

Taiwan: Rally Held to Commemorate One-Year Anniversary of Russian Invasion of Ukraine

Sunday 26 February 2023, by [HIOE Brian](#) (Date first published: 25 February 2023).

A RALLY WAS held this afternoon at Liberty Plaza in Taipei to commemorate the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, organized by Taiwan Stands with Ukraine. The rally involved a number of Taiwanese and Ukrainian speakers, with interpretation in both English and Mandarin. Around 150 to 200 were present for the rally.

Participants gathered at Liberty Plaza starting at 1:30 PM, despite cold weather and light rain. The rally itself began at 2 PM, with the singing of the Ukrainian national anthem. Afterward, a moment of silence was held for those that have died during the invasion.



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Taiwan Stands with Ukraine, the main organizer of the rally, was formed in the aftermath of the invasion. As the moderators of the event stated, to date, the organization has raised 1.5 million NT for Ukraine through fundraising efforts. Fundraising efforts have included everything from cultural fairs for Ukraine to dance nights. Moreover, daily gatherings to wave the Ukrainian flag in urban areas, to remind of the ongoing war, have been held by Taiwan Stands with Ukraine and Ukrainians in Taiwan since the start of the invasion.



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Among the speakers at the rally were Taiwanese politicians such as Taipei city councilor Miao Poya

of the SDP, Claire Wang, chair of the NPP, and Hsieh Pei-fen, the head of the International Affairs department of the DPP. The three brought up how Putin likely did not expect Ukraine to be able to resist beyond three days when the invasion began, but how Ukraine has endured for over a year, in spite of the many deaths that have occurred at the hands of Russian armed forces. In her comments, Miao stated that even as Ukrainians have sometimes thanked Taiwan for support, Taiwan should in fact thank Ukrainians for drawing a line in the sand for democracies worldwide in resisting authoritarianism. Hsieh Pei-fen cited how some Taiwanese have traveled to Ukraine to directly assist Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Furthermore, comments by speakers touched upon how Russia's military aggression has left many Ukrainians to endure the harsh winter without heat or energy.



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Other Taiwanese speakers included Shih Yi-hsiang, the secretary-general of the Taiwan Association for Human Rights, who touched on Taiwan's history of democratