

Two Irish MEPs: Official Statement on the situation in Ukraine

Saturday 26 February 2022, by [DALY Clare](#), [WALLACE Mick](#) (Date first published: 24 February 2022).

The attacks on Ukrainian targets and incursion of Russian forces into Ukraine are an act of aggression and a serious violation of the United Nations Charter. They have already resulted in loss of life. The pretexts President Vladimir Putin is using to justify his decision are contrary to international law and cannot be supported. Russian arguments about its security interests in the face of NATO expansion are valid and should be taken seriously, but they do not justify the decision Russia has now taken. We echo the call of the UN Secretary General António Guterres: the conflict must stop now.

The only legitimate forum for addressing Russia's actions at an international level is the United Nations. Unilateral action from the United States, the European Union, or NATO, only risks further escalation and the further erosion of international law and norms. There is no military solution for what is now happening. We oppose any military response just as unequivocally as we oppose Russia's actions. Russia must withdraw its troops from Ukraine, immediately cease all military operations and resume diplomatic engagement. All parties must work to restore the Minsk process, as the only path to a peaceful resolution of conflict.

The responsibility for opening hostilities is solely with President Putin, but we do not withdraw a single of our longstanding criticisms of NATO brinkmanship and the recklessness of Western policy on Ukraine. Both Russia and the West bear responsibility for creating conditions of instability and confrontation in Ukraine in pursuit of their strategic and economic interests. Despite rhetoric, Europe has been no friend of Ukraine. The country has been used as a pawn, and Ukrainian lives have been treated as expendable. It is the first duty of the European anti-war movement to criticise the role of European and allied governments in fanning the flames of conflict, not governments over which it has little influence. In the months to come, it is all the more important that this duty is upheld.

Predictably, hawkish elements in government and in the press are now exploiting the crisis to attack the anti-war movement, to propagandise on behalf of NATO, and to undermine Ireland's policy of neutrality. The Irish public should draw the opposite lesson from what is happening. Ukraine, like Ireland, was once a neutral country. Its loss of neutrality, and its gradual alignment with NATO, is one of the reasons for Russian hostility. Ireland's strength on the international stage, as a neutral broker for peace in international institutions, is completely undermined by the Irish government aligning itself with belligerents in a geopolitical conflict. Ireland should learn the lesson of Ukraine and take immediate steps to restore its neutrality, by unilaterally withdrawing from EU common defence structures, putting an end to all NATO cooperation, and denying transit and use of its territory to all foreign militaries.

24^h 00 00000000, 2022

Clare Daly, Mick Wallace

P.S.

- Clare Daly (Dublin) and Mick Wallace (Ireland South) are Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) from the Independents 4 Change, which is member of the GUE/NGL group.

Note: Daly and Wallace were initially mistakenly identified Ireland South, when it is only the case of Wallace.