



MEDIA RELEASE

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Community concerns ignored: Ukrainians protest final screening of film *Russians at War* on 14 February

Despite weeks of community outrage, Australian-Ukrainians and their supporters will rally in Sydney today **14 February**, protesting the final screening of Kremlin-aligned propaganda film, *Russians at War* during the Antenna Documentary Film Festival.

Protest location: 5:45pm, Ritz Cinema, 43 St Pauls Street, Randwick.

A young Ukrainian defender Nazar (call sign “Капа”), who recently arrived in Australia for medical treatment and spoke yesterday at Parliament House in Canberra, will attend to give a personal account of what “Russians at War” really do.

Kateryna Argyrou, Co-Chair of the Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations, expressed the community’s shared outrage at the decision to proceed with screenings.

“Over the past few weeks, the AFUO has worked tirelessly to educate the Antenna Documentary Film Festival and its sponsors on the significant dangers of screening blatant Kremlin-aligned propaganda in Australia, and we are disappointed that they have chosen to ignore our concerns,” said Ms. Argyrou.

“We raised their concerns with the festival on multiple occasions, as did the Ukrainian Ambassador to Australia and the Ukrainian Council of NSW (UCNSW). More than 1,400 concerned community members joined a letter-writing campaign objecting to the screening.

“Our protest at today’s final screening of *Russians at War* sends a clear message not only to the Antenna Festival, but also to Ukraine’s supporters here in Australia that the threat of foreign interference in Australia is real and present — something that should concern everyone.

“Artistic expression is valuable - but propaganda is not art,” said Ms Argyrou.

Protesters peacefully attending the screening of *Russians at War* on 6 February were harassed online by pro-war activists, threatening harm via popular social messaging app Telegram.

“The Ukrainian community in Australia has a long history of peaceful protest and advocacy, which has brought about positive change,” said Ms Argyrou.

“We were extremely concerned about online threats made to protestors involved in Monday’s campaign, and continue to work closely with the NSW Police Hate Crime Unit to ensure our protest on 14 February remains safe for all.”

“I would like to personally thank our resilient Ukrainian-Australian community for speaking out on this important issue, and protesting against Kremlin-aligned propaganda in Australia,” said Ms Argyrou.

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Additional facts about the film

A distorted narrative

Russians at War claims to offer an alternative perspective on the conflict, yet it does so by encouraging sympathy for invading Russian soldiers while failing to acknowledge the brutal realities of their actions and their active participation in a genocidal war. The film's approach creates a false equivalence between aggressor and victim, undermining the historical and legal truths about Russia's invasion of a sovereign nation.

Questionable credentials and state influence

The documentary's director, Anastasia Trofimova, asserts her independence as a journalist. However, her background includes work with Russia Today—a state-controlled outlet notorious for spreading misinformation and manipulating global narratives, and banned in multiple democratic nations. Furthermore, Trofimova's seven-month embedding with a Russian military unit in occupied Ukrainian territory was conducted she claims without permission from the Russian Ministry of Defence—a detail that is significant and difficult to believe, as independent journalists are typically not granted access to the front lines without Kremlin approval. Trofimova has also referred to Russian soldiers active in Ukraine as 'heroes'. Coupled with the film's editing being completed in Russia, there are grave concerns about its honesty, integrity, objectivity, and its function as a vetted piece of Russian state propaganda.

Opposition from the Ukrainian community and beyond

Key stakeholders have voiced their disapproval:

- The Australian Federation of Ukrainian Organisations (AFUO), along with the Ukrainian Council of NSW (UCNSW) and Ukrainian Ambassador Vasyl Myroshnychenko, have all strongly opposed the screening.
- More than 1,350 protest emails from members and supporters of the Australian-Ukrainian community have been sent to festival organisers and their sponsors.
- In Ukraine, the state-funded cultural advocacy agency—the Ukrainian Institute—has [condemned the film](#) as an attempt to whitewash the crimes committed by Russian soldiers and to absolve them of responsibility.
- The Ukrainian Government has noted that Trofimova's unauthorised travel to occupied Ukrainian territories constitutes a violation of Ukrainian legislation, rendering any platform that features this film complicit in breaching legal norms.

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