

UKRAINIANS ABROAD: NEWS AND VIEWS #169

Compiled by Serge Cipko, Coordinator, Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative, CIUS (Email: scipko@ualberta.ca).

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1. Argentina. “Chornobyl, memoria viva en la identidad ucrania” [Chornobyl, a Living Memory in Ukrainian Identity], *Elmundodeberisso.com.ar*, 3 May 2026.

Se cumplieron cuatro décadas del desastre nuclear de Chornobyl, que para la comunidad ucraniana de todo el mundo representa una “huella invisible grabada en el alma”. Para conmemorar el episodio y reflexionar sobre sus consecuencias, el pasado domingo la Asociación Ucrania de Cultura Prosvita Filial Berisso llevó adelante un encuentro que se inició con una disertación del analista Gustavo Sterzcek, quien ofreció su mirada sobre la tragedia y su impacto sobre la identidad ucraniana.

Luego, la doctora Laura Damonte, especialista en física médica de la facultad de Ciencias Exactas de la UNLP, aportó una visión académica y técnica sobre la radioactividad, mientras que por la Asociación anfitriona, Natalia Vacun Dykyj compartió unas palabras que aludieron al poner el valor del “coraje de un pueblo frente a la desidia del poder”.

Mientras se desarrollaba el encuentro, niñas y niños que participan de las actividades de la colectividad participaron del Rincón de las Acuarelas, buscando dejar un mensaje de esperanza a través del arte.

Desde la organización se agradeció el acompañamiento de los concejales Federico Ruiz y Daniela Rivero, de la vicepresidente de la AEE Gabriela Olivera, de representantes de otras colectividades, del CEVECIM y de integrantes del equipo Radioactividad de la UNLP.

[Translation into English follows – S.C.:]

Four decades have passed since the Chornobyl nuclear disaster, which the Ukrainian community around the world regards as an “invisible scar etched into the soul.” To commemorate the anniversary and reflect on its consequences, the Berisso branch of the Ukrainian Cultural Association “Prosvita” organized a gathering last Sunday.

The event opened with a presentation by analyst Gustavo Sterzcek, who shared his perspective on the tragedy and its impact on Ukrainian identity.

Dr. Laura Damonte, a specialist in medical physics at the Faculty of Exact Sciences of the National University of La Plata (UNLP), then provided an academic and technical overview of radioactivity. Representing the host organization, Natalia Vacun Dykyj shared remarks that alluded to the value of “the courage of a people in the face of the apathy of power.” While the presentations were taking place, children participating in the Ukrainian community’s activities took part in the *Watercolor Corner*, creating artwork intended to convey messages of hope.

The organizers expressed their gratitude for the attendance of city councilors Federico Ruiz and Daniela Rivero, Gabriela Olivera, Vice President of the Association of Foreign Entities (AEE), representatives of other communities, members of CEVECIM, and participants from the UNLP Radioactivity Team.

2. Australia. “Resilience on Screen: The First National Ukrainian Film Festival in Australia,” *Kyiv Post*, 22 May 2026.

By Solomiya Sywak

The inaugural Ukrainian Film Festival Australia brings award-winning contemporary Ukrainian cinema to audiences nationwide. Spanning documentaries, queer stories, historical dramas, and sci-fi, the program reveals a Ukraine far richer and more complex than war headlines alone – a country shaped by resilience, creativity, humor, and the enduring power of storytelling.

Ukrainian cinema is emerging as one of the most vital and emotionally resonant forces in contemporary filmmaking. As Ukraine continues to endure the realities of full-scale invasion, its directors are crafting stories that move beyond headlines – revealing the depth of Ukrainian culture, the tenderness of everyday life, and the quiet, commonplace tragedies of war. These films are not only earning acclaim on the international festival circuit, from Sundance to TIFF (Toronto International Film Festival), but are also forging profound emotional connections with audiences worldwide.

This spirit arrives in Australia for the very first time through the inaugural Ukrainian Film Festival Australia, a landmark national event bringing contemporary Ukrainian cinema to audiences across Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane, Adelaide, Perth, and Canberra. Spanning documentaries, historical dramas, queer stories, tragicomedies, and sci-fi, the festival presents a cinematic portrait of a country fighting not only for its territory, but for its identity.

In Australia, the festival carries a significance that extends beyond cinema itself. At a time when Ukraine is so often understood through headlines and geopolitical debate, film offers audiences a more intimate and human connection to the country and its people. By bringing contemporary Ukrainian stories to Australian screens, the festival fosters empathy, cross-cultural dialogue, and deeper public understanding, while also strengthening ties between Australia and Ukraine through art. It further highlights the role of the Ukrainian-Australian community in preserving and sharing cultural identity, demonstrating how cinema can become both an artistic expression and a powerful act of solidarity.

Resilience Within Music

After Russia’s full-scale invasion scattered her choir across Europe, a pianist in Kharkiv rebuilt a community where singing together offers a brief distance from the war surrounding the city.

Charity screening of *Kherson: Human Safari, 2025*, shown in Victoria, Australia hosted by The Association of Ukrainians in Victoria (AUV), Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations and the Ukrainian Embassy in Australia. Image Credit: Ukrainian Film Festival Australia. Advertisement

The festival’s co-organizer, Olesia Gordiienko, says its aim is to introduce Australian audiences to the many realities of modern Ukraine beyond the narrow lens of war coverage.

“Our mission is to show Ukraine not through dry news reports, but through living art,” Gordiienko explains. “We are inspired by the incredible resilience of Ukrainian filmmakers and artists who continue creating despite the war. We want their voices to resonate across Australia, demonstrating the richness and complexity of Ukrainian culture.”

Designed for both devoted cinephiles and newcomers alike, the program reaches beyond the Ukrainian-Australian community to engage wider audiences interested in film, art, culture, and global storytelling. “For Ukrainians, the festival is a reminder of home, for Australians, it is a chance to see Ukrainians not simply as victims of aggression, but as talented, resilient creators,” Gordiienko says. “These stories are told in the universal language of cinema.”

Andrew Mykhaylyk, a member of the organizing committee, says the festival is grounded in themes of “resilience and resistance,” using art and performance to draw historical parallels while fostering a sense of empathy – whether through humor, companionship, or care for one another.

When Ukraine is so often understood through headlines and geopolitical debate, film offers a more intimate and human connection to the country and its people.

Across nine films, Ukraine emerges not as a singular narrative of war, but as a vibrant, contradictory, and deeply alive society. Some films confront the brutal realities of the front line, such as *2000 Meters to Andriivka* and *Cuba & Alaska*, while others expose a calculated strategy of cultural liquidation in *Slovo House: Unfinished Novel* – a story of the systematic and treacherous destruction of Ukraine’s intellectual elite.

Elsewhere, audiences encounter stories of beauty and tenderness flourishing amid devastation; artists crafting delicate porcelain under bombardment in *Porcelain War*, drag performers organizing charity shows in *Queens of Joy*, and children continuing school lessons through the sound of air raid sirens in *Timestamp*.

The program also includes *Us, Our Pets and the War*, a moving documentary about Ukrainians rescuing animals during wartime, and *U Are the Universe*, an ironic sci-fi love story following a Ukrainian space trucker searching for connection at the edge of the cosmos. Together, the films form a cinematic mosaic of contemporary Ukraine – one filled with grief and humor, rage and tenderness, destruction and creativity.

“These are films that strip away the armor of indifference,” Gordiienko says. “After screenings like these, audiences leave the cinema energized and inspired to act and explore.”

The festival is also presented by the Ukrainian Arts Council of Australia (AFUO) in partnership with the Embassy of Ukraine in Australia and Ukrainian community organizations across the country. It’s a strong example of cultural diplomacy and diaspora engagement, showing how Ukrainian stories are being shared far beyond Europe, while still maintaining urgency and relevance.

At a time when Ukraine's future is being contested on both the battlefield and the global stage, the Ukrainian Film Festival Australia offers something deeper than cultural showcase or political statement. Through stories of grief, humor, intimacy, and survival, these films insist on the fullness of Ukrainian life – revealing a nation defined not only by war, but by creativity and an enduring determination to be seen on its own terms.

Solomiya Sywak is a Ukrainian-Australian emerging artist and writer, working and sharing Ukrainian culture in Sydney, Australia. With a background in politics, she is interested in the intersectionality of these disciplines, especially the duality of her cultural identity in the current and ongoing context of the Russia's war against Ukraine.

3. Australia. “\$831 Billion Rebuild Cost Reveal as Ukrainians in Australia Stuck on ‘Hope and Heartbreak,’” *Sbs.com.au*, 24 February 2026.

As the Russia-Ukraine war enters its fifth year, Ukrainians are exhausted by protracted peace talks and ongoing violence.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine began four years ago and has displaced over 10 million people.

Ukrainians in Australia remain hopeful for a lasting peace, as the cost to rebuild Ukraine nears one trillion dollars.

Four years into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, members of Australia's Ukrainian community say they are living in a constant state of “hope and heartbreak” as the war grinds on.

Kateryna Argyrou, chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, told SBS News that families remain deeply affected by the conflict, whether they arrived recently as refugees or migrated decades ago.

“Our community is carrying a deep mix of grief and determination,” she said, describing daily rituals of checking updates from loved ones still under threat in Ukraine.

As the war enters its fifth year, battlefield momentum has slowed, but the human toll continues to mount, with millions displaced and hundreds of thousands of casualties on both sides.

It comes as the cost of rebuilding has been estimated at nearly \$1 trillion over a decade.

For Ukrainians in Australia, the protracted conflict has brought emotional exhaustion, even as diplomatic efforts intensify amid fresh talks involving Russia, the US and Ukraine aimed at forging a pathway to peace.

Fatigued by years of war

In the war's first year, Ukraine forced back the Russian offensive at the gates of Kyiv and reclaimed swathes of occupied land.

But since then, Moscow has made slow but relentless gains in costly battles along a 1,200km front.

The war, which this week enters its fifth year, has triggered the largest refugee crisis in Europe since World War Two, with more than 6 million Ukrainians living as refugees outside the country, and 4.6 million more displaced inside its borders, as of December 2025, a new report from the United Nations and World Bank notes.

According to estimates released in January by the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), Russian forces have suffered 1.2 million total casualties since 2022.

The CSIS estimated Ukraine had suffered up to 600,000 casualties.

Argyrou described the ongoing war as an “extraordinarily painful” period.

“People are exhausted by the uncertainty and by the knowledge that the war continues to devastate civilian lives,” she said.

“So emotionally, we live between hope and heartbreak — committed to Ukraine’s survival, yet longing for peace and justice.”

SBS News spoke with attendees like Alan Sasha at a rally in Sydney advocating for an end to the war, which included people from Russian and Ukrainian diasporas.

“My wife’s sister is still in Odesa, in the centre of the city,” Alan said.

“We’re on the phone every night, and we know precisely what is happening and when, well ahead of the news. It’s a tragedy, just a tragedy.”

Sasha said people had gathered to mark the anniversary and acknowledge the loss of innocent civilian life in Ukraine.

“People are dying every night. The Russians are shelling and destroying civilian infrastructure,” he told SBS News.

“Hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians are freezing without heat, without running water, without electricity in their homes.”

Hopes to rebuild

Rebuilding Ukraine’s economy will cost an estimated US\$588 billion (\$831 billion) over the next decade, the World Bank, UN, European Commission and the Ukrainian government said on Monday.

The latest assessment by the institutions, based on data from 24 February 2022 through to the

end of 2025, showed a 12 per cent increase from last year's estimate, based in part on a 21 per cent jump in damaged or destroyed energy infrastructure from a year ago.

