AN HOUR FOR UKRAINE

Stand in solidarity with Ukraine this Christmas.
Switch off your festive lights. Show your support.

We can see your support even in the darkness.
#LightUpUkraine

When: 21st of December, 8 pm your local time

The 21st of December is the darkest day of the year. But darkness for Ukraine began in mid-October, as Russia bombed and shelled the country's civilian energy infrastructure. Over 10 million people will have to go through winter with no electricity, heat, and water, while temperatures are expected to plummet to –20C degrees.

President Zelensky calls for solidarity with Ukraine and its people on the darkest day of the year as Ukraine faces a winter of blackouts and war because of Russia's illegal invasion.

This Christmas we ask the world to renew the unity around Ukraine in a symbolic act of support. We are initiating "60 minutes of darkness" to raise the public's awareness of the humanitarian catastrophe that is taking place in Ukraine and direct them to a fundraising initiative.

Turn off your Christmas lights for an hour and share a moment of reflection with the people of Ukraine.

This shared moment of darkness will remind everyone to stand in solidarity with Ukraine. This hour with no festive lights will be a glimpse of how 10 million people are spending Christmas this winter.

Campaign is part of a $10m fundraising drive for generators for hospitals across Ukraine.

This appeal is led by members of parliament of Ukraine, United for Ukraine coalition of more than 500 MPs and MEPs around the world, 1 Granary, a global creative network, and the UNITED24 ambassadors – Andriy Shevchenko, Oleksandr Usyk, Scott Kelly, Elina Svitolina, Liev Schreiber, and Timothy Snyder.

President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy said:

"When the light shuts off, you always take it as something out of the ordinary. But when you spend four, ten, twenty hours or even days without it, and you start to get used to the darkness – that's the worst thing ever. This means that light is not the only thing they want to take away from you. They aim for everything that is part of your life.

" This is how we live in Ukraine right now – defending ourselves from the enemy who came to destroy us. That is why I am turning to you now, true friends of Ukraine. We need your support! Every doctor who is forced to operate in the dark. Every father and every mother who does everything to give their families what they need – even in the darkness. Every Ukrainian who has faith in freedom, despite the darkness.

"Together we will stop this war! Please search for new ways to help Ukraine! And thank you to everyone who cares about freedom!"

The Archbishop of Canterbury, The Most Revd Justin Welby said:

"In this season of Advent, Christians wait in the darkness for the coming of Christ, who brings light to a cruel and desperate world. Earlier this month, in Ukraine, I saw the suffering of Ukrainians who face the violence of the Russian regime, in a dark and cold winter without electricity.

"Jesus coming into our world shares in our life and our sorrows, and we are called to do the same with our brothers and sisters.

"That's why the lights will be turned off at Lambeth Palace at 8pm on Wednesday and why I urge everyone to donate what they can to the UNITED24 initiative, to help raise funds to pay for hospital generators.

"May this small action be a sign that, even in the deepest darkness, the light of hope and love cannot be extinguished."

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan said:

 "2022 will be a year defined by the heroism of the Ukrainian people in defending their homeland against President Putin's illegal invasion.

"Whilst we all prepare for Christmas festivities this hour of darkness reminds us all of the hardships and privations being faced by ordinary Ukrainians every day as they live without power, heat and water in freezing temperatures.

"On this shortest day and every day, London stands in solidarity with Ukraine."

How to support:

• Switch off your Christmas lights in the squares and streets for one hour at 8 pm local time on the 21st of December
• Encourage city landmarks (e.g. museums, theaters, city halls) to join in and switch off festive and non-essential lights in solidarity with Ukraine
• Encourage citizens to join the campaign: switch off Christmas decorations and electricity in homes - pause, reflect, and recognise the impact of what's happening in Ukraine
• Spread awareness about the campaign through social media channels and local press
• Direct to UNITED24 Fundraising Initiative

Initiators:

UNITED24
Members of the Parliament of Ukraine
1 Granary, a global creative network
War Against War, an alternative media organisation

With the support of:

United for Ukraine ([U4U](U4U)) - coalition of over 500 MPs and MEPs of different countries
The Mayor of London's office

An Hour for Ukraine is an act of solidarity with the people of Ukraine who will be spending this Christmas in darkness. They are currently facing their hardest battle so far: a freezing and dark winter. If there was ever an urgent need for help during this war, it is most pressing now.

Participating cities:

Paris, New York, Sydney, Warsaw, Prague, Edinburgh, Liverpool, Reykjavik, Sofia, Ottawa, Helsinki. More to be announced soon.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

UNITED24 - A fundraising platform, initiated by the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. It is the central venue for charitable donations in support of Ukraine.

During the first 7 months of operation, UNITED24 collected more than 245 million dollars from citizens of 110 countries worldwide. Among UNITED24 ambassadors are famous athletes – Andriy Shevchenko, Elina Svitolina and Oleksandr Usyk, creative director of Balenciaga – Demna, American actors – Liev Schreiber and Mark Hamill, music band – Imagine Dragons, singer and actress – Barbra Streisand, astronaut – Scott Kelly, and historian – Timothy Snyder.

100 per cent of the funds raised go to the official accounts of the National Bank of Ukraine to cover verified needs. An auditor, Deloitte Ukraine, reports quarterly.

UNITED FOR UKRAINE (U4U) - Network of over 500 politicians and experts committed to supporting Ukraine as it defends against Russian aggression.

The network has been initiated by Andrius Kubilius, Member of the European Parliament, former Prime Minister of the Republic of Lithuania, together with an international cross-party coalition of MEPs and members of national parliaments.

1 GRANARY - a global creative network connecting a worldwide community of designers, photographers, stylists, writers, and educators. Through its media, education and business support arms it is dedicated to making a positive change within the creative industry.

WAR AGAINST WAR - Progressive Ukrainian alternative media that is fighting against disinformation and propaganda.