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# International Women's Day — Message from the Front Line in Ukraine

Solidarity Collectives

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Ukraine  
2023

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to change. I am proud of you. My close German friends were very worried for my life when they found out that I was going to serve the Ukrainian people, and for some reason they did not mention the slogans about struggle and freedom which we used to shout together at various protests. They tried to persuade me that my decision was wrong and that it was more important to stay alive. I, in turn, wanted them to start donating to fundraisers for the Ukrainian military—this would mean solidarity, a word that people in Western Europe like to use so much. There are still large-scale protests in Germany where people call to stop giving weapons to Ukraine and instead sit at a negotiating table with Russia.

Would you negotiate with a rapist who does not admit his guilt? Would you be able to look in the eyes of raped women, girls, children of Ukraine and tell them to sit at a negotiating table, tell them that they and their sisters don't need weapons to defend themselves and people around them?

Ukraine is a victim who fights back. Help her the way she asks you to. Arm Ukraine and arm Ukrainian women, the Ukrainian people.

Arm Ukraine now!

– *Kira*

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you can find out more about what is Solidarity Collectives and what we do in this article: "No rest til' the last dictator dies" ([edist.ro](http://edist.ro) version)

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Solidarity Collectives is an anti-authoritarian volunteer network formed before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine to help comrades on the front line and civilians affected by the war. "Collectives" isn't merely a name but the essence of our initiative which was joined by various organizations and groups from Ukraine, Germany, Poland, France, US, Netherlands, Canada, and many other countries.

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8 March. A day that symbolizes freedom, a day that motivates us to fight, a day when the voices of feminists can be heard by millions of their sisters who share their path of achieving equality. But the path of Ukrainian women changed radically on 24 February 2022.

The beginning of the war in Ukraine caused an existential shift in the lives of millions of people, their peaceful safe reality went up in the flames of Russian missiles, it was crushed by tanks with "Z" signs on them, shot to death with the civilian residents of Bucha...

Thousands of women decided to resist the aggressors from the East. They joined the Armed Forces of Ukraine to defend their homes, families, friends, loved ones, freedom and the independence of their people.

Our initiative supports eight female fighters who, just two years ago, marched in Marches for Equality in Ukraine and all over the world, and who today invest tremendous effort to defend Ukraine.

Each of them is a hero, each has an incredible story, each of them has sacrificed something, each of them has lost someone. Sometimes you can't believe how much courage, strength, power one person can have. We would like you to hear voices of feminists from the Ukrainian resistance today.

## Swallow

A day of struggle... For over a year now, every day in Ukraine is a day of struggle. A day of struggle against the enemy and the occupier, against fear and desperation, a day of struggle for hope. For me, 8 March has lost some of the meaning it used to have. Any struggle is first and foremost about people. I am writing these lines and imagining if 8 March was organized today...



by who? An empty street, ruined houses, wind whistling, the sound of sirens, missiles flying... 24 February 2022. Most people left, a minority are fighting or volunteering... and each of them has their own traumatic story.

War is scary. War is not romantic at all, it's death, it's ruined lives of millions of people, war is PTSD, it's what will leave a mark on you for your entire life, and many will not survive it at all... Here I'm asking you for a minute of silence in the memory of the comrades who have died. Those who are at the front now need much more support than is discussed. Much more than the media or anyone else says. We need weapons, we need equipment, drones, wings, thermal imagery, medicine and many, many other things. I encourage you to look at reality honestly and soberly, we have not finished this path, it seems long and incredibly thorny. I am calling on you to support the women who fight in Ukraine (not just women, of course, but right now we are talking about March 8), those who have taken up arms to fight the invaders, support them as much as possible. Because it is unbelievably scary and difficult, and we

be obsessed with numbers, so we were expecting an escalation of terror in exactly a year after the full-scale invasion. Also, our minds and bodies are in distress because of retraumatization. To save my sanity in these challenging times, personally I was trying to focus on the fact that most of my closest ones have SURVIVED this year.

Moreover, now I feel much more powerful than in 2022, because I'm a part of the organized and supplied resistance of the Armed Forces of Ukraine. Sooo... I know it's not the end of it, not even close, and that's frustrating for sure, because I hoped this shit was gonna stay in history books and never come out again. And if it happened, it would be stopped immediately. But geopolitics doesn't work like that.

So I just have to continue my resistance and try to be not hard-strong, but resilient. Luckily, as a human rights activist, I kinda know something about it.

Moreover, thanks to my personal experience and the support of my fem/lgbtiq+ sisters\* and brothers\*, I never feel alone and I am getting all best military supplies and lil' heart-warming souvenirs.

And I'm pleased that Ukraine's resistance against the terrorist "Russian state" is still getting a lot of attention worldwide, and our refugees are taken good care of. Thank you for supporting Ukraine in our anti-imperialistic battle!