The study doesn't include data from Russia's intensified attacks on Ukrainian energy facilities in January and February, which left tens of thousands across Ukraine without heat, power and water during the coldest winter on record in decades.

The estimate — the fifth conducted since the start of the war — found direct damage in Ukraine had reached US\$195 billion (\$275 billion), up nearly 11 per cent from the previous assessment, with housing, transport and energy sectors most affected, the groups said. That is more than double the damage reported in the first report in 2022.

"The damage is immense and increasing continuously," the report said, noting that damages were concentrated in frontline areas and metropolitan areas, including Ukraine's capital, Kyiv.

What are the sticking points to peace

Another round of peace talks aimed at ending the war in Ukraine could be held at the end of this week, according to the Reuters News Agency.

Ukraine, Russia and the US have held several rounds of talks in Abu Dhabi and Geneva, as the US seeks an end to four years of war since Moscow's 2022 full-scale invasion.

The peace proposal under discussion includes 20 points.

These include the reaffirmation of Ukraine's sovereignty; a full and unquestionable non-aggression agreement between Russia and Ukraine; and the provision of security guarantees by the US, NATO, and European countries.

Russia currently controls large parts of four Ukrainian regions — or 'oblasts' as they are known in Russia — and some post-Soviet states.

These oblasts share their names with their respective administrative capitals — Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk — which are along Ukraine's eastern border.

Russia annexed Crimea in 2014.

However, the two sides can't agree on the future of the Donetsk region — one of the two regions that comprise Donbas.

Russian forces already control nearly all of Luhansk, the other Donbas region.

Russian President Vladimir Putin wants Ukraine to withdraw from the roughly 5,000 square kilometres of Donetsk, which Russian forces have so far not managed to take on the battlefield in the face of fierce Ukrainian resistance.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has said he sees no reason to gift Putin the land.

Argyrou said Ukrainians in Australia follow these negotiations closely.

“Ukrainians have paid an immense price to defend their country and democratic future,” she said.

Any negotiation must recognise that sacrifice and uphold international law.

Australia’s support

Australia’s “meaningful support” of Ukraine’s defence gives people hope, according to Argyrou.

“Australia may be geographically distant, but morally it has stood close. That solidarity gives our community strength and hope,” she said.

However, “continued” assistance for Ukraine’s military and energy sector is vital.

Argyrou would also like to see Australia strengthen sanctions enforcement, “particularly by closing loopholes that allow blood oil of Russian origin to enter Australian markets indirectly”.

Australia remains the single biggest buyer of oil products refined from Russian crude in third countries, according to several submissions to the inquiry and experts who appeared at the hearing.

SBS News first reported on this loophole in July 2024. The issue was also mentioned in two separate Senate inquiries.

In October 2025, SBS News also revealed that sanctioned shadow fleet tankers were still appearing in the supply chains of Australian companies.

Pressure from experts and community members on the government to close the so-called “blood oil” loophole grew significantly in 2025, with Foreign Minister Penny Wong saying the government expected the industry “to prevent their supply chains from inadvertently funding Russia's illegal and immoral invasion of Ukraine”.

“Our greatest hope is for a just and lasting peace,” Argyrou said.

“One that restores Ukraine’s sovereignty and territorial integrity and guarantees real security for the people of Ukraine.”

— With additional reporting from the Reuters News Agency.

4. Botswana. “Symbol of Freedom: Botswana Opens Africa’s First Monument to Ukrainian Poet Taras Shevchenko,” *Newsukraine.rbc.ua*, 9 March 2026.

In the African country of Botswana, the first monument on the continent to Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko has been installed. The monument was unveiled at the country’s largest educational institution — the University of Botswana, according to Ukraine’s Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha.

Details of the historic event

The ceremonial unveiling of the monument was attended by the university leadership, members of the Ukrainian community, diplomats, and journalists. The monument was made of Botswana bronze by a local sculptor, Francois Coertze.

During the ceremony, the dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Thapelo Otlogetswe, read Shevchenko’s famous poem Testament, translated into Botswana’s national language, Setswana. Sybiha emphasized that Botswana became the first country in Africa to honor the memory of the Ukrainian poet. Currently, there are 1,384 monuments to Shevchenko around the world, 128 of which are located in 35 countries outside Ukraine.

“The first Kobzar (nickname of Shevchenko - ed.) on African soil reflects the global nature of Shevchenko’s ideas and the power of his thought, which across centuries unites the world around the values of freedom and justice,” the minister said.

The head of the Foreign Ministry also thanked Ukrainian diplomats and the Ukrainian embassy in Botswana for implementing this initiative.

Taras Shevchenko

Taras Shevchenko is a figure of global significance whose name has become synonymous with Ukrainian resilience. Known as the Kobzar and the spiritual father of the nation, he laid the foundation for the modern literary language and national consciousness of Ukraine.

His life story is a remarkable transformation from an enslaved serf into an academician of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts. Shevchenko’s creative legacy, filled with calls for freedom, still serves as a manifesto of the struggle for Ukrainian statehood.

5. Canada. “Ukrainian Heritage Month Bill Stalls as House Breaks for Summer,” *Penticton Herald*, 10 July 2026.

By Jonah Jung, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The Ukrainian community in Canada will enter September without a federally recognized heritage month after MPs failed to complete debate on Bill S-210 before the House of Commons adjourned for the summer.

The bill has passed the Senate, won unanimous support at second reading in the House by 318-0, and cleared the Canadian heritage committee without amendment. It is now at third reading—the final House debate stage before a vote—but the legislative process remains unfinished.

Bill S-210 designates September as Ukrainian Heritage Month every year, marking the first arrival of Ukrainian immigrants to Canada in 1891. The bill was introduced in the Senate by former Senator Stanley Kutcher and sponsored by MP Yvan Baker in the House of Commons. The Ukrainian Canadian Congress (UCC) urged the House of Commons to adopt the bill before the summer recess, which began on June 18.

On June 12, in the third reading, the Speaker dropped the bill to the bottom of the order of precedence after the time for discussion had run out. Baker said the final vote on the bill might not happen until the fall if the debate did not happen in time, as the Parliament's Hansard transcription described.

Orest Zakydalsky, the senior policy advisor at UCC, regretted having the bill stalled in the House until September, when Parliament resumes its meetings.

"We had hoped to see the bill passed in June, and we were disappointed to see that it was not adopted before the House rose," Zakydalsky said. "We hope to see that legislation passed as soon as possible."

On May 21, the UCC issued a statement urging MPs to pass Bill S-210 as the Ukrainian diaspora across Canada celebrated by wearing a traditional Ukrainian shirt called a 'Vyshyvanka', an intricately embroidered garment.

"Adoption of Bill S-210 would be both a fitting acknowledgement of the contributions Ukrainians have made to Canada – and a strong signal of support to the Ukrainian people, who heroically defend their country from Russia's genocidal war of aggression," said Alexandra Chyczij, the national president of the UCC.

Chyczij said passing the bill before the summer recess meant the Ukrainian diaspora can celebrate the Ukrainian Heritage Month this September "from coast to coast to coast of our great country."

During the third reading of the bill, Baker urged the MPs to allow the debate before the allotted time ended so the bill could go to a final vote the following week and Kutcher, who is in poor health, could watch the bill pass.

The liberal MP emphasized that Kutcher, members of the UCC and himself had reached out to all parties to ask for help in expediting the passage of the bill. "I would argue that there has never been a more important time to pass this bill than now," Baker said.

Following his retirement, Kutcher, a youth-mental health expert and a member of the Ukrainian diaspora, shared why he introduced the bill in the first place: for the recognition of how the Ukrainian Canadian community has contributed to the growth and prosperity of Canada.

[Introducing the bill] was “a recognition of their cultural, ethno-cultural contributions as well to the tapestry that makes up the Canadian firmament,” Kutcher shared.

During Canada Day, Kutcher said the country should honour Ukrainian heritage the same way it honours every heritage. “Canada is a multicultural country. That is one of its tremendous strengths,” he said.

“Canada celebrates many heritage months and heritage days, but heretofore has not seen fit to find an opportunity to designate a Ukrainian Heritage Month.”

Despite the unfortunate delay, Zakydalsky shared what Canada Day means for Ukrainian immigrants in Canada. Since March 2022, more than 305,000 people have arrived in Canada through the Canada–Ukraine Authorization for Emergency Travel, a temporary measure for Ukrainians and their eligible family members fleeing Russia’s invasion.

Zakydalsky said Canada Day is a time to remember those who fought for freedom and a holiday for the Ukrainian community to remember how Canada is helping Ukrainians defend themselves against Russia’s invasion. “So it’s both a day of celebration and a day to reflect for us.”

Despite the bill being held up, Zakydalsky said the UCC will continue advocating for the adoption of the heritage month bill in the House. “We look forward to continuing to work with all Canadians as we always have.”

The House is scheduled to return Sept. 21, but no date has been set for Bill S-210 to resume third-reading and debate, or receive a final vote. Zakydalsky said the UCC would continue pressing MPs to pass it.

New Canadian Media

6. Canada. “Restoring the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village,” *Alberta.ca/release*, 18 April 2026.

This spring marks one year since the fire destroyed the visitor centre at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (UCHV). While the loss was devastating for Alberta’s Ukrainian community and for all Albertans who value our province’s cultural heritage, Alberta’s government has made significant progress on the site’s restoration.

The UCHV is preparing to safely welcome back the public on May 16 during the May long weekend, marking an important milestone in reconnecting with the community.

“The UCHV holds a deeply meaningful place in Alberta’s history and in the hearts of the Ukrainian community. While fire recovery continues, we are proud to reopen the Village this May to ensure Albertans and visitors can continue to learn and celebrate Ukrainian culture and heritage.”

Tanya Fir, Minister of Arts, Culture and Status of Women

Visitors will once again be able to explore the historic village, participate in cultural programming and connect with Alberta's Ukrainian heritage as longer-term reconstruction continues. Field trip bookings are also now open for May and June, with major special events, including Ukrainian Day on Aug. 16, returning this summer.

"Alberta's government has been instrumental in supporting the restoration of the UCHV. Their efforts have made it possible to welcome visitors back just a year later, ensuring Alberta's Ukrainian stories, traditions and history will continue to be shared and celebrated."

David Makowsky, director, Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village branch

While no historic buildings were damaged in last year's fire, many irreplaceable artifacts, furnishings and original research files stored within the visitor centre were lost. However, thanks to earlier digitization efforts and off-site storage at the Royal Alberta Museum, many important materials were preserved.

Over the winter, Alberta's government continued working with consultants and contractors to clean up the site and repair utilities affected by the fire. Efforts are now focused on preparing for construction of a new visitor centre, which is set to begin later this year.

Despite these challenges, the UCHV has continued to play an important educational and cultural role in our province. Fall and winter school programs resumed on Nov. 17, 2025, and nearly 1,500 students have already been welcomed back to the site.

"As parliamentary secretary for Ukrainian evacuees, I recognize how vital places like the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village are to preserving identity and culture. After last year's devastating fire, I am happy to hear that the Village will be reopening to visitors on May 16. Ensuring this site continues to honour Ukrainian-Albertan's history, resilience, and Alberta's rich cultural heritage."

Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk, Parliamentary Secretary for Settlement Services and Ukrainian Evacuees

Restoring the Visitor Centre goes beyond rebuilding a facility. It is about preserving a place of learning, remembrance and pride for generations to come.

Alberta's government extends its sincere thanks to the first responders from Lamont County and Strathcona County who responded to the fire on April 18, 2025, as well as the individuals, organizations and institutions that reached out to the UCHV and the Friends of the Ukrainian Village Society to support fire recovery efforts and keep the spirit of the village alive.

