

*Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023*

## **Statement on Ukraine's Independence Day**

*August 24, 2023*

Today the people of Ukraine are once more marking their Independence Day, while suffering the all-out assault of Putin's craven war for land and power. For 18 months, Ukrainian families have lived under the daily threat of Russian rockets and the reality of brutal attacks. But the people of Ukraine have refused to break.

On this Independence Day, as they have since Russia first invaded Ukraine in 2014, brave Ukrainian women and men are defending Ukraine from assaults on fundamental principles essential to every nation on the planet: sovereignty and territorial integrity. They are showing the world once more that freedom is worth fighting for.

Independence means the freedom to choose your own future. It's precious. Each year on July 4, Americans celebrate our Independence Day as a time to remember the price we paid for our freedom and all the blessings that flow from it. So today, as Putin continues his brutal war to erase Ukraine's independence and redraw the map of our world by force, Americans all across the country stand united with the people of Ukraine.

The United States will continue our work, together with partners all around the world, to support Ukraine's ability to defend itself against Russia's aggression, to uphold the foundational principles of the U.N. Charter, and to help the Ukrainian people build the secure, prosperous, and independent future they deserve.

Our commitment to Ukraine's independence is unwavering and enduring. That's why the United States and other G-7 nations issued a joint declaration in Lithuania last month pledging to help Ukraine maintain armed forces capable of deterring Russian aggression in years to come, a declaration which over 25 nations have now joined. Together with our partners in Europe, we are supporting Ukraine in their fight for freedom now, and we will help them over the long term.

We are also working with nations everywhere to hold Russian forces accountable for the war crimes and other atrocities they have committed in Ukraine. That includes the forcible removal of thousands of Ukrainian children to Russia. These children have been stolen from their parents and kept apart from their families. It's unconscionable. And today we are announcing new sanctions to hold those responsible for these forced transfers and deportations to account and to demand that Ukrainian children be returned to their families.

I sincerely hope that next year, Ukrainians will be able to celebrate their Independence Day in peace and safety, knowing how their extraordinary courage inspired the world. May Ukraine's Independence Day be a reminder that the forces of darkness and dominion will never extinguish the flame of liberty that lives in the heart of free people everywhere.

NOTE: The statement referred to President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia.

*Categories:* Statements by the President : Ukraine's Independence Day.

*Names:* Putin, Vladimir Vladimirovich.

*Subjects:* Group of Seven (G-7) nations; Independence Day; Russia, conflict in Ukraine; Russia, human rights issues; Russia, President; Ukraine, Russian invasion and airstrikes; Ukraine, U.S. assistance; Ukraine, war refugees, humanitarian situation; Ukraine, Independence Day.

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