

Roger Waters delivers impassioned speech at the UN demanding an end to the war in Ukraine

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International rock music star and founding member of the renowned rock band Pink Floyd, Roger Waters, addressed the United Nations Security Council via remote video stream on Wednesday and called for an immediate ceasefire in the US-NATO proxy war against Russia in Ukraine.

Waters spoke as an artist imbued with and true to his deep democratic convictions.

Waters began his fourteen-and-a-half-minute briefing by saying he was speaking at the UN to express what he believed to be “the feelings of countless of our brothers and sisters all over the world.”

He said he was “profoundly honored to be offered the singular opportunity” to bring these views into the UN during a session devoted to the possibilities for peace in war-torn Ukraine, especially in light of the “increasing volume of weapons arriving in that unhappy country.”

Waters said that those he was speaking for “make up a voiceless majority” who wish to live in peace, “in conditions of parity that give us the real opportunity to look after ourselves and our loved ones.”

He stated clearly that the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation was illegal, saying, “I condemn it in the strongest possible terms.” He continued, “Also, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was not unprovoked. So I also condemn the provocateurs in the strongest possible terms,” adding, “There, that’s got out of the way.”

Waters delivered his remarks during the agenda item “Threats to international peace and security,” which had been requested by Russia to discuss “the prospects for the peaceful settlement of the crisis around Ukraine in the context of the increasing supplies of Western armaments,” according to an official UN Security Council press statement.

The UN press release said the briefing was being held

“against the backdrop of a raft of announcements of new military aid to Ukraine.” It continued: “In January and February, several countries—including Germany, the UK, and the US—agreed to deliver tanks, such as the German-made Leopard 2 tank, and sophisticated military equipment to Ukraine.” It said that Waters was “expected to criticize the supply of weapons to Ukraine.”

In a tweet on Tuesday, Russian First Deputy Representative to the UN Dmitry Polyanskiy confirmed, “we invited as a briefer famous British Musician and rock-musician@Rogerwaters” to the session. While some media outlets claimed that Waters’ invitation by Moscow meant that he would be speaking “on Russia’s behalf,” the content of his speech makes clear that this is not at all what took place.

During his eloquent remarks, without mentioning the US specifically, Waters said the voiceless majority is concerned that “your wars will destroy the planet that is our home and, along with every other living thing, we will be sacrificed on the altar of two things: profits from the war to line the pockets of the very, very few and the hegemonic march of some empire or other towards unipolar world domination.”

Waters made numerous references to the threat of a third world war and nuclear annihilation as the inevitable product of the imperialist drive for global hegemony. He said, “That road leads only to disaster. Everyone on that road has a red button in their briefcase and, the further we go down that road, the closer the itchy fingers get to that red button and the closer we all get to Armageddon.”

He asked the five permanent members of the UN Security Council (China, France, Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States), “What are your goals? What is the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow? Bigger profits for war industries? More power globally?

A bigger share of the global cake?... Does not a bigger share of the cake mean less for everyone else?"

Significantly, Waters drew a parallel between "our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and elsewhere who, through no fault of their own, find themselves in dire and often deadly circumstances." In Ukraine, he said, they may be soldiers or civilians facing a warzone of "barbed wire and watch towers and walls and enmity," or they might be in a city like New York, where they "can still find themselves in dire straits."

He said, "Maybe, somehow, however hard they worked all their lives, they lost their footing on the slippery, tilting deck of the neo-liberal capitalist ship we call life in the city and fell overboard to end up drowning. Maybe they got sick, maybe they took out a student loan, maybe they missed a payment... but now they live on the street in a pile of cardboard, maybe even within sight of this United Nations building."

Waters concluded his comments with a call for universal human rights and an immediate ceasefire in Ukraine, "No ifs, no buts, no ands. Not one more Ukrainian or Russian life is to be spent, not one. They are all precious in our eyes. So, the time has come to speak truth to power."

Waters then said we have a message "from all the refugees, in all the camps, a message from all the slums and favelas, a message from all the homeless on all the cold streets and all the earthquakes and floods on earth... from the 4 billion in the voiceless majority, enough is enough, we demand change."

Waters appealed directly to Biden, Putin and Zelensky to "please change course now," and he then imagined what it would be like if his call were followed, saying, "We have finally been heard in the corridors of power. The bullies in the schoolyard have agreed to stop playing nuclear chicken. We are not going to die in a nuclear holocaust after all, at least not today."

As of this writing, none of the major US daily newspapers (*New York Times*, *Washington Post* or *Wall Street Journal*) or cable news networks (CNN, MSNBC or Fox News) have reported on Waters' remarks.

Even though the deputy UN ambassador for the US, Richard Mills, issued a cynical statement acknowledging Waters' briefing and questioning his "qualifications to speak to us as an expert briefer on arms control or European security issues," the corporate media outlets in the US have, so far, refused to even mention his remarks.

Reuters carried a short news item on the speech and was forced to report that Waters condemned "Moscow's

invasion of its neighbor as illegal," while also reporting "though adding he believed it was provoked—and calling for a ceasefire." Others reporting the event, such as *Rolling Stone* and the *Guardian*, wrote despicably that Waters "reflected a pro-Russian bent," and heavily quoted the Ukrainian ambassador to the UN, who said the musician was spreading "Russian misinformation and propaganda."

Waters is among a very few artists and musicians who have maintained a principled anti-war position on the actions of the US and NATO in Ukraine without supporting Russia. He has refused to be browbeaten into supporting the narrative of the US State Department and intelligence agencies about the origins and the reasons for the war in Ukraine.

Although he did not go into it in his UN speech, Waters has previously discussed the years-long imperialist provocations against Russia that lie behind the military action taken by the Putin regime in Ukraine that began one year ago.

The UN speech took place amid an increase in the public campaign against Waters by pro-imperialist and anti-Russian forces, who have attempted to cancel performances on the European leg of his "This Is Not a Drill" world concert tour. Most recently, as Waters reported through his social media channels, an effort has been mounted to force the cancellation of three concerts in Germany in May that are already 85 percent sold out.

The campaign against Waters in Germany is a combination of attempting to block the anti-war message at the core of the performance and a smear campaign accusing him of anti-Semitism for his defense of Palestinians' rights against the crimes of the Israeli apartheid regime. Waters responded to the campaign against him in Germany in a lengthy interview with *Berliner Zeitung*, which he translated into English and posted on his website.



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