Quick facts

- On the evening of April 18, 2025, a fire destroyed the UCHV visitor centre buildings, including the visitor reception area, gift shop, exhibition galleries, offices, conservation lab, collections and curatorial storage and public washrooms.
- Utility restoration and planning for the full reconstruction of the UCHV visitor centre will continue into fall 2026.

- The UCHV is expected to open on May 16. The site will be open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays to Sundays as well as holiday Mondays until Labour Day.
- The temporary visitor centre will be located in the Silska Domiwka (Red Barn), where visitors can also purchase food and visit the gift shop.
- The UCHV is a seasonal open-air museum located 25 minutes east of Edmonton in Lamont County.
- The UCHV is typically open from mid-May through September each year and welcomed approximately 29,500 visitors during the 2024–25 season.

7. Canada. “Edmonton’s Ukrainian National Federation Hall Made a Municipal Historic Resource,” *CTV News*, 15 April 2026.

By Alex Antoneshyn

The Ukrainian National Federation of Canada (UNF) building in Edmonton has been designated a municipal historic resource.

The UNF was created in 1932 to support and protect Ukrainian cultural identity. Edmonton and Saskatoon were its first branches.

The non-profit’s early years were focused on helping its community through the era’s hardships, including the depression. In Edmonton, the group also helped establish schools, create technical training opportunities, and build the St. Josaphat’s Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral.

By 1941, Edmonton’s Ukrainian population had grown to approximately 6,000 and the UNF needed to new headquarters.

The building on 98 Street, which was finished in 1947, was designed by Patrick Campbell-Hope, who also designed Edmonton’s St. John’s Ukrainian Orthodox Church, Beth Israel Synagogue and Mill Creek Swimming Pool.

Chester Kuc founded Shumka Dancers in the hall in 1959 and the Cheremosh Ukrainian Dance Company in 1969, teaching dance there for 25 years.

“This part of downtown was historically occupied by businesses and residents of Ukrainian origin and other nationalities like Croatians and Chinese. The UNF Hall was built by its members with its own financial resources and is one of the last original structures still standing from that time in Chinatown. Presently, the UNF hall is a very important cultural and social venue for many non-for-profit organizations and is a social meeting place for quite a number of new Ukrainian newcomers,” said George Yopyk, a director on the UNF board and manager of the hall.

The building was added to the city’s inventory of historic reasons in 2010, according to David Johnston, a principal heritage planner with the city. Receiving municipal historic resource status protects it from demolition and earmarks it for repair funding.

“It’s a real, established presence,” Johnston said of protecting historic buildings.

“Contributions sometimes can get overlooked as a city grows and that’s why these built, tangible recognitions can be really important.”

Wood Residence also receives designation

On Wednesday, city council approved the same designation for Wood Residence, a craftsman-style home in Westmount located at 12530 109A Ave.

The city calls it an example of Westmount’s development.

Although demand in the area was high during the First World War, resources were limited and the neighbourhood wasn’t fully built out until after the Second World War.

Construction on the Wood Residence started in 1923.

Two houses to the east are also designated municipal historic resources. Together with the Wood Residence, the trio are the only such arrangement in the city, according to Johnston.

In total, 197 buildings in Edmonton have been designated municipal historic resources.

With files from CTV News Edmonton’s Miriam Valdes-Carletti

8. Canada. “Oseredok Centre Gets City Grant,” *Winnipeg Sun*, 10 April 2026.

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By Ty Dilello

The Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Educational Centre is thanking city councillor Brian Mayes of the St. Vital ward for a municipal grant supporting urgent elevator repairs in its heritage building.

The \$5,850 contribution, provided through the councillor’s Communities Fund, will cover essential maintenance needed to keep the elevator operational and compliant with provincial regulations. The work is considered critical for maintaining accessibility throughout the six-storey facility.

Oseredok officials say the repairs will ensure all visitors—including those with mobility challenges can continue to access the centre’s archives, event spaces and museum galleries. The museum, located on the fifth floor, features one of the largest collections of pysanky-traditional Ukrainian hand-painted Easter eggs-outside of Ukraine.

“We thank Councillor Mayes for stepping up to ensure continued access to all of Oseredok’s collections, archives and event spaces,” said Andrew D. Konopelny, vice-president of the organization’s board of directors. “Operating in a 114-year-old heritage building, we are no stranger to maintenance costs. This grant helps us maintain accessibility while allowing us to direct other funds toward programming.”

The building’s age has presented ongoing infrastructure challenges, with elevator reliability a recurring concern. Without the repairs, access to upper floors-including the museum-could be limited.

Mayes said he was pleased to support the project, emphasizing the cultural importance of the institution. “I am delighted to support Oseredok’s elevator maintenance project-the museum is doing important work in this critical moment for Ukraine, and their funds should be devoted to that cause, not building repairs,” he said.

Founded in 1944, Oseredok has long served as a cultural hub for Winnipeg’s Ukrainian community. The centre houses extensive archives and collections, and offers educational programming and exhibitions that reflect both Ukrainian heritage and broader multicultural themes in the city.

Organization leaders say the grant underscores the role of municipal support in sustaining heritage institutions, particularly those operating in aging buildings with high maintenance demands.

Oseredok officials added they look forward to welcoming Mayes for a visit once the repairs are complete, inviting him to take the elevator up to view the pysanka exhibit firsthand.

9. Canada. “A Treasured Easter Egg Tradition,” *Toronto Star*, 4 April 2026.

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By Samantha Fink, special to the *Star*

Lyudmyla Pogoryelova has been creating colourful, intricately patterned Easter eggs since she was six years old. Then, her lines, curves and dots were shaky and uneven, but the feeling was special. “When the wax melted away, and the colours shone through, I saw my first pysanka: imperfect, crooked, but alive,” recalled Pogoryelova, now the director of the Shevchenko Museum at Bloor and Dundas West.

“Since then, pysanky-writing has never been just a craft for me. It’s something that connects me to my childhood, to my sibling and cousins, to my grandmother’s steady hands and patient voice.”

One of the most significant Ukrainian Easter traditions, pysanky is the practice of writing on

eggs with beeswax, dyeing the shell in various colours, then removing the wax. The eggs represent renewal, protection, hope and strength, and are often given from one person to another as personalized gifts. For the Ukrainian community in Toronto, it's also an affirmation that their stories, symbols and rituals remain alive in the diaspora.

“Pysanky-writing becomes a bridge between past and present, between grandparents and grandchildren; between those who arrived (in Canada) decades ago and those who have come more recently seeking safety and belonging,” Pogoryelova said.

While the eggs themselves are fragile, the tradition is strong. The name is derived from the word “pysaty,” which means “to write,” and the practice is rooted in storytelling. It has existed for thousands of years, and was used to express prayers and wishes by people before they could read and write.

Gathering around a table to prepare the eggs is a time to reconnect with heritage. “When I write a pysanka now, I am adding my own chapter to a story that people began writing centuries ago,” Pogoryelova said. It's a way to invite other people in, too. “In a multicultural country like Canada, these traditions also become a way to share Ukrainian heritage with neighbours and friends, strengthening understanding and fostering pride.”

During the lead-up to Easter - Orthodox Easter takes place April 12, a week after the western Easter long weekend - Canadian Ukrainians run Easter egg-decorating workshops around the city to bring this colourful tradition to one another and to the public.

At the Shevchenko Museum's pysanky workshops, led by artist Olena Chorna who specializes in the Petrykivka folk-art painting style, visitors can learn the ancient wax-resist techniques and explore sacred symbols of protection. The museum also possesses a collection of eggs on display, donated by generations of Ukrainian Canadians.

There are more opportunities than ever before to make pysanky in Toronto, said Irene Nabereznyj-Appleby, a first-generation Ukrainian-Canadian who leads workshops at Studio Mooi in the Beach. She cited the weeklong Ukrainian EggCessories pysanky retreat in Oakville in July that people travel from all over the world to attend.

Because of the Russia-Ukraine war, Nabereznyj-Appleby said many Ukrainians come to her workshop to be reminded of what it felt like to make pysanky with their mothers or grandmothers back home. “During this terrible time in Ukraine, pysanky is one of the many things worth fighting for,” she said. Under Soviet rule, the practice was prohibited and only survived because of the diaspora. It has since flourished in Ukraine once again.

Traditionally, pysanky were believed to ward off evil spirits, and were left at gravesites or given as gifts. Nabereznyj-Appleby has given eggs with symbols of strength written on them to those struggling with illness or infertility. In her workshop, she incorporates symbols from all over Ukraine - flora and fauna common in the Carpathian Mountains; darker tones and geometric symbols often seen in eastern Ukraine; and floral designs from Kyiv and beyond. Typically, the process involves writing patterns using a pen-shaped tool with beeswax on a raw, room

temperature egg wiped clean with vinegar and water. You submerge the egg in dye (starting with the lightest colour), then repeat the wax and dye process several times. Finally, you melt off the wax by holding the egg beside a candle flame or putting it in a 350 C oven for three to four minutes. Oil pastels can be used instead of dyes to teach children the concept of wax resistance. You'll need a "kistka" or writing tool, beeswax, dyes (if using) and a candle; you can shop for these supplies at the west-end store Koota Ooma or the online-only Ukrainian EggCessories.

The craft is so intricate that it must be approached with a calm hand, Nabereznyj-Appleby warns newbies. She recommends watching YouTube videos or attending a workshop before attempting to prepare the eggs for the first time. "I am sure that anyone who tries to make a pysanka at Studio Mooi will leave very proud of what they have produced, particularly when they melt off the wax," she said. "That is when the magic happens!"

That magic never gets old. Each year, after the Easter meal, Nabereznyj-Appleby makes pysanky eggs with her sons, their partners and her two granddaughters. She feels the craft keeps her connected to her roots. "Ukrainian legend states that as long as Ukrainians make pysanky, the world will not end, and we are doing our best."

10. Canada. "Ukrainians in Sudbury Want Russian Flag Removed from Bridge," *Sudbury Star*, 28 February 2026.

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By Jim Moodie

Ukrainians in Sudbury want Russian flag removed from bridge; City so far refusing to do so, arguing the symbol is not political

As bombs continue to fall on Kyiv and other Ukrainian targets, a local group is pushing for the removal of the Russian flag from the Bridge of Nations.

"We continue to stand for the dignity of our city and of Canada as a whole, and we are demanding that the Russian flag of genocide be replaced with the white-blue-white flag used by the Russian opposition, who openly oppose the cruel policies of the current Russian government," said Oksana Tymeczko in a message to The Star.

The group started a petition in the fall, which it sent to the city as well as local members of parliament. The version submitted to Tom Davies Square counted "dozens of signatures," said Tymeczko. Many more have signed an online petition she launched, which now counts more than 1,200 signatures.

A fellow member of the local Ukrainian community, who preferred to not be identified, pointed out "it isn't only Ukrainians or people of Ukrainian background" who have attached their name to the cause.

“It’s also Canadians who were born here,” she said. “And I know a few people who are Russians, who moved here before the war, and they are supporting this initiative, too.”

One of those told her “he feels shame for this flag to still be around.”

Both this Ukrainian resident and Tymeczko came to Sudbury before the Russian invasion in 2022, but each has relatives who remain in their war-torn homeland. They have also been helping the Ukrainian families who have fled the war and found refuge here in the last few years.

Neither is thrilled with the response they have received so far from the city around their flag request. In a message sent on Oct. 30, a representative told them the Russian colours would continue to fly on the bridge, as the display is meant to be apolitical in nature and simply honour the people of any country who have chosen to make Sudbury their home.

