world and the authoritarian one. And that the continuation of the war in Ukraine will lead to new and new conflicts in which the West will get entangled and most likely lose its role in the modern world.

It is from the end of the war in Ukraine that which power will be privileged in the world in the future depends. Despite all the economic potential of the West, it risks being in the shadows if dictatorships prove their ability to solve problems by force.



*interview conducted by Olha Okhrimenko*

## FROM 'DOING ENOUGH' TO DOING WHAT'S NEEDED: RETHINKING WESTERN SUPPORT FOR UKRAINE

Written by Helena Geldhof, intern of the Canada-Ukraine Parliamentary Program (CUPP) 2024-2025

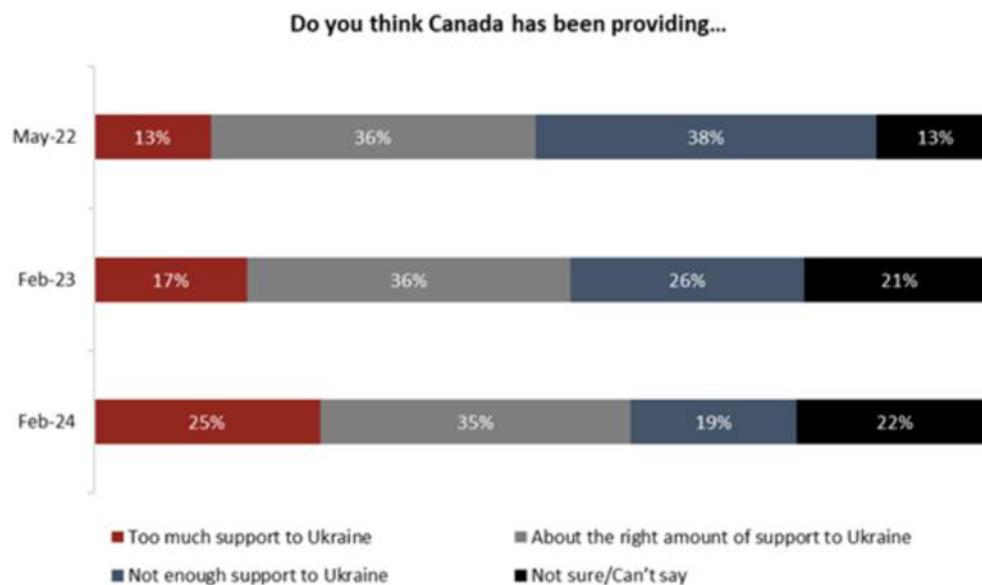
Has Western support for Ukraine reached its limit? Substantial aid is being provided to the nation, but only enough to prevent a Ukrainian defeat. Western leaders seem reluctant to take the decisive steps needed for a true Ukrainian victory. According to Victor Pinchuk (Dickinson, 2023), a true victory would involve Ukraine not only winning the war, but becoming an official member of both NATO and the European Union, and reforming its institutions by strengthening democracy, the rule of law, and eliminating past corrupt practices. Each moment the West remains hesitant, the war grinds on and the human toll mounts. Without a shift in approach, the atrocities inflicted by the Kremlin will continue, unchecked.

"War fatigue" and "compassion fatigue" have entered our daily vocabulary when discussing Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The public is weary of the war itself and the large numbers shown in the news make it easy to lose sight of the individuals whose lives are lost. The same fatigue presents itself in conversations surrounding the allocation of Western aid to Ukraine. Discussions are becoming increasingly repetitive and unproductive while politicians - old men - compare the sizes of their weapons deliveries. We consistently hear the same filtered, diplomatic responses that protect various

Western institutions rather than Ukrainian lives. Some political groups are even contemplating reducing aid with the incentive to put their own country and people first.

The Angus Reid Institute (Korzinski, 2024) researched attitudes in Canada towards the war in Ukraine. Canada has been a strong ally to Ukraine, providing them with extraordinary amounts of financial aid. But over the years that the Institute has asked whether Canada provides enough support to Ukraine "the proportion of Canadians who believe Canada was providing too much has doubled while the Canadians asking for more for Ukraine has halved".

The limit to the West's willingness to help is caused by a narrow focus on the West's own short-term national security. Its view may be grounded in realism, political awareness, and rationality but it will never lead us to a decisive Ukrainian victory. This article will explore why this is the case by critiquing two key areas: the role of politicians and decision-makers in driving the aid allocation conversation, and the limitations imposed by the psychological barriers that cause the West to prioritise a short-term perspective on national security risks in these discussions. Finally, I will propose a shift in approach to allocating aid.



## THE CONTRIBUTION OF WESTERN LEADERS TO THE DISCUSSION OF UKRAINIAN AID ALLOCATION

Public discourse surrounding how we allocate aid to Ukraine is largely driven by politicians in the media who seldom offer fresh perspectives to the general audience. Their statements are often filtered and diplomatically crafted to protect the institutions and countries that they represent, leading to cautious positions that rarely challenge the status quo. Many claim their countries are 'already doing enough'. These positions, though framed as balanced and reasonable, can give the impression that Ukraine's continued requests for more support are excessive. When pressed on why they cannot offer more, politicians often become defensive, leading to unproductive public debates. Instead of exploring new solutions, discussions tend to devolve into bickering and needless comparisons of financial aid. Politicians, it seems, are either unwilling or unable to critically examine their own countries' actions and values in ways that might provoke more creative and forward-thinking solutions.

