

Australian and New Zealand students and youth demand freedom for Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk

Our reporters
14 August 2026

The following resolution was passed at meetings of students and young people called by the International Youth and Students for Social Equality's (IYSSE) in Sydney, Melbourne, Newcastle, and Wellington, held between August 12–14, 2026.

The International Youth and Students for Social Equality condemns the August 10 sentencing of Bogdan Syrotiuk, a 27-year-old Ukrainian socialist and leading member of the Young Guard of Bolshevik-Leninists, to 15 years' imprisonment by a fascistic court in the Nikolaev region.

Bogdan was denied urgently needed medical treatment for over a year, and every day of imprisonment threatens his life.

Bogdan has committed no crime. The case contains no act of treason—no espionage, sabotage or collaboration with a military force. He was convicted for political articles published on the *World Socialist Web Site* which opposed both the Putin regime's invasion of Ukraine and the US-NATO proxy war, exposed the glorification of Nazi collaborators by the Zelensky regime and called for the unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers.

The verdict criminalises socialist and antiwar political speech. The court ordered the destruction of his socialist books, leaflets and programmatic documents—the methods of a fascist regime.

The frame-up is a warning of the assault on democratic rights internationally. The fight to free Bogdan is inseparable from the global struggle against imperialist war, dictatorship and fascism.

The IYSSE demands Bogdan Syrotiuk's immediate and unconditional release and the annulment of this fraudulent verdict. His fate cannot be left to courts which have demonstrated their contempt for democratic rights. Bogdan's freedom will be won through the mobilisation of the international working class and youth.

We call on student and youth organisations, trade unions, civil-liberties groups and antiwar movements to take up

Bogdan's case: pass resolutions, issue public statements and sign and circulate the petition for his freedom.

Members and supporters of the IYSSE must make this campaign a priority: organise meetings and discussions, bring the resolution to other clubs and organisations, and build the international movement that alone can secure Bogdan's freedom.

The IYSSE has also received numbers of statements from students and youth opposing the frame-up of Bogdan Syrotiuk and calling for his release.

Gabrielle, studying social work in Sydney, denounced the “undemocratic prosecution of Bogdan Syrotiuk on the grounds of lack of evidence for his charges, the dismantling of his basic rights outlined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, and the precedent this case will set for future cases, if his sentencing is not overturned. Both in Ukraine and internationally.”

Unless the conviction and sentence is overturned, she said, it “will further the decline of democratic rights, stifling any opposition against war.”

Emily, a law and politics student at Victoria University of Wellington (VUW), said: “Bogdan Syrotiuk has not committed any crime. He has been made a criminal because of his opposition to both the war of the Putin regime against Ukraine and the United States led proxy war against Russia.

“Suppressing political speech, book burning, and withholding medical care from political prisoners are policies that define an authoritarian regime, not a democratic one. Bogdan's release cannot be achieved through corrupt judicial processes. We must rely on international solidarity movements by workers and young people.”

Jorjia, a VUW student of environmental science, said: “I believe that the recent sentencing of Bogdan Syrotiuk to 15 years of imprisonment is fundamentally unjust and constitutes a frame-up and an assault on democratic rights. The fight for Bogdan's freedom is in the hands of the

international working class, so we must mobilise to secure his freedom.”

Mitya, a young call centre worker in Adelaide, called for “the annulment of the barbarous prison sentence against Bogdan Syrotiuk, a comrade who merely opposed war. I condemn the Ukrainian government for its warmongering, rehabilitation of fascists like Bandera, as well as its 2015 ban of communism and any political organisation of the working class. Other than being a puppet of NATO-American imperialism, Kyiv answers to the whims of capitalist oligarchs.

“Free Bogdan Syrotiuk from the veritable death sentence of 15 years in inhumane Ukrainian prisons! Zelensky does the bidding of the United States war machine, banning political opponents in the process; Bogdan Syrotiuk, on the other hand, calls for the unity of the Russian and Ukrainian working class to stop the drive to World War III.

“If the courts read the *World Socialist Website* articles they cited, they would realise that Bogdan Syrotiuk calls for an end to the system that creates war.”

Cameron, a chemistry student from VUW, wrote that the sentencing of Bogdan was one of many actions by governments aimed at “suppressing the voices of workers and youth in countries around the world who are against the imperialist actions of their own countries and others.”

He compared it to the arrest of students for demanding that their universities divest from Israel and stop supporting the genocide of the Palestinian people, and the imprisonment of anti-ICE protesters in the United States.

“Bogdan has committed no crime, as certified by [more than] one criminologist reviewing the supposed ‘evidence’ against Bogdan: the 6 articles he posted on the WSWs that, essentially, made Ukrainian Nazi war ‘heroes’ look bad.

“This suppression of opposing voices and political ideologies is distinctly fascistic in nature,” Cameron said, adding that it undermines the claim that the Zelensky regime is “fighting for democracy.”

Isaac, a young worker who attended the meeting in Newcastle, said: “When war happens, the mask of democracy slips off, and it reveals exactly what kind of brutal power the state is willing to enact to keep itself alive.

“The charges against Bogdan are a fraud. The first forensic criminologist to examine Bogdan’s writings found no statements that could be construed as supporting Russian aggression.

“The Zelensky regime has sentenced Bogdan Syrotiuk to 15 years in prison—not because he is guilty of sedition, but because he represents a large and growing layer of disaffected Ukrainians who are done with the war. Bogdan’s actual position is that Russian and Ukrainian workers should unite to overthrow the bourgeoisie in a collective struggle.

“I call upon workers, students and young people everywhere to oppose this sentencing and sign the petition for his release. But the fascist Zelensky regime will not be moved by petitions alone. The only way Bogdan Syrotiuk will be freed is through the building of rank-and-file committees and the mobilization of the international working class for socialist revolution.”

Claire, a young health worker in regional Victoria, said: “The arrest and sentencing of our comrade Bogdan Syrotiuk to 15 years in prison by the Ukrainian courts is a crime against democracy and against humanity.

“This arrest is made on baseless claims of treason, when in fact the Zelensky government is scrambling to silence increasing opposition to the drive to war, in Ukraine and globally.

“Bogdan’s only crime is calling for a united front amongst the working class in Ukraine and Russia, rather than submitting to the nationalist war drive that pits Ukrainian and Russian workers against one another for the benefit of their respective ruling classes.

“Under a truly democratic government, Bogdan’s words would be protected speech, but the fascistic Zelensky government sees this call for the threat that it is: a direct challenge to the entire basis of its war machine, and its function as a proxy of US imperialism against Russia.

“I call upon my fellow members of the youth and working class to join the fight of the WSWs, answer Bogdan’s call and end his imprisonment. War abroad and war on the working class can be stopped. Free Bogdan Syrotiuk!”



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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