“We understand your concerns,” the spokesperson wrote. “However, the flags represent our community’s belief that we are stronger through inclusion of all people who have chosen to live here.”

The city has been “enriched by the hard-working peoples of international descent” whose heritage and culture “have become interwoven with what makes Greater Sudbury an amazing place to live,” the city representative said. “The flags on the Bridge Of Nations are not a political statement. They represent our people, our neighbours and their country of birth and culture, not each nation's government.”

Tymeczko said this position is one “we cannot accept,” and vowed to keep fighting to have the flag removed.

Her friend agreed, while expressing surprise that the city hadn’t already reconsidered its position, given the momentum of the petition and examples elsewhere of the Russian state not being recognized.

“We thought they might change their mind because if you look at the Olympics, the Russian flag did not exist there,” she said. “They say it is not political to have this flag raised, but I think it’s still political - because anything (a country is) doing, it is under the flag. We are hoping somebody will have some better sense of understanding of this.”

She feels like it is an affront to anyone of Ukrainian heritage and especially those, like her relatives, who are enduring incredible hardship in Ukraine itself.

“We are safe and warm here,” she said. “But if you look at Kyiv, they don’t have lights or heat, where it’s -20 C outside and -10 C inside. They try to dress up as much as possible to keep themselves warm, but it’s hard to make food, even if you have the food.”

Some of her relatives are fighting on the front lines and others are living in fear, she said, woken

nightly by air raid sirens and taking shelter as best they can.

The city she grew up in, near the Polish border in western Ukraine, is far from the front lines, yet it is under a constant state of alert. “My family and friends are saying every night the sirens are going they sleep in the washroom because they need to be between two walls, and if the building is to collapse, at least in the small space they might not be hit,” she said.

The group has also reached out to the Sudbury Multicultural and Folk Arts Association for support and is appealing to the broader public through a recent statement it provided to The Star.

“On Feb, 22, the citizens of Sudbury gathered to mark another year since the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine, an invasion that did not begin in 2022 but in 2014 (with the invasion of Crimea), and whose brutality has continued every single day since,” the statement reads.

Russia continues to carry out attacks on civilians and essential infrastructure in Ukraine, they say, and families continue to be torn apart.

“And yet, here in Sudbury, the symbol of that aggressor state - the Russian flag - still flies above the Bridge of Nations,” they write. “For many of us, every trip across that bridge brings a deep and painful reminder of the crimes committed under that flag. It is a symbol that evokes terror, loss and injustice.”

While they understand the display is meant to celebrate multicultural harmony, “the presence of this particular flag, at a time when Russia continues its full-scale war against Ukraine, forces us to confront difficult questions about the values we choose to elevate in our most visible public spaces,” the group says. “Having the symbol of a state that is committing mass violence flying in the Canadian sky is not a gesture of inclusion. It is a stain on Sudbury and on Canada.”

The flag contradicts values of “human dignity, justice and peace that our communities hold dear,” they argue. “And it stands at odds with Canadian laws that prohibit the promotion of symbols associated with terrorism and violence.”

While the flag might honour the Russian-Canadians in Sudbury’s mosaic, “many of those individuals fled that very regime and its oppressive symbols,” the group points out. “They are proud Canadians now, and the flag that represents them is the Canadian flag. To associate them with the ideology and war crimes of the regime they escaped is to misrepresent and dishonour their lived experience.”

The municipality may posit the flags are apolitical, but “flags are never neutral,” in their view. “Here in Sudbury, many Ukrainian-Canadian families have loved ones directly affected by these crimes. For them, the Russian flag is a symbol of invasion, occupation and loss.”

The Bridge of Nations features the flags of 88 nations, which are chosen and maintained by the City of Greater Sudbury, in partnership with a volunteer committee.

The online petition to remove the Russian flag can be found at tinyurl.com/bdevj2s9.

11. Canada. “‘We’re Still Hoping’: Ukrainians in N.L. Reflect on 4 Years Since Russian Full-Scale Invasion,” *Cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador*, 24 February 2026.

By Henrike Wilhelm · CBC News

About 4,500 Ukrainians have arrived in the province since 2022, says Ukrainian National Federation

For Olena Horbatenko, Feb. 24 is a difficult day.

It’s a day when she thinks back to the first few minutes of hearing explosions in her hometown of Kyiv in 2022 — a memory that is now etched in her brain.

“Even now, when people hearing fireworks, we hearing the same sound of explosions. So, when we talking about the date, probably all that memories, they just go up in your mind,” she said.

Horbatenko is one of almost six million Ukrainians who have fled their home country since Russia’s full-scale invasion on Feb. 24, 2022, according to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Of the approximately 300,000 who arrived in Canada, roughly 4,500 made their way to Newfoundland and Labrador, according to the Ukrainian National Federation. The first government-chartered flight arrived in May 2022.

For Horbatenko, her new life in the province started a few months later, in October — a life without her parents and brother, who stayed behind.

“When I saw a few military planes in my backyard, probably it was the moment when I made my decision that I need to go,” she said.

For her family and others still in the country, Horbatenko says the sound of bombs and missiles, and the trauma that comes with it, has become a part of everyday life — a life that still goes on, including celebrations such as birthdays, despite the war.

“That’s really hard to understand probably living in here but while I’m talking with them each time ... they trying to show me that everything’s fine. And that’s really emotional,” said Horbatenko.

Meanwhile in Corner Brook, Kateryna Sydorenko has also left her family behind — including her father, who’s in the Ukrainian military — for a life of peace.

For her, Feb. 24, 2022 felt surreal.

“I woke up around 4 a.m. in the morning because a bomb [flew over] my house and I was

sleeping in that time and I didn't understand what's going on," said Sydorenko, who was visiting her hometown Krolevets in eastern Ukraine at the time — only about 80 kilometres from the Russian border.

"I was thinking, maybe it's a dream.... But when I checked the news, I understand that the war begins."

After her home province was occupied by Russia for about a month, Sydorenko decided it was time to leave. She arrived in Stephenville shortly after, in July 2022.

For those who decided to stay, she said it remains a difficult situation to this day, even more so during cold Ukrainian winters — with no end in sight after four long years.

Sydorenko said the duration of the war has taught Ukrainians to live one day at a time, rather than making big plans for the future.

"If you wake up today, if you can drink a coffee, if you have a message from your family that say, 'I alive,' they wake up, bomb didn't destroy their house — it's success for us," she said.

Ukrainians in N.L. feeling at home thanks to community support

For Bruce Lilly, it's this resilience that stands out.

"They're having to live the machinations of a regular life while their home is being bombed," he said.

Lilly, who founded the Ukrainian Cultural Organization of N.L. and serves as the executive director of the Ukrainian National Federation's Avalon branch, has been involved with Ukrainians' settlement in the province from the very beginning.

He said other than needs such as housing and employment, the federation realized that, due to the lack of a Ukrainian diaspora in the province, a cultural void also had to be filled.

"You could be totally safe ... but you're living in a hotel, feeling like a stranger in a strange land."

That quickly changed when the federation organized events, such as a children's summer camp, to foster integration and a feeling of belonging. Since then, he said much more has been added, including a language school for children, a choir, and a dance group.

"So, we've got ways that make it easy touch points for them to meet the community and learn about Newfoundland, teach about some of their own culture and feel all of the things that make a house a home," said Lilly.

"You can have a house, but what's a home? It's the same kind of theory on a provincial scale."

And an above-average number of Ukrainians have made the province their home, he said. While Newfoundland and Labrador has a typical newcomer retention rate of about 35 per cent, that number is at 85 per cent for Ukrainians.

“Newfoundlanders were curious, Ukrainians were open, but then it went the other way. Newfoundlanders were open and Ukrainians were curious. And so, that’s how you kind of make that connection.”

And while the province has also become a new home for both Horbatenko and Sydorenko, their thoughts are still back in Ukraine every day — especially on Feb. 24 — switching between uncertainty and hope.

“We believe that everything will be over,” said Sydorenko. “Doesn’t matter where you are. The most important that your family is safe and you can see them one more time.”

Meanwhile, for Horbatenko, it’s important to continue the conversation about the war.

“When you’re talking about it, people understand that we’re still going,” she said. “We’re talking about it because our families there. And we can’t keep a silence.”

12. China. “Hongkonger Fights in Ukraine as Diaspora Marks Grim Anniversary,” *Global Voices*, 2 March 2026.

By Kelly Yu

A Hong Kong volunteer soldier battles in Ukraine while the local Ukrainian community grieves from afar

When US President Donald Trump announced plans to withdraw aid to Ukraine in early 2025, 31-year-old Hongkonger Nid made a decision that would change his life: he would join the fight himself.

“I felt it was very unfair,” Nid told Global Voices over a crackling video call from his military base in Ukraine. “When those in power don’t do anything, those below have to act. We, ordinary citizens, have to do it.”

Nid arrived in Ukraine in March 2025, leaving behind his job as a chef. Now a combat medic in the 3rd Separate Assault Brigade, he evacuates wounded soldiers using robots after serving several months as an infantryman.

Nid sees parallels between Ukraine’s resistance and Hong Kong’s own struggles. Both were forced to ramp up their fight for autonomy in 2014, after Russia’s annexation of Crimea and the resistance campaigns in the Special Administrative Regions of China (SAR), known as the Umbrella Movement.

“We’re both being occupied by a neighboring power that’s gradually eroding our political autonomy and assimilating us,” Nid said, praising his unit’s effort to preserve the Ukrainian language and wishing the same for Cantonese.

After Beijing’s crackdown on the 2019 pro-democracy protests and the implementation of the National Security Law, Nid felt increasingly hopeless about participating in Hong Kong society.

“There was no way to participate in society like before. People who spoke up politically became fewer and fewer. I felt somewhat disheartened. So I thought: why not go somewhere where I could use my own power to support justice, even in a small way?”

In 2019, protesters drew inspiration from Ukraine’s Euromaidan revolution, portrayed in the film “Winter on Fire.” People screened the film across neighborhoods throughout Hong Kong to learn resistance tactics. By 2022, solidarity reversed: Hongkongers flocked to Ivan the Kozak, a Ukrainian restaurant in the city, expressing support through donations and messages.

A war with no end in sight

Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine entered its fifth year on February 24, 2026, marking Europe’s largest military conflict since World War II. At least 15,000 civilians have been killed since the invasion began, including 763 children, according to data by the United Nations.

The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) estimates Russia has suffered around 1.2 million casualties, including around 325,000 killed. For Ukraine, CSIS estimates military casualties between 500,000 and 600,000, including up to 140,000 deaths.

Russia has intensified attacks on energy infrastructure during one of Ukraine’s coldest winters in recent years, leaving millions without consistent power, heat, or water. “It’s minus 20 degrees Celsius, and there’s electricity for just two hours a day. Residents in apartment buildings in Odesa can’t burn wood for warmth. Life is very hard for them,” said Nid.

International support remains divided. The European Union (EU) has provided over EUR 193 billion (USD 228 billion) in aid, but unity faltered when ministers failed to agree on new sanctions against Russia. Trump’s proposed 28-point peace deal would require Ukraine to cede territories to Moscow.

Two Hong Kong volunteers killed in action

In December 2025, two Hong Kong volunteer soldiers, known as Pin and Shui, were killed during their first frontline deployment in Zaporizhzhia while attempting to recover a comrade’s remains. Nid, who had been in contact with Pin, was devastated. He said:

“When my other comrades died, I was still at a position with work to distract me. But when Pin and Shui died, I was at the base doing routine training. There wasn’t urgent work to dilute the emotion. It felt like swallowing something bitter.”

In January, the city's security secretary, Chris Tang, suggested that some Hongkongers joining Ukraine's military might be seeking training to later use against their own government.