I'm not suggesting that politicians have no place in the public discussion of Ukrainian aid. They have the power to drive change and should. For example, Canadian Defence Minister Bill Blair did an excellent job at the 19th meeting of the Ukraine Defense Contact Group (UDCG) (CityNews Toronto, 2024) where he reaffirmed Canada's commitment to Ukraine's defence and spoke about Canada's contributions to vital projects like the Air Force Capability Coalition, encouraging others to follow suit. He spoke constructively, and other politicians can do the same. By presenting effective, proven initiatives, they can not only inform the public but also inspire fellow decision-makers to take similar actions. Politicians should focus on technical and practical matters, leaving innovation and ideas about new strategies to experts and thinkers who specialise in those areas. This division of roles allows more room for creative problem-solving by specialists in the public eye.

## DISTORTED PRIORITIES DUE TO PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS

We need to critically evaluate why and how Western discourse remains fixated on short-

term national security risks. While this focus has been effective in addressing immediate threats, it implies a ceiling on how much aid can be justified through this constricted lens. We have hit that ceiling. In order to break it and truly support Ukraine, we must address the long-term national security risks more often and confront the uncomfortable reality that in some ways, Western thinking mirrors Putin's more closely than we're willing to admit.

Certain U.S. politicians for example - particularly Republicans who champion president-elect Trump with his admiration for masculine and authoritarian leaders like Putin - embody a broader Western fascination with power and control.

Politicians who support Trump reflect a troubling tolerance for leadership that prioritises might over right. At the YES Annual Meeting 2024 (Victor Pinchuk Foundation, 2024), historian Timothy Snyder underscored a deeper psychological issue in American thinking: their reluctance to admit mistakes. This mindset stalls progress, as leaders spend more time defending their nation's past actions than making the radical changes Ukraine needs.

What was most striking about Snyder's insight to me was how many American representatives seem to see echoes of Putin's flaws in their own nation's past and present actions. This can be exemplified through Edward Saïd's concept of orientalism. Saïd observed that Western literature, philosophy, and scholarship silences the Eastern world and has created a distorted vision of it, the "Orient". The Orient is frequently portrayed as barbaric and in need of intervention. This portrayal has historically legitimised Western colonial and imperial actions toward the East as "civilising missions". Similarly, Putin views Ukraine as having been 'led astray' by the West, justifying his invasion by framing it as a mission to restore Ukraine to its 'rightful' place within the Russian sphere, rather than allowing it to align with the 'backward' West. The West's defensiveness and mirroring of the Kremlin signals a deeper failure to fully comprehend the dangers posed by Putin's imperial ambitions and authoritarian leadership. In Canada, Conservative Party leader is a good example of this

phenomenon. He advises not to overstretch Canada's resources in providing support to Ukraine. He avoids radical changes despite their ability to radically benefit Ukraine, echoing the defensive mindset of U.S. Republicans. He prioritises short-term national security concerns over acknowledging Canada's broader geopolitical responsibilities because he is reluctant or unable to acknowledge the scale of Putin's long-term threats.

While the U.S. and Canada, like other countries, provide significant aid to Ukraine, their support is driven largely by the perception of the Kremlin as a short-term national security threat. Their aid is calculated to serve their own interests, rather than being based on a full acknowledgment of Ukraine's needs or the moral urgency of countering Putin's regime. Regrettably, with international aid to Ukraine capped, the war shows no signs of ending soon. To secure a Ukrainian victory, we need drastic changes not just in policy but also in perspective.

## SHIFT IN APPROACH

By questioning Western ideals, superiority, and mindset, leaders could begin to fully recognize the extent of Putin's crimes. This shift would spark a necessary conversation, moving the focus away from money, power, and national security toward a more self-aware, humanitarian approach to aid allocation. Challenging entrenched Western perspectives allows for a broader discourse that complements national security and financial concerns with a more direct, human-centred strategy. Ultimately, this critical, humanitarian-focused conversation is essential for fostering more international cooperation and effective aid policies.

Such a discussion would undoubtedly be risky and controversial, and the West may not yet be ready for it. However, if approached thoughtfully and with care, the potential outcomes could be revolutionary.

To spark such a discussion, politicians need to listen, ask questions, and make comments that help ground us in reality. But thinkers and experts, who are not loyal to any particular country or political party, should have a leading role in the discussion of Ukrainian aid encouraging productive and original conversations, perhaps and ideally even sparking new philosophies or ideologies.

*written by Helena Geldhof*

I'm not suggesting we abandon national security discussions as they remain essential for keeping those in power engaged. We must broaden the discussion from a short- to long-term focus while placing greater emphasis on the moral imperative of countering Putin. I urge thinkers like Snyder to push for this shift in perspective, and for politicians to listen closely, reflecting on how this transformation can be implemented in practice.

This shift in perspective, if fully realised, could reshape the approach not only toward Ukraine but also other regions facing their own crises. When the global hegemony changes, policies will naturally follow, forcing decision-makers to allocate aid based on more than short-term national security interests, prioritising protection of human rights and moral urgency. This could potentially benefit regions like Palestine and Congo who, despite young people's protests in the West gaining significant media attention, receive far less international support than Ukraine for various reasons including them both not affecting Western national security and geo-politics to the same extent as Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine. With a more humanitarian-focused approach and the policies that follow, humanitarian aid could be allocated much more to victims suffering from genocide and civil conflicts in those regions as well promoting world peace and supporting peoples right to life.

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