



NGO «UKRAINIAN LIBERATION»

Non-profit organisation of free people

EDRPOU: 41735032

Bank account («PrivatBank»): 26004052621580 (UAH)

PIC: 300711

<http://ukrliberation.org.ua>

ukrliberation@mail2tor.com

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Dear representatives of the Free Software Community, the GNU Project, and the supporters of Freedom in all its forms!

My name is Bohdan Kovalchuk. I am a leader of the NGO "Ukrainian Liberation" (Kyiv, Ukraine). The goal of my organization is to promote and spread the knowledge and the use of Free Software in my country.

While I am writing this text to you, I can hear the air sirens — we have yet another threat of attack. I don't know how many times I've heard this sound in the past few days. My country is in the middle of bloody war. This war was started by the insidious aggressor, the Russian Armed Forces led by the notorious dictator Vladimir Putin. Ordinary Ukrainians, women and children, are dying. Five days ago they went to work, did household chores, enjoyed their lives.

Russian officials are using artillery, airstrikes, and shelling against peaceful Ukrainians. People have to run to basements and bomb shelters several times a day. Every night feels like hell. For all Ukrainians, without exception, life has been divided into "before" and "after". For many, unfortunately, life was interrupted. In particular, it happened to at least 16 Ukrainian children (as of February 28, 2020, 2 PM - five days after the beginning of the war).

But we are not afraid. They will not break us. Now Vladimir Putin is talking about nuclear missiles. But his "talk" can't break our spirit either. More than 4000 Russian servicemen have died in five days of military confrontation on Ukrainian soil. And resistance continues. Civilians throw themselves under the tanks in an attempt to stop them from moving further into Ukraine. Ordinary Ukrainians disarm tanks and armored vehicles with bare hands. Often at the expense of their own lives, because the aggressors kill everyone, regardless of whether they are military or civilians.

I am sure the FLOSS Community has reliable sources of information (and the ability to think clearly) and knows about this situation already. So I will cut to the chase since I don't have much time (and, to be honest, mental or physical strength) to paint the picture in more graphic detail.

I appeal to the FLOSS Community, the GNU project, and the FSF because I know that these organizations are defending rights of Freedom and Respect very actively and effectively: we need your help. Once, Richard Stallman said, "Geeks like to think that they can ignore politics; you can leave politics alone, but politics won't leave you alone".

This is what's happening in my country. But it affects everyone because Ukraine not only defends itself — it defends human rights and peace, Freedom in every possible meaning. It defends everyone. Today the Russian army is killing us. Tomorrow they might come for you. Don't think that you are safe from war. I thought so too until on February 24th, 2022, I had to search for shelter and try to sleep to the sounds of enemy artillery.

Now we need the support of the Community more than ever.

I am asking you, my brothers and sisters, united by Freedom, to help Ukrainians stop the bloody dictator and prevent him from destroying what we have been building for years, decades, centuries. I understand that the FSF, the GNU project, and other related organizations are fundamentally apolitical. I am asking you to ignore this principle once, just once, to protect the lives of innocent people. To protect people from this aggression, that is currently taking place against my people, my country, against freedom.

I am asking Russian citizens to fight the propaganda they are being exposed to. I urge them to find and read some pieces of news other than those that are being fed to them by the Kremlin. I ask them to find the courage to help us fight their insane dictator Vladimir Putin.

I am not even asking, I am begging all hackers to provide an official position on the war in Ukraine and share it among as many people as possible, especially among those in Russia, as they are under active disinformation attack launched by the local authorities. I beg you to help freedom-loving Ukraine to stand for itself and the whole world.

I am asking you to protect Freedom.

Every person in the world matters now.

Bohdan Kovalchuk
Leader of NGO "Ukrainian Liberation"