Nid dismissed this claim: "If the government doesn't need violence or bloodshed [to act], who wants to die?" He urged functional dialogue over fear, recalling the peaceful July 1 marches of old, when grievances were resolved naturally.

EU pledges continued support amid criticism

On February 21, Hong Kong Anti-war Mobilization held a protest at the Tsim Sha Tsui Cultural Center to mark the fourth anniversary of the war. The group mourned fallen soldiers before being stopped by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department staff for not applying for an official permit.

In their statement, the group condemned Putin's expansionist war and criticized the US for sidelining Ukraine in peace negotiations. "We also condemn European countries for continuing to import Russian natural gas, and criticize Russia's allies for providing diplomatic, military, and economic support," the statement read.

Speaking at a screening event on February 24, Harvey Rouse, head of the EU office in Hong Kong, emphasized the bloc's unwavering commitment to Ukraine.

Rouse said Moscow's ability to obtain dual-use goods for its war machine remains a major concern. He said:

"This is also a discussion that we are having with the Hong Kong administration. We are also discussing the need to avoid any enabling of Russia's shadow fleet of ships transporting sanctioned oil. Ukraine is not just fighting for its own freedom. Ukraine is fighting against a world where might equals right. Ukraine is fighting for all of us."

Watching from afar

For Anna Odnokopyla, society representative of the Ukrainian Society of Hong Kong, watching the war from thousands of miles away brings its own anguish. Born in Kyiv, Anna has lived in Hong Kong for almost 10 years, but her family remains in Ukraine. She told Global Voices at the EU screening event:

"Of course, being in Ukraine is tough, being outside is also tough for the family members. Obviously it feels terrible because every single Ukrainian, has someone either at war. Like my family is still there, so it's been hard."

Anna noted the recent escalation of missile attacks on Kyiv. "The news every day is not great, and lots of family members are on the battlefield, and they have to go to serve. It's the reality of having a Ukrainian notice," she said.

The Ukrainian Society of Hong Kong has organized events for the diaspora community while

also collaborating with local institutions to share Ukrainian culture, Anna added.

Asked about the passing of two Hong Kong volunteers, Anna said:

“It’s terrifying, it’s like losing one of our family members. Every single Ukrainian will appreciate their contribution to the frontline.”

Anna hopes for lasting peace:

“We all want to have the war finished. We all want to have all territories back as it was before 2014, because the war started way before [2022].”

“Don’t give up hope”

Back at his base in Ukraine, Nid reflected on what keeps him going: the Ukrainian people, his fallen comrades, and hope for the future.

Meeting older Ukrainian soldiers reinforced his resolve:

“There’s an uncle in his 50s or 60s in my position. When I look at him, I think: this person is only a few years younger than my dad. If my father had to fight on the frontline, I’d feel terrible.”

Nid was injured by an enemy drone a few months ago, but that didn’t stop him.

“Don’t be too immersed in this oppressive atmosphere. Do what you can within your means. Don’t lose heart. Don’t forget you are Hongkongers.”

As the war grinds into its fifth year, Nid plans to fight until the end. “I find life here quite comfortable,” he says. “I want to learn new skills and knowledge, like how to use drones, unmanned ground vehicles, and combat medicine to save people.”

13. Cyprus. “A Park Called Odesa in Larnaca, Restored by Ukrainians Who Left Their Home,” *En.philenews.com*, 2 April 2026.

Around 90 volunteers from the Ukrainian community and local Cypriots cleaned, painted and replanted Odesa municipal park in Larnaca last Saturday, planting 44 trees and installing a commemorative plaque dedicated to the Alley of Friendship between Ukraine and Cyprus.

The event was organised by the Ukrainian Cultural Center Obiimy and the Ukrainian community of Larnaca in partnership with the Larnaca Municipality and Cypriot Plast and Scout organisations, as part of the European environmental campaign Cleaning Up Our European Home. The civic platform Strichka co-organised the clean-up with support from the International Renaissance Foundation. Participants travelled from Nicosia and Limassol as well as Larnaca. The Municipality and the Department of Forests supplied tree saplings, paint and other materials.

“I am proud of the Ukrainian community — for the first time in Larnaca, and in Cyprus overall, such an event is taking place, where the Ukrainian community helps the local community take care of a park named after the beautiful Ukrainian city of Odesa,” said Honorary Consul of Ukraine in Cyprus Christodoulos Ellinas. “These people came today not just for this event but also to lay the foundation for ongoing efforts to support this significant park in the city of Larnaca.”

“It is a great honour for the Municipality of Larnaca to take part in such events. Your dedication to this park demonstrates your love for Larnaca and Cyprus. We are proud that you are part of our community,” said Deputy Mayor Iasonas Iasonidis.

During the clean-up, participants also paused to commemorate the recent Russian attack on a maternity hospital in Odesa. The organisers and municipality agreed on further development of the park, including the construction of a sports ground, improvements to the children’s area, installation of flagpoles and a public restroom.

Cleaning Up Our European Home is a campaign active in ten European countries since November 2025, bringing together Ukrainians displaced by the war to clean parks, streets and waterfronts in the countries that have hosted them.

14. Czechia. “Prague’s Week of Ukrainian Solidarity Begins: Where to Find English-Friendly Talks and Films,” *Expats.cz*, 20 February 2026.

Written by Expats.cz Staff

Supporters can also look forward to a major rally in Old Town, marches, exhibitions, and performances marking the fourth year since Russia's invasion.

Czechia will mark the fourth anniversary of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine this weekend with a series of commemorative events across the country.

The commemorations begin with a major public gathering at Prague’s Old Town Square on Saturday, Feb. 21, where President Petr Pavel is scheduled to deliver a keynote address.

Organizers expect thousands of attendees, ranging from local Czech citizens to members of the significant Ukrainian diaspora that has reshaped the country’s population since February 2022.

The event Together for Ukraine will be opened by the President in Prague’s Old Town Square at 3 p.m. Former hockey goalie Dominik Hašek and filmmaker Agnieszka Holland will also appear on stage. Mothers whose children died fighting for Ukraine, representatives of Ukrainian civil society, and a children’s choir will also feature in the event.

The rally is followed by a solidarity march to Kinský Square and the Taras Shevchenko Monument.

Culture events begin this weekend, run through next week

The cultural tributes begin on Feb. 21 at 2 p.m. in Old Town Square with Freedom at the Highest Price, a panel exhibition honoring Czech soldiers fallen on Ukrainian soil, opened by Ukrainian Ambassador Vasył Bohdanovych Zvarych.

Later that evening at the Scout Institute, Prague Amnesty and Amnesty International's English Speaking Group (ESG) hosts a screening of the documentary series LINE, with a discussion in English to follow (the film is screening with English subtitles).

The Prague Maidan protest continues with its regular Sunday protest and informational tent on Feb. 22, maintaining a bridge between the Czech public and the front lines.

On Monday, Feb. 23, the struggle is documented through the Kinowar 2026 benefit film festival, with English-friendly screenings at independent cinemas across Prague. All proceeds from the festival, running through Feb. 27, go toward the efforts in Ukraine.

On the actual anniversary of the Russian invasion, Tuesday, Feb. 24, the Václav Havel Library will host a sharp debate on A Just Peace, or Just Russkiy Mir? The panel brings together scholars, politicians, and experts and will be held in English. Registration is required.

Beyond the capital, similar vigils and charity concerts are planned in Brno, Ostrava, and Pilsen. Many of these events are focused on fundraising for humanitarian aid, specifically targeting energy infrastructure and medical supplies as the conflict continues to strain Ukraine's civilian resources.

A full schedule of events across Czechia can be seen [here](#).

War impact a daily reality for Czechia

Since Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022, Czechia has emerged as a cornerstone of European support for Kyiv, a role that remains pivotal as of February 2026. The Czech state has directed approximately CZK 91.3 billion in direct aid to Ukraine, while simultaneously positioning itself as a central logistics hub for the West.

Beyond its own borders, Prague's diplomatic weight has leveraged international funding through the landmark Ammunition Initiative, which by late 2025 had delivered nearly 4.4 million large-caliber shells to the front lines.

Today, the Czech Republic continues to host the highest number of Ukrainian refugees per capita in the European Union, with approximately 613,000 Ukrainians legally residing in the country, according to the Czech Statistical Office.

15. Estonia. “Ukrainian Diaspora in Estonia Unites to Provide Power Solutions for Ukrainian Defenders,” *Ukrinform.net*, 1 July 2026.

The Ukrainian Center in Pärnu (Estonia) hosted a large-scale volunteer, cultural, and educational event that brought together local residents, Estonian volunteers, and representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora from the cities of Pärnu and Valga. The main goal of the gathering was to make lighting equipment for Ukrainian defenders.

According to Ukrinform, this information is posted on the Facebook page of the Ukrainian Center in Pärnu.

Working together, the adult participants made trench candles, which are indispensable in field conditions on the front lines: they help soldiers stay warm, heat food, boil water, or light up dugouts.

Special guests at the event included representatives of the Ukrainian community “Kalyna” from Valga, led by its director Ruslana Dovga. Such horizontal ties between diaspora communities make it possible to coordinate volunteer aid and find new ideas for joint charitable projects in Estonia.

Estonian military chaplain Volodõmir Batuhtin was a special guest at the gathering. He shared moving and candid stories from his chaplaincy service directly in Ukraine, spoke in detail about the crucial spiritual and psychological role of military chaplains during intense combat operations, and answered numerous questions from the audience. The official part of the event concluded with a touching exchange of commemorative gifts.

While the adults were busy making candles and discussing humanitarian plans, creative activities were organized for the children at the “Ukrainian Club.” The children made their own colorful decorative suns, which became symbols of warmth, light, and faith in victory for them.

The organizers expressed their deep gratitude for the support in holding the event to: the organization MTÜ Print&Power Team Eesti and its director Kateryna Sinkevych, the Ukrainian community “Kalyna” (Valga), Chaplain Volodymyr Batukhtin, as well as all the craftswomen at the mini-fair, volunteers, and caring residents of Estonia.

As a reminder, the traditional “Big Family” (Suur perekond) festival and fair took place in Rakvere (Estonia), which every two years brings together the creative forces of the Ukrainian diaspora, Estonian groups, and representatives of other national and cultural societies from across the country.

16. France. “Ukrainian Refugees in France Face Uncertainty as Emergency Protection Phased Out,” *RFI.fr*, 24 February 2026.

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France, Feb. 24 -- When Russia invaded Ukraine on 24 February, 2022, France and other

European countries moved quickly to organise emergency support for the tens of thousands of Ukrainians fleeing their country.

As of January this year, France has recorded the arrival of more than 79,000 Ukrainian refugees since 2022.

While most arrived in the Paris region, many headed south to the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region, particularly around Nice, where there was an existing sizeable Ukrainian community.

The AFUCA Ukrainian cultural association in Nice, which was founded in 2016, became a central point of support, helping new arrivals look for work, navigate administrative procedures and fill out paperwork.

Four years on, it continues to help around 100 new arrivals each month, as well as those who are already in France and hoping to stay, such as Karina Youdenkova.

Youdenkova, 23, left Kyiv after an explosion blew in the windows of her flat. Her father was killed on the front.

When she arrived in France, she lived first in emergency accommodation then in a hotel before she found a job in a cafe, which has allowed her to rent her own flat

“I see my life in France. I don’t see a future for myself in Ukraine,” she explains. She is considering enrolling at university.

One major obstacle for her is obtaining a driving licence. She says she was unable to register for the test because she is in France under the temporary protection scheme. She would like to obtain a more stable status so she can continue building her life in France.

