

April 18, 2022

Dear colleagues and friends,

More than 50 days have passed since the beginning of the special military operation of the Russian armed forces in Ukraine. Some important events took place over the past two weeks that I'd like to inform you about.

It is with increasing indignation that Russian trade unions keep on watching how governments, public and political structures in the EU, North America and some other countries, contrary to common sense, their own economic interests, real facts and eyewitness testimonies, continue to impose new sanctions against Russia, its economy, public structures and individual citizens.

The blocking of Russia's gold and foreign exchange reserves in foreign banks, the seizure of accounts of companies and individuals cannot be qualified other than plain robbery. These massive violations of international norms and other actions by the "collective West" are aimed at destroying the Russian economy, destabilizing and, ultimately, changing the political system in our country.

The position of a number of governments, which express their desire for a diplomatic solution to the conflict, for peace and universal security while increasing the supply of different types of weapons, providing financial and political support to the Ukrainian regime, which openly encourages the ideology of Nazism, racism and xenophobia characteristic of the WWII period, can cause nothing else but outrage.

At the same time, according to the latest polls, 79.6% of the Russian population supports President Putin's actions with 74% supporting the military operation in Ukraine.

Our data shows that the level of support for the operation and measures taken by the country's leadership is even higher among trade union members and is approaching 90%. The majority of the working population of Russia believes that our country has embarked on the path of economic and ideological decolonisation against the hegemony of the "collective West" led by the United States.

The Ukrainian armed forces and their nationalistic battalions continue regular shelling of villages and cities of Donbass using heavy artillery and multiple rocket launchers, to which hundreds of children, the elderly and women fall victim. By destroying enterprises and civilian infrastructure in the territory of the Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republics, Ukrainian troops prevent the establishment of peaceful life and normal operation of businesses.

Recently, two atrocious provocations by the Ukrainian regime took place in the town of Bucha near Kiev and at the train station square in the Donbass city of Kramatorsk. In the first case, the town was abandoned by Russian troops on March 30. Four days later, the Ukrainian media disseminated a video showing dead civilians in the streets of Bucha (a bizarre coincidence with *butcher*?). This was done despite earlier reports by Ukrainian officials and the military that the town had been taken without resistance and no mention of any shooting of civilians by Russian troops. European officials enthusiastically took photos against the background of body bags and blamed Russia for that hideous crime, but the next day new amateur footage appeared showing the Ukrainian military laying out dead bodies along the roads.

A few days later, a tactical *Tochka U* missile with cluster munitions exploded over the train station square full of people in the Ukrainian-controlled city of Kramatorsk killing 57 and injuring 109 civilians. The Ukrainian regime and the Western media immediately called it a war crime of Russia. The truth is that this particular type of missile is not in service with the Russian army, and according to the serial number on the wreckage of the missile found at the explosion site, it was established beyond any doubt that it belonged to the Ukrainian Armed Forces, which was also confirmed by foreign journalists who arrived there.

Both these provocations, as well as several others (for instance, the shelling of a maternity hospital in the city of Mariupol), have failed miserably and information about them quickly disappeared from the Western media.

At the same time, the monstrous provocations of the Ukrainian military continue. These include using civilians as human shields and preventing them from escaping through humanitarian corridors; refusal to comply with the Geneva Convention on the Treatment of Prisoners of War, torturing and executing Russian POWs for the camera; calls by the political and state elite of Ukraine to kill Russians on linguistic and ethnic grounds; ISIL-style videos calling for the massacre of Russians and much more that falls into the category of war crimes, ethnic massacres and genocide of civilians.

In March and April, the FNPR faced enormous pressure from a number of ITUC affiliates, the purpose of which was to compel the FNPR to retract its statements in support of President Putin's course and condemn the military operation in Ukraine. The discussion of these issues at the ITUC General Council and PERC Executive Committee meetings initiated by Ukrainian trade unions and actively supported by representatives of a number of European trade union federations took place in a totally unacceptable form. Furthermore, the ITUC Constitution did not serve as an obstacle to unsubstantiated unilateral, hostile rhetoric containing blatant lies.

Proceeding from its national interests, not willing to listen to the barrage of baseless allegations and lies at the ITUC statutory bodies' meetings, the FNPR decided to suspend its membership in the ITUC. A copy of our letter to that effect is attached herewith.

We will continue to fight for the rights of our trade union members, actively cooperate with the trade unions of BRICS and other friendly countries, and we will hold mass May Day events in support of international solidarity of workers. Currently, the All-Russian motor rally organised by the FNPR is taking place under the slogan "A world without Nazism!"

We remain open for any relevant, detailed, exhaustive explanations.

Yours in solidarity,

Evgeny Makarov

Vice-President, FNPR

BRICS National Trade Union Coordinator