

Australian Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee demands freedom for Bogdan Syrotiuk

Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee
27 August 2026

The Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee (HWRFC) recently convened an emergency meeting and passed a resolution unanimously condemning the conviction and sentencing of Bogdan Syrotiuk, a 27-year-old Ukrainian socialist, to 15 years' imprisonment.

The HWRFC includes doctors, nurses, pathology and disability workers and allied health professionals from across Australia. The committee brings health workers together across the professional divides, and across the public and private sectors on the basis of a common class interest and independent of, and in opposition to, the trade-union bureaucracies and the corporate health employers they serve.

The resolution stated:

"We call for the immediate and unconditional release of Bogdan Syrotiuk, and for the annulment of the 10 August 2026 verdict, on the basis that his conviction rests on the criminalisation of political expression and that Bogdan's health and life are at risk in detention.

"No act of espionage, sabotage, or collaboration with any military force has been presented as evidence against him. The basis of the conviction was six articles written for the *World Socialist Web Site*. Bogdan is not being targeted for any genuine criminal act, but for expressing oppositional political views that the state has chosen to criminalise.

"In his articles, Bogdan explicitly opposes the Russian invasion and the Putin regime, as well as the Zelensky regime. His calls for the socialist unity of Ukrainian and Russian workers against the capitalist oligarchs in both Russia and Ukraine and against the US-NATO war being prosecuted on Ukrainian soil.

"Reports indicate that, since his arrest in April 2024,

Bogdan has been denied urgently needed medical treatment, despite deteriorating health. In Ukraine's penitentiary system—where detainees are confined to cells for up to 23 hours a day, where overcrowding and inadequate food and water are routine, and where the United Nations has documented torture and a rising toll of deaths in custody—a 15-year sentence is a direct threat to his life.

"Health workers must understand the connection between the struggle they face every day and this political persecution. The persecution of individuals for their political views undermines democratic rights and the ability of workers everywhere to oppose war and injustice.

"His imprisonment is meant to terrorise all those who oppose imperialist war—in Ukraine, in Australia, and internationally. If the Zelensky regime can jail a socialist for his writings with the backing of Western governments, no opponent of war is safe."

The HWRFC resolved to campaign among health workers, in hospitals, clinics and workplaces, to build support for Bogdan's freedom—through resolutions, social media, workplace discussions, and participation in the international campaign organised by the *World Socialist Web Site* and the International Workers Alliance of Rank-and-File Committees.

During the discussion several attendees voiced their concern about Bogdan's welfare and asked how he could be freed. The meeting outlined the perspective that Bogdan's freedom can and must be won through the mobilisation of the international working class.

Others drew parallels with the attacks on anti-war opponents internationally and the ongoing persecution of health workers in Australia who have been

disciplined or threatened with deregistration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency for publicly denouncing Israel's genocidal war against Palestinians in Gaza.

Margaret, a mental health nurse with decades of experience who was involved in the years-long campaign to free WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange, commented during the meeting:

"This young man is immensely courageous in speaking out against war. His persecution is setting a precedent against anyone who opposes any war and a warning to all. This is not just a health workers issue. This is a humanitarian issue and an attack on democratic rights worldwide."

After the meeting several of attendees wrote statements of support for the campaign for Bogdan's freedom.

Mark, a retired nurse from Queensland, stated: "The imprisonment of Bogdan Syrotiuk is a blatant attack on democratic values and freedom of speech by a regime that has declared martial law and refuses to hold elections. All governments supporting the Ukraine regime and the imprisonment of Bogdan are guilty of war crimes and crimes against humanity. We must build international socialism for world peace and ending poverty."

Chandra, a hospital caterer from Melbourne, wrote: "I condemn the persecution of the Ukrainian socialist Bogdan Syrotiuk by the Ukrainian Security Services in 2024 and the recent sentencing of him to 15 years of imprisonment by a Ukrainian court. This undemocratic act was taken against him, for his writings advocating that Russian and Ukrainian workers unite against the war and criticizing the glorification of Ukrainian fascistic collaborators. I demand his immediate and unconditional release."

John, a clinical scientist, said: "Health workers both in Australia and globally need to rally behind Bogdan Syrotiuk and call for his release. He has been sentenced to prison for calling for the end of war by appealing to the Ukrainian and Russian working class to unite against the Zelensky and Putin regimes. This objective and principled stand, together with revealing the re-emerging fascist ideology behind the Zelensky government with full support of NATO, is a defence of the working class of this region as it suffers from the

horrors of war.

"This is a war of imperialism designed by both the US and European ruling elite, where Putin and the Russian Government's answer was a reactionary invasion of Ukraine. The working class is organically hostile to war. This has been seen in the working class globally resisting, through protest against the genocide in Gaza.

"Health workers, like Bogdan have come under attack by the ruling establishment as it attempts to suppress resistance—health workers have been threatened, doxed and reported to the medical board due to their public opposition to the Gaza genocide.

"This why workers in Australia should support the Health Workers Rank-and-File Committee's call for the immediate freeing of Bogdan, while advancing the working-class organisation to fight against imperialism and wider war that occurs in lock step with attacks on healthcare and healthcare workers."



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