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CEC STATEMENT ON UKRAINE
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GMB unequivocally condemns Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.

We believe that the invasion was an appalling and illegal act that has brought destruction and terror to the citizens of this independent sovereign nation.

We condemn in absolute terms the crimes against humanity that have been committed against Ukrainian civilians since 24 February.

We note that, under Vladimir Putin, the Russian regime represses the rights of trade unionists, and that the rights of trade union members have been suppressed in Luhansk, Donetsk, and Crimea since 2014.

We further note the appeals by the democratically elected Ukrainian government for direct support from other states; and from Ukrainian trade unions for practical assistance to protect workers and aid refugees fleeing slaughter and oppression.

We recognise the contributions that GMB branches and members have made in response those appeals; including to the ITUC fund organised on behalf of the Ukrainian FPU and KVPU trade union centres.

We recognise also that GMB members stood ready to build missile boats for the Ukrainian Navy; that cuts to spending on UK defence manufacturing jobs have hurt workers and the UK’s ability to aid Ukraine; and we believe that increased UK defence spending is needed in response to growing international threats and to uphold the UK’s international responsibilities.
We further believe that workers throughout the world share enduring common bonds and that there is more that unites us than divides us.

GMB expresses:

- Our support for the victims of this military aggression and solidarity with our trade union brothers and sisters across Ukraine;

- Our support for civil rights in Russia, including labour rights, that are denied under Putin’s regime.

GMB calls for:

- An immediate withdrawal of Russian forces;

- The further development of direct links between GMB and Ukrainian trade unions, and where possible with independent Russian trade unionists, and for the TUC to also take these steps;

- The provision of moral and material aid from the UK to Ukraine, including the means of self-defence - the right to which is enshrined under international law;

- A reconstruction programme that protects the rights of Ukrainian workers;

- A peaceful end to the conflict that respects the territorial integrity of Ukraine and can carry the support of the Ukrainian people.