– Bat

## Kira

I lived in Germany for more than five years. In my last few years there, I learned a lot about German society's views on the history of Eastern Europe. And I did not like what I learned. I did, however, like that people of Eastern European origin fight for these views

So I can understand the part of our society who advocate for canceling this holiday as one of the last remnants of the Soviet Union. Generally, it would be logical to send the “day of girls” after the “day of boys” (23 February) to follow the course of the Russian warship. But there’s a “but,” and not just one. Around the world, 8 March is not a day of spring and beauty, it is a day of struggle for women’s rights. And this is still relevant, given the problems faced by countless women everywhere and in Ukraine in particular. It is especially relevant during the war, when the level of poverty, unemployment, violence and discrimination goes off the charts, and women are the first to suffer from it. So as long as the problems of the struggle for women’s rights are relevant, this day remains relevant as well.

I am at the front now. Just like over 5,000 other women who fight and 60,000 who serve, I am also fighting the Russian aggressor. I want us to defeat this empire of evil as soon as possible, so that our only enemy after the victory is the patriarchy. Which will be defeated, too.

Death to the empire! Death to the patriarchy!  
– *Chimera*

## Bat

1 year at full-scale war. Although, 9 years since it all started with the massacre at Maidan and the escape of our former Russ-simp president Yanukovich.

Of course, I felt an increase of anxiety in me and our society around these days (and it’s still there). Russians are known to



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can overcome it all only by joining our efforts, by being together and keeping our spirits up.

And holidays will return after the victory. They will. I promise!  
With love and solidarity,  
– *Swallow*

## Shadow



This day grew in meaning for me last year. It happened so that accidentally I came to Ukraine to fight on the 8th of March. I didn’t plan that. Everything was too much in chaos, everything was too uncertain and the world seemed to be going too crazy to give any special meaning to any day. But I like the symbolism of it. And it’s easy to count the days I’ve spent here already. War is a very strange thing. The worst

things happen here as well as the best things happen here. Or maybe I should say the best people and the worst people are here.

Many of the best people here are women. Strong women, deserving all the admiration, but usually they are very humble and simple. Very often they are much braver than an average man. Maybe because usually women don’t come here to kill, they come to fight for lives. This is the main reason why there are so many female medics. I am one of them. It doesn’t mean that they hide and don’t take risks. Medics go where someone has already got injured or killed, they come for others, forgetting themselves. I have worked with many female medics. They are not afraid to get killed.

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They are afraid only that they will make a mistake and will not be professional enough to save others. They are afraid to come too late.

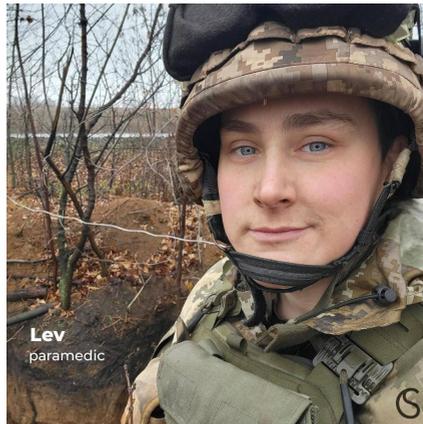
We often get attacked. We often get killed. Just yesterday I lost another friend and comrade. She was just a young girl, she laughed a lot, she loved life, she was beautiful and bright in every meaning. And she was killed while trying to evacuate the injured. There are many others we lost on the way.

I hope that when we all come back home, when the war is over, the history will not turn into glorification of killers. I hope we will remember all the beautiful saviors. I hope that people will remember all the women who sacrificed so much to end this war. Volunteers, medics, fighters... And today, on the 8th of March, I hope you will remember the strongest women who are struggling this very moment here with me.

– *Shadow*

## Lev

Women on this day should believe in our hearts that we do not march as individuals but as a whole in a struggle that all women and LGBTQ+ people endure all around the world in every country, every house, every street and every trench. The same oppression that can take form in all shapes and sizes. From violence by voices or actions that try to take our dignity or make us small. But we are not small!. We are



strong! Throughout history, women have proven at the cost of their very lives that we will not be forgotten, and our lives will not be silenced or ignored.

So on this day, we remember so many who came before us, who fought and died for all of our voices to be heard. And who continue to do so in the battles in the frozen sunflower fields of Ukraine or in the blistering heat and hardened rock of Kurdistan. All of theirs and so many others' memories serve as an example to us all! The courageous fallen! Their lives will always continue to have meaning because we the living refuse to forget them! Because women do not buckle or yield when faced with the cruelty of this world! We push forward together! We scream out together! We LOVE, and we RAGE TOGETHER! So on this day let it be that we march TOGETHER.

With love and rage from a female combat medic in Ukraine.

– *Lev*

## Chimera



I remember I was making a card for my mom for 8 March in second grade. The number 8 was made of dry beans glued to cardboard... I can't imagine anything more kitschy, anything that devalues and distorts this day more than turning it into a "day of spring and beauty," and all these endless awkward cards, tulips, shampoo sets, and drunk parties to celebrate the "decoration of the office team" once a year.