

GMB aid delivered to Ukrainian unions on the frontline



As part of a vital aid mission to Ukraine, a vehicle funded by donations from GMB branches and packed with essential supplies has been delivered directly to the frontline in the Kharkiv region. The mission, organised by the [Ukraine Solidarity Campaign](#) (USC), covered 3,000 kilometres in response to an urgent appeal from the Confederation of Free Trade Unions of Ukraine ([KVPU](#)).

Volunteers – including GMB member Christopher Ford from N90 Branch who has kindly provided this report – delivered three pick-up trucks loaded with medical aid and winter supplies for union members serving on the frontline. One vehicle was handed, along with specialist medical equipment for rescue operations in Donbas, coordinated by GMB member and paramedic Alla Kurhanska. Within hours, the vehicle was dispatched to Donbas, where thousands of miners were trapped underground following Russian bombing. Thanks to swift action, every miner was brought to safety.



Alongside the vehicle, GMB branch donations supplied specialist winter clothing, sleeping bags for extreme cold, heaters, trauma kits, and medical supplies sufficient for two platoons.

In Kharkiv, the delegation visited, the **Kharkiv Professional College of Sports**, home to the primary branch of the Free Trade Union of Education and Science of Ukraine (VPONU). Less than 30 kilometres from the Russian border, the college has produced Olympic champions. On 26 March 2024, it was struck by Iskander ballistic missiles – the third attack since the full-scale invasion – an assault documented as a war crime. ‘Kharkiv is wounded, but it is alive and refusing to surrender,’ said Igor Prikhodko, head of the KVPU’s Kharkiv regional organisation. Despite devastation, 450 pupils continue to train.

KVPU provides humanitarian aid to soldiers’ families, alongside psychological support and resilience training. In partnership with the International Labour Organisation and Belgian unions, they deliver free legal and psychological assistance to members, displaced people, and soldiers.

The aid mission also travelled to Kyiv to attend the Ukraine Progressive Summit, organised by the **Social Democratic Platform**. The event brought together progressives such as **Social Movement**, the labour party **Peoples Power**, trade unionists, LGBT+ campaigners, members of Ukraine’s Parliament, and European MPs to discuss Ukraine’s future.

Olesia Briazgunova, international secretary of KVPU, explained: ‘Our priority is keeping our members safe.’ She warned that the war is being used to push Ukraine towards a neoliberal economy, prioritising markets over workers. For KVPU members fighting on the frontline, it is vital they return to a country committed to social justice and workers’ rights – not oligarchs.

The delegation also visited the **Save Ukraine** centre. Earlier this year, GMB supported a ‘March for the Children’ in London to highlight the plight of 1.6 million children still under occupation and at least 35,000 abducted have been taken to Russia. Save Ukraine rescues children from occupied territories, provides housing, psychological care, and social support. Since the full-scale invasion, the centre has rescued more than 1,300 children. Shockingly, one in ten rescued children has suffered sexual abuse. ‘Russia is specifically targeting children,’ explained Alina Dmytrenko, the centre’s government relations officer. ‘It is part of their aim: to break Ukrainian identity and trust.’ Save Ukraine collects forensic evidence and testimonies, sharing them with prosecutors, Ukraine’s attorney general, and the International Criminal Court.

This mission demonstrates the crucial role of GMB members’ solidarity in delivering aid directly to those who need it most. GMB’s support has helped to save lives but the struggle is far from over. Ukraine’s unions are fighting not only for survival but for a future built on social justice and workers’ rights.

Now more than ever, we must stand with Ukraine’s unions. Solidarity – a lifeline for those defending democracy in Europe – must continue. GMB is affiliated to the Ukraine Solidarity Campaign and GMB Branches can contact the campaign for further information on how they can help the current aid appeal from unions in Ukraine at: **info@ukrainesolidaritycampaign.org**



Press office

07958 156846

press.office@gmb.org.uk

Member requiring help?

Click to contact your local GMB Region

info@gmb.org.uk