Phasing out protection

In 2022, the European Union activated its Temporary Protection Directive for Ukrainians.

First implemented in 2001 following the conflicts in former Yugoslavia, its aim is to “provide immediate and temporary protection in the event of a mass influx of displaced persons from non-EU countries”.

The scheme granted Ukrainians residency and work authorisation, a small living stipend and health coverage.

While many people have since returned to Ukraine, according to the French Interior Ministry there were 40,850 people still living in France under this status at the beginning of 2026.

However, the scheme is due to expire in March 2027, and French authorities have begun winding down services specifically dedicated to Ukrainians.

In Nice, the main hub that provided temporary accommodation and guidance to new arrivals closed in August 2024. The area's last accommodation programme reserved for Ukrainians shut down at the end of 2025. Ukrainian refugees now must find housing in the same way as any other vulnerable group.

“The only reception now is with us,” says AFUCA founder, Iryna Bourdelles.

For Ukrainians intending to remain in France, obtaining a more permanent legal status is pressing.

Some are eligible for standard residence permits. Others are applying for asylum, which offers more durable protection, but may not be suitable for those who hope to return to Ukraine one day. In 2025, 12,310 Ukrainians applied for asylum in France, according to Ofpra, the French office for the protection of refugees.

Moving away from emergency measures is understandable, says Bourdelles, as the war enters its fifth year. “I’m not saying the state is abandoning us, but Ukraine is no longer among the priorities. And that’s normal, it’s been four years.”

Complex needs

The transition brings uncertainty for those still in France, who have needs that include help with administrative tasks, looking for jobs and learning French - as well as psychological support for the trauma they have experienced.

“The profiles of those who have stayed in France often involve complex issues,” says Audrey Terradura, director of emergency and crisis management for ALC, an organisation that played a key role in the emergency response in Nice in 2022.

“There are elderly people, seriously ill individuals, families with disabled children, for whom access to employment and independent housing is more difficult.”

As war drags on, France seeks long-term solutions for Ukrainian refugees

With support from charity Secours Catholique, the AFUCA distributes food parcels twice a week to around 70 Ukrainians each month.

Tetyana, who arrived in France a year and a half ago, hoped to be able to find work and send money to her daughter, who stayed in Ukraine with her husband who is fighting at the front.

When she first arrived she lived with another of her daughters, but since last summer she has had to cover her own rent and is struggling to make ends meet. “I would really like to work. I’ve worked all my life, but there is always an obstacle,” she says.

She lost her most recent job as a seamstress when the alterations shop ran into financial difficulties. She has since applied to work in home care, but for now relies on the food parcels to

get by.

Natalia, who worked as a civil servant in the Ukraine's Chernihiv region before fleeing in 2024 with her 13-year-old son, works as a hotel cleaner in Nice. She rents a small room from her employer.

"I'm grateful, because in September 2024 I thought I was going to end up on the streets," she says. But she hopes for more stable housing.

She worries about the future, as she sees the prospect of returning to Ukraine receding as the war drags on.

This article was adapted from the original version in French by Aurore Lartigue. Published by HT Digital Content Services with permission from RFI English.

17. General. "Ukrainian Diaspora Plays Major Role Since Start of War - Its Head," *CTK Daily News*, 23 February 2026

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Prague, Feb 23 (CTK) - The Ukrainian diaspora in Europe has played a key role in supporting the invaded country almost four years after the Russian invasion began, Bohdan Raichynets, who chairs the international coordinating organisation European Congress of Ukrainians, told CTK today.

He said Ukrainian emigrants acted as a bridge between the new and old homelands and were a mainstay for promoting positive Ukrainian interests outside Ukraine.

"Organisation is important, whether humanitarian aid, the creation of support centres and the integration of those who do not want to return," Raichynets said. Technical assistance to Ukraine is still insufficient, he said, especially in terms of missile systems and air defence. "If it were possible to shoot down missiles before they hit cities and infrastructure, the situation would be much better," he said.

Raichynets also pointed to the European Union's sanctions restrictions on Russia. Some countries through which trade with Russia flows are not fully included in the sanctions packages, and the crackdown on China, a major source of energy and finance for Russia's war, is so far insufficient, he said.

When it comes to future, Raichynets fears that the political situation in some EU member states, such as Hungary, may limit aid to Ukraine. However, he stressed the role of an active civil society, which he believes can fill in some of the gaps and financially support humanitarian projects. "The main thing is not to be afraid to persevere," Raichynets added.

After the war is over, he said, young Ukrainians, students and scientists will continue to support Ukraine and some will return to their homeland with new experience.

“A lot of people who were forced to flee are young, they are students or scientists, for example. Either they will realise their life abroad but still return their energy and finances to Ukraine, or they will return to Ukraine enriched to some extent. So this is the new wave, and the old wave will always try to maintain what it has for the next decades, which means culture, language and integration,” Raichynets said.

The European Congress of Ukrainians is now focusing on networking and connecting youth organisations, promoting humanitarian aid and educating children in Ukrainian through Saturday schools. “The purpose is to bring together capable people, whether they decide to return or stay abroad,” Raichynets added.

The European Congress of Ukrainians (ECU) is an international coordinating organisation representing the interests of Ukrainians in Europe. It was founded on January 4, 1949 in London. Its main offices are located in Prague and Bratislava. It also has executive committees in other European cities such as Brussels and Bucharest.

18. Germany. “Europe’s First Unity Center for Ukrainians to Open in Berlin on April 15 – Ministry of Social Policy,” *Interfax.com.ua*, 10 April 2026.

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KYIV. April 10 (Interfax-Ukraine) – Starting April 15, the first Unity Center (Unity Hub) for Ukrainians in Europe will begin operations in Berlin, offering consultations on returning home as well as educational and cultural events, the Ministry of Social Policy, Family, and Unity reports.

“According to the latest Eurostat data, over 4.3 million Ukrainians are under temporary protection in EU countries, with the largest number—1.2 million—residing in Germany. In this context, Unity Centers for Ukrainians abroad are a vital element of the policy to maintain our citizens’ connection with Ukraine and facilitate their return home,” the ministry statement says.

It is noted that international and Ukrainian organizations have already joined the Center’s work, ensuring a wide range of services—from consultations on returning and receiving social services in Ukraine to educational, cultural, and integration programs.

Additionally, the Center will provide consultations from the Pension Fund of Ukraine regarding pensions, housing subsidies, benefits, and insurance contributions.

The hub will also host regular activities for children and youth based on the Ukrainian scouting model, vocational guidance, digital technology training for all ages, and seminars on education and countering disinformation.

The department informed that the Unity Center in Berlin will be administered by the “National Unity Agency” LLC.

As reported, on January 24, 2025, the Cabinet of Ministers approved the creation of the National

Unity Agency—a structure designed to implement initiatives for interaction with the Ukrainian community and NGOs in host countries. It was noted that the Agency would open departments in key host countries, primarily Germany, Poland, and the Czech Republic, with “Unity Hubs” established in their capitals. Functions of a Unity Hub include educational and cultural spaces, language courses, return consultants, consular services (as an external service), banking and postal services, economic opportunity coordinators, SE “Document,” youth programs, a Ukrainian cafe, a business hub, coworking, and a UA Job Center.

In February 2025, a joint declaration of intent was signed to open the first Ukrainian Unity Hub in Berlin, with plans for additional hubs in Munich and Dusseldorf. In March 2025, declarations were signed for hubs in France and Spain.

In early November 2025, the Ministry of Social Policy announced that Ukrainian Unity Centers would open in Spain (Torrevieja, Alicante province), Germany (Berlin), and the Czech Republic (Prague) in 2025. Furthermore, it was previously noted that Ukraine is interested in opening Unity Centers in Poland (Warsaw), Austria (Vienna), and Sweden (Stockholm).

19. Italy. “Russia at Venice Biennale: Italy’s Reaction, Pussy Riot Protests and Response from Ukrainian Pavilion,” *Ukrainska Pravda*, 6 March 2026.

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After a four-year break, Russia is returning to the Venice Biennale. Mikhail Shvydkoi, Russia’s delegate for international cultural exchanges and the country’s former culture minister, said that Russia “never left” the world’s largest art exhibition, while Italy’s Ministry of Culture stated that it is not responsible for the country’s participation in the Biennale.

Source: Ukrainska Pravda.Kultura (Culture)

Details: Meanwhile, the Russian feminist anti-Putin group Pussy Riot will perform in Venice in protest against Russia’s return. Kseniia Malykh, curator of the Ukrainian pavilion, also commented on the participation of Russia.

Ukrainska Pravda.Kultura has compiled everything known so far about Russia’s return.

Statement by Italy’s Ministry of Culture

On the evening of 5 March, Italy’s Ministry of Culture issued a statement saying that the decision regarding Russia’s participation in the 61st Venice Biennale had been made independently by the Biennale Foundation despite the government’s position. The ministry noted that it does not support this decision.

The Italian Ministry of Culture stressed that it continues to help Ukraine restore cultural heritage damaged by Russian strikes.

At the time of publication, Ukraine’s Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Culture and Tetiana Berezhna, Deputy Prime Minister for Humanitarian Policy and Minister of Culture, who is the

commissioner of this year's Ukrainian pavilion in Venice, had not commented on the situation.

Pussy Riot protests

The Russian feminist anti-Putin group Pussy Riot will perform at the Venice Biennale in protest against Russia's return to the world's largest art exhibition.

Responding to Shvydkoi's statement that "eternity prevails over momentary concerns; culture prevails over politics... Unfortunately, not everyone is capable of understanding this", the group said: "Yes – Ukrainian children who have lost their parents and their homes will indeed not be able to understand that."

The group believes Russia's participation in the Biennale is a serious blow to Europe's security. Pussy Riot stressed that such a decision cannot depend solely on the Biennale Foundation.

Quote from Pussy Riot: "The Biennale consists of the main international exhibition and national pavilions. One of them is the Russian pavilion. However, although the building belongs to Russia, it is located in the Giardini, which are the property of the Italian state and the city of Venice, and it functions only through agreements with the Biennale. The president of the Biennale is appointed by the Italian government.

The Russian pavilion is not an embassy: it is not sovereign territory and does not have diplomatic status. This means that the Italian government, the authorities of Venice, and the Biennale itself can say "no" to Russia if they choose to.

If Russia participates in the Biennale, it means this is a political decision by Italy."

Details: The group therefore plans to stage a protest performance at the Biennale in support of Ukraine, the victims of Russian war crimes, Russian political prisoners and Ukrainian prisoners of war.

Statement by Kseniia Malykh, the curator of the Ukrainian pavilion

In a comment to Ukrainian Radio Culture, Kseniia Malykh said that the participation of Russian artists in the Biennale is perceived as legitimising Russia's actions in Ukraine. The decision has sparked criticism and protests from the Ukrainian community and international cultural organisations.

"The Biennale gave an official comment saying that this is not their decision. They do not decide which countries participate; those decisions are linked to states recognised by Italy. If Italy recognises a state, it can take part in the Venice Biennale," she said.

Meanwhile, the Ukrainian team continues to work on presenting its pavilion and cultural project.

"The main thing we have to do is present our project as strongly as possible. We have a very good project this year and we will attract as much attention to it as possible," Malykh said.

This year, the central object of the Ukrainian pavilion will be the sculpture Deer, evacuated from Pokrovsk in Donetsk Oblast. The work was created in 2019 by artist Zhanna Kadyrova as part of the global reconstruction of Yuvileinyi Park. The sculpture occupies a pedestal where a Soviet jet aircraft once stood. The aircraft had been installed in the 1970s during the Cold War and was dismantled in 2005.

Malykh added that Russia's return did not come as a surprise to the Ukrainian cultural community. Over the past four years, Russia has attempted to re-enter various international platforms. In some cases, artists changed their positions or applied through other countries.

“There is the phenomenon of the so-called ‘good Russians’ who simply rewrote their biographies as artists and described themselves, for example, as Berlin-based artists. In other words, they tried to distance themselves from their Russian origin,” the curator said.

On 4 March, the Venice Biennale published the list of participating countries in the world’s largest art exhibition, which included Russia.

The Russian national pavilion will be titled The Tree is Rooted in the Sky, and its commissioner will be Anastasia Karneeva.

The Russian art consultant and contemporary art manager was appointed commissioner of the Russian pavilion in 2021 for the following eight years. However, Russia missed the Biennale twice, in 2022 and 2024.

Karneeva is the daughter of Nikolai Volobuyev, a retired general and deputy director of one of the largest defence corporations, Rostec. Previously, Volobuyev served as deputy head of Russia's Federal Customs Service and director for special assignments at Rosoboronexport. From 1975 to 2004, he served in the structures of the KGB of the USSR and later the FSB of Russia.

In 2014, Karneeva co-founded the art consulting company Smart Art together with Ekaterina Lavrova, the daughter of Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov.

20. Russia. “Once Large and Active Ukrainian Diaspora on Russia Currently ‘Lost To Ukraine’ – OpEd,” *Eurasia Review*, 29 March 2026.

By Paul Goble

Since 2010, Moscow has worked to suppress or take full control over all organizations in Russia involving Ukrainians as part of its effort to force members of that community to give up their language and identity or face the near certainty of repression and the inability to get and keep good jobs, a former Ukrainian diplomat who worked in Russia says.

Speaking to Radio Liberty on condition of anonymity, he says that as a result of these Moscow actions, “the Ukrainian diaspora in Russia is lost for Ukraine” however much Kyiv might like to change that (svoboda.org/a/ukraintsam-opasno-vyskazyvatjsya-otkryto-ukrainskaya-diaspora-v-rossii/33711715.html).

Moscow began by targeting organizations involved in political or even public life, banning their operation, driving activists into emigration, or in some cases even killing their leaders – and then replacing them with “puppet” groups that the FSB totally controlled even though they retained references to Ukrainians in their names.

The survivors are now typically led by retired military officers who came from Ukraine in Soviet times, served in the Red Army, and then retired in the Russian Federation. They appear sufficiently Ukrainian to fool some in Russia as well as many in Ukraine and in western countries.

But the greatest pressure against ethnic Ukrainians inside the Russian Federation came in 2018-2019, the diplomat says. At that time, many ethnic Ukrainians were informed that they would lose their jobs or at least any chance for advancement unless they gave up their Ukrainian citizenship and became ethnic Russians.

Many of these people lined up at Ukrainian consulates to take the necessary steps, thus allowing Moscow to claim on the basis of the census in 2020-21 that the number of Ukrainians in Russia had fallen by more than half in the last decade, although it is likely many avoided identifying as Russians but were among the 11 percent not declaring a nationality at all.

Irina Klyuchkovskaya, the director of Lviv’s International Institute of Education, Culture and Ties with the Diaspora, provides additional information on the trends the anonymous diplomat has talked about. She says that the Russian authorities have been successful in suppressing organized life of the Ukrainians inside Russia and of their use of Ukrainian.

Russian oppression of ethnic Ukrainians, including in some cases the murder of their leaders, was “a test for the reaction both in Russia and in Ukraine and in the world,” she suggests. There wasn’t much of a reaction in any of these places, in part because Ukrainian organizations had ceased to trust one another given the FSB’s control of so many.

The current situation of ethnic Ukrainians in Putin’s Russia is dire, but it isn’t necessarily irreversible. Many Ukrainians within the current borders of the Russian Federation retain a cultural identity even if they no longer speak their native language. If conditions in Russia change as a result of the war, the Ukrainian community in Russia almost certainly

About Paul Goble

Paul Goble is a longtime specialist on ethnic and religious questions in Eurasia. Most recently, he was director of research and publications at the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy. Earlier, he served as vice dean for the social sciences and humanities at Audentes University in Tallinn and a senior research associate at the EuroCollege of the University of Tartu in Estonia. He has served in various capacities in the U.S. State Department, the Central Intelligence Agency and the International Broadcasting Bureau as well as at the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Mr. Goble maintains the Window on Eurasia blog and can be contacted directly at paul.goble@gmail.com

21. Spain. “Adra Festival Brought Together 11 Countries to Celebrate Heritage,”
Mezha.net, 23 June 2026.

A vibrant seaside gathering created new ties between residents and international communities, revealing surprising shared traditions and flavors.

According to the online media Ukrinform.

In the coastal town of Adra, in the province of Almería, a large-scale multicultural festival was held, bringing together representatives from over 11 countries to showcase national heritage, traditional crafts, and authentic cuisine.

According to the official Facebook page of Asociación “Corazón Ucraniano” / Ukrainians of Almería, the event became a platform for intercultural communication and friendly exchange among participants.

The Ukrainian diaspora played a special role in the festival of friendship among peoples, gaining the opportunity to showcase to international audiences and local residents the traditional Ukrainian culture, ethnic flavor, and renowned hospitality.

The representatives of the association expressed heartfelt gratitude to the main organizers of the forum – the NGO Almería Para Todos – as well as the municipal authorities of the city of Adra and all volunteers involved who helped create a space for open dialogue.

Cultural activists offered special thanks for the high level of preparation, patriotism, and dedicated work to the Corazón Ucraniano (Ukrainian Heart) team.

Festival outcomes and significance for the Ukrainian diaspora in Spain

At the event, the Ukrainian community presented traditional rites, folk songs and dances, and also showcased crafts and authentic Ukrainian cuisine.

The organizers and participants stressed the importance of such intercultural encounters for strengthening the ties between the Ukrainian diaspora in Spain and the local community.

It was also noted that previously in Barcelona the 6th International Festival of Ukrainian Culture Vyshyvanka-Beregynia took place, which became a large platform for consolidating the Ukrainian diaspora in Spain through the presentation of Ukrainian song, dance, and ethnographic heritage.

The conclusion of the event confirms a shared interest in preserving cultural heritage and developing mutual understanding among the different communities of Spain and Ukraine.

22. Spain. “Catalan Parliament Marks 4th Anniversary of Russian Invasion by Raising Ukrainian Flag,” *Catalannews.com*, 24 February 2026.

The Catalan Parliament raised the Ukrainian flag on Tuesday, February 24, to mark the fourth anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion of the country. This was announced by the parliament speaker, Josep Rull, during the closing of a demonstration held by the Ukrainian community in Barcelona, on Sunday, February 22.

In a speech at Plaça Catalunya square, Rull stated that the Ukrainian cause is also that of Catalonia and Europe, as well as the cause of freedom, democracy, human rights, and humanity.

The parliament already displayed the Ukrainian flag in 2024 and 2025 at the foot of the honorary staircase as a sign of solidarity with the country's civilian population, coinciding with the second and third anniversaries of the Russian invasion.

This week, the full parliamentary session will again read an institutional declaration of support, as it has done in previous years.

23. United Kingdom. "UK Project Launches Digital Archive of Ukrainian Literature and History in Nottingham," *Odessa Journal*, 3 July 2026.

In the United Kingdom, the first phase of the Digital Library of the Nottingham branch of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain (AUGB Nottingham) has been launched, providing access to a unique collection of Ukrainian literary, historical, and cultural heritage for users worldwide.

This reported on the Facebook page of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain.

The landmark project was financially supported by Nottingham City Council. The main goal of the initiative is to preserve and promote the overseas book collection. The platform is designed not only for the local community, but also for students, historians, researchers, and academics across the UK and beyond.

Special thanks for the careful, many-hour work on developing the resource was expressed to Bohdan Vhatskyi.

The developers have already presented the first results and confirmed the schedule for the platform's full rollout:

- Phase One – Now Live. Approximately one third of the physical AUGB Nottingham Library is now available online.
- Phase Two – Planned by the end of Summer 2026. A further third of the collection will be added.
- Final Phase – Planned by the end of 2026. Completion of the remaining collection together with the resolution of any problematic entries and further improvements to the catalogue.

The digital catalogue is available in both Ukrainian and English. The platform's interface allows flexible searching by title, author, year of publication, or keywords (for example, entering "in English" filters English-language materials).

Some digitised materials are freely accessible via the "Open book" button, while other rare editions may be provided individually upon request for educational or research purposes. The interactive platform can be accessed at the official address: AUGB Nottingham Digital Library. Representatives of AUGB encourage the community to actively share this resource with schools, universities, and anyone interested in the history of Ukraine.

"Please take a look, rediscover our heritage, and share this exciting new resource with your family, friends, schools, universities and anyone with an interest in Ukraine and its history. Together, we are preserving our past for future generations," the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain wrote.

24. United Kingdom. "World's Worst Man Made Disaster' Remembered 40 Years On at Special Church Service," *Bolton News*, 1 May 2026.

By Joe Harrigan

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A special service was held in the heart of Bolton on Sunday to remember the lives lost in the Chernobyl disaster.

The catastrophe that shook the world on April 26, 1986, has gone down in history as the world's worst nuclear disaster when a reactor exploded at the plant in Ukraine.

Two workers died in the explosion itself, but over the next three months 28 firefighters and emergency clean-up workers died from acute radiation sickness, and one died of cardiac arrest.

On Sunday, April 16 members of Bolton's Ukrainian community gathered at St Patrick's Roman Catholic Church on Great Moor Street to commemorate the disaster.

Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain Bolton branch chair Yaroslav Tymchyshyn said: "Let's face it, it was the world's worst man-made disaster that occurred.

"A lot of the ground around Chernobyl was affected by radiation, it was made completely uninhabitable."

He added: "I think people still don't understand is that there are children being born with thyroid cancer as a result of this disaster."

"For Ukrainians it's an important part of our history, no other nation has suffered as much as we have because of it."

Mr Tymchyshyn had visited a hospital himself in Kyiv in 1993 where he saw the long-lasting effects of the disaster.

He said: “Those are innocent children who have done nothing wrong.”

Bolton is home to a significant Ukrainian community, many of them having settled in the years after the Second World War, with many more having joined them over the years.

The Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain helps host a range of events celebrating the community’s heritage and supporting people back in their homeland.

Much of this has become all the more significant since the full scale Russian invasion was launched in 2022.

The Church service last Sunday allowed attendees to pray for those affected by the catastrophe 40 years ago and to reflect on its long-lasting historical significance.

Father Ewen Nebesniak said: “We commemorate all those tragic events, like Chornobyl or anything that highlights Ukrainian culture or celebrates our heritage.”

He added: “Especially in these last few years since Ukraine was invaded by the Russians the urge to conserve our heritage has grown stronger and stronger.”

25. United Kingdom. “Leeds Ukrainian Community Association Set to Host Charity Hike and Eurovision Night to Raise Money for Ukraine,” *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 April 2026.

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By Jennifer Cartwright

British, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian communities are set to come together for a charity hike this May.

The Leeds Ukrainian Community Association is hosting a 12km hike to promote community spirit and raise money to support Ukraine.

The Unity Hike, which has been organised in collaboration with members of the British military, Lithuanian Civil Action, and the Lithuanian Riflemen’s Union in the UK, will begin at Totley Rifle Range in Sheffield at 8:30am on May 16.

Money raised from the hike will be used to fund humanitarian aid for Ukraine including pickup trucks, food, and clothes.

Bernadeta Bagaslauskaitė, Head of Charity at LUCA said: “The war continues and it’s been four years. Ukraine is exhausted and there isn’t much help they can get in.

“These pick up trucks that we fundraise for are used as medivacs which means each of the trucks we deliver saves approximately 50 lives.

“We don’t go with empty cars - we fill them up with food, clothing depending on the season, with vitamins, and anything they need.”

Bernadeta sees the hike as an important opportunity to unite the Ukrainian, British, and Lithuanian community to come together and to show Ukrainians that they are not alone.

“It’s not just about hiking, it’s about learning about each other’s culture and integrating.

“We want people to have more knowledge and see how similar we are. That cultural exchange is hugely important for Ukrainians because they will feel when the war is over that they are already integrated.

“We do this work to show that these people are the same as us, they are neighbours and we should help them now.”

As well as this, the hike aims to be a poignant reminder of the freedom that many Ukrainians do not currently have.

“You’re not only just hiking for the sake of hiking but every step you take on that hill you are showing that you know your values, your morals - you are standing up for Ukrainians who currently can’t hike.

“Ukrainians can’t go on peaceful hikes, you’re doing this now so they could do it again when Ukraine is free again.”

Following the hike, participants are invited to return to the Leeds Ukrainian Community Association for their annual Eurovision party.

The party will see the Eurovision grand finale broadcast on a big screen, as visitors can enjoy music from around the continent, and place guesses on who will win the coveted Eurovision trophy.

As well as this, the Eurovision party will be a chance to indulge in traditional Ukrainian food including varenyky, which are boiled dumplings filled with fillings such as potatoes and cheese.

Ultimately, Bernadeta hopes the Unity Hike will be a chance to show Ukrainians that they are not forgotten, something that will make a “huge difference” to the Ukrainian community.

Four years on from the Russian invasion of Ukraine, she wants the event to be a chance to remember the suffering Ukrainians have experienced and a clear demonstration of support.

Bernadeta said: “You can’t get used to the war. At first, everybody was shocked that it’s happening and thought it’d be over really quickly, however, we are now four years in; four years

of loss, four years of funerals, four years of displacement, four years of not knowing what tomorrow is going to bring.

“The best thing that anyone, Ukrainian or not, can do, is to remind Ukrainians and volunteers that they are not alone.”

LUCA kindly ask that anyone participating in the hike, brings a £5 donation to support their humanitarian mission for Ukraine.

To find out more about the event and get involved, visit LUCA’s Facebook page to learn more.

26. United Kingdom. “Popular Bradford Market to Host a Celebration of Ukrainian Culture,” *Bradford Telegraph and Argus*, 4 April 2026.

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By Harry Williams

A celebration of Ukrainian culture is coming to Darley Street Market.

The one-day event will take place in Bradford on Saturday, April 18, from 10am to 4pm and has been organised by the Bradford branches of the Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain and the Association of Ukrainian Women.

The programme will feature music, dance, crafts, and traditional food in the outdoor Courtyard area of the city centre market.

Visitors will be treated to performances from the Dibrova Ukrainian Male Voice Choir, the Huddersfield Ukrainian Singing Troupe, Ukrainian school children, and Ukrainian musicians who will play the market’s piano.

There will also be dance performances from junior and senior groups, including traditional ribbon dancing.

Stalls will offer traditional embroidery, ceramics, wooden crafts, books, candles, paintings, Ukrainian varenyky (dumplings), and Ukrainian bottled beers.

Workshops will introduce attendees to traditional crafts such as Pysanky (decorated eggs) and Petrikivka painting, a 200-year-old art form recognised by UNESCO.

An exhibition of artwork painted by injured soldiers of the war in Ukraine and a display of retro Ukrainian football shirts and memorabilia will also be on show.

The AUGB said: “We look forward to you joining us to celebrate the richness of Ukrainian culture and heritage.

“Come and enjoy an exciting day of traditional Ukrainian music and dance, indulge in authentic Ukrainian food and beer, and discover beautifully crafted artisanal goods and souvenirs.”

The event will also help raise awareness about Bradford’s Ukrainian community, which dates back to 1947 when Ukrainians arrived to work in the district’s textile mills.

A spokesperson for Bradford Council’s markets team said: “We have an exciting and eclectic programme of events and activities running throughout the year and are delighted to host this event bringing the colour and energy of traditional Ukrainian culture to Darley Street Market.”

More information about upcoming events can be found at bradfordmarkets.com.

27. United Kingdom. “Hundreds Turn Out for Keighley’s Annual Ukrainian Cultural Festival,” *Keighley News*, 1 April 2026.

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By Alistair Shand

SEVERAL hundred people attended Keighley’s third annual Ukrainian Cultural Festival.

The event – held in the Airedale Shopping Centre – featured attractions including music, food and crafts.

It was organised by Olha Zhydetska, together with fellow members of the town's Ukrainian community and a team of volunteers.

“We welcomed around 400 visitors throughout the day,” says Olha.

“The festival brought together refugees, long-standing members of the Ukrainian diaspora, local residents and supporters from across the district.

“Visitors were treated to a lively programme of music – which included a performance by the male choir Dibrova from Bradford, as well as individual performers and young local talent. A special guest was Yuliya Lord, honoured artist of Ukraine, who travelled especially from Huddersfield to perform at the festival.”

There was a wide selection of traditional Ukrainian food, plus tea, coffee and homemade cakes.

28. USA. “Long Before the World Cup, Ukrainian Immigrants Built a Soccer Powerhouse in Philly,” *Npr.org*, 25 June 2026.

By Brian Mann

NORTH WALES, Pa. — Just before game time, Roman Chuprynyak sat in a locker room bent forward, face intense. He ran his hand through stubbly gray hair while giving his team one more pep talk.

“You win,” he shouted in Ukrainian. “There’s no other option, damn it!”

The men, wearing the yellow and blue national colors of Ukraine, roared a cheer and jogged out to the pitch in this suburb just outside Philadelphia.

This isn’t World Cup play. That’s happening in Philadelphia’s big stadium 45 minutes away.

These are two local, ethnic soccer clubs, players with roots in Belarus scrumming on the home pitch of a Ukrainian club called Tryzub. The club’s name is a reference to the trident, Ukraine’s national symbol.

“Everybody calls us Ukis,” Chuprynyak said, grinning with pride. After immigrating to the U.S. as a teenager in 2001, he found his way to Tryzub, where he now works as a coach and an athletic director. “This club has been proven through time

Tryzub, formally known as the Ukrainian American Sport Center, focuses on amateur league play and is home to the Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals. It’s a top-tier amateur team now, but in the 1950s and 1960s, the squad dominated American pro-leagues, during an era when soccer was still largely eclipsed in the U.S. by football, baseball and basketball.

In its heyday, the team, led by Ukrainian refugees from World War II and Stalin’s postwar oppression, won a half-dozen national championships in various American professional leagues. It also convinced big European teams like Manchester United to come play exhibition matches.

“Nobody cared about [soccer] in the '60s except the Ukrainians and these other ethnic teams,” said Yana Pashaeva, who made a documentary about Philadelphia’s deep Ukrainian soccer culture. Her film tracks how members of the club helped lay the foundation of the modern U.S. soccer movement, which began to draw wider popularity in the 1990s.

Through the late 1950s and 1960s, the Philadelphia Ukrainian Nationals soccer team was one of the top pro-league soccer teams in the United States. Immigrants fleeing World War II and Stalin’s oppression brought their love of the game to Pennsylvania, helping to establish soccer as an American sport.

Much of the documentary focuses on a Ukrainian immigrant named Walter Chyzowych, who settled in Philadelphia in 1949. Chyzowych was a star player who helped establish a network of coaching schools and camps around the United States. He later managed the U.S. national team and coached top national squads.

“He had to wash the uniforms for the team himself because they just didn’t have enough resources to hire someone,” Pashaeva said.

Eugene Luciwi, who serves as Tryzub's spokesman and unofficial historian, describes Chyzowych as the "godfather" of American soccer and says immigrants made the current soccer boom possible.

"It became what it is as a result of émigré clubs such as us — and specifically us," Luciwi said.

A soccer culture that helped sustain Ukrainian identity

According to Luciwi, Tryzub and the Ukis also grew into something more than a soccer and sports club. They became one of the anchors of Ukrainian life and identity in Philadelphia.

On one recent day, while soccer players competed on the pitch, there was also a cultural festival, with kids singing Ukraine's national anthem and performing traditional dances in bright embroidered shirts.

"Ukraine's culture and national identity cannot be destroyed," Luciwi said from the stage, before calling for a moment of silence to honor those lost in the war after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Watching from the crowd was Father Taras Naumenko, a Ukrainian Orthodox priest, one of Tryzub's team chaplains and a passionate soccer goalie. "I'm a soccer player, and I still play in a men's league," he said.

According to Naumenko, the club, which helped sustain Ukrainian culture during the Cold War, gained new importance after Russia's invasion.

"It unifies us," he said, gesturing at families picnicking on the grass. "There are many people in this community who've lost relatives, brothers, nephews, fathers, sons."

One of the players on the field was Sasha Ostapchuk, who came to the U.S. a few years ago after the war intensified. He said finding his people and his sport in America made him feel less lonely.

"I was looking for a good team, so I found Ukrainian national team," he said. "It's so far from Ukraine, so good."

Roman Chuprynyak, who played and coached as his team won this local league game five goals to nil, said he's proud his club helped establish soccer in America. He also thinks Tryzub's deep history in America sends a message that his Ukrainian culture can't be erased.

"It's a Uki nation, a Uki family," Chuprynyak said. "There's just no letting that go. That's going to stick here forever."

On that afternoon, Chuprynyak and his Ukrainian side took the win one more time, going four goals to nil in front of their home crowd.

29. USA. “Philadelphia Ukrainian Community Adds to New 30-Meter Painting Inspired by Faith, Resilience,” *CBS Philadelphia*, 29 March 2026.

By Laura Fay, Scott Jacobson
CBS Philadelphia

Members of Philadelphia’s Ukrainian community on Sunday unveiled a large outdoor painting meant to capture the pain of the war and the people’s resilience.

The 30-meter painting titled “Song of Songs of the Ukrainian People” was created this month by professional artists; wounded Ukrainian soldiers receiving medical care in the U.S., students from the Ukrainian School of Philadelphia; Ukraine’s ambassador to the United States, Olha Stefanishyna; and members of the local Ukrainian community. Three artists — Tetyana Myalkovska, a Gold Star mother who lost her son, soldier Mykola Myalkivsky, in the war against Russia; Tetiana Rusetska; and Iryna Semenenko — led the project.

Mialkovska said in an interview posted on the Ukrainian Catholic Archeparchy of Philadelphia website that the mural “draws on the most recognizable symbols of Ukrainian Christianity” and depicts scenes from the Bible such as the birth of Jesus and the Resurrection as well as folk icons.

“It is through art in a special way that we can understand what happens in our human life. And this art expresses both the devastation, the despair, but also the great hope and resilience of the people of Ukraine,” Archbishop Borys Gudziak said.

After the presentation outside the Ukrainian Catholic Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception on North Franklin Street, community members were invited to add their own touches to the canvas.

“With your heart and your creativity, express that this is a country that has always welcomed immigrants, that this is a county that has stood with those who defend democracy, that we are a people under God all together, on all continents. You are invited to make this work of art also yours,” Gudziak said.

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Serge Cipko
Coordinator
Ukrainian Diaspora Studies Initiative
Kule Ukrainian Canadian Studies Centre

Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies
4-30 Pembina Hall
University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta, CANADA T6G 2H8
Email: scipko@ualberta.ca

To subscribe to “Ukrainians Abroad: News and Views” or to unsubscribe, send an email message to scipko@ualberta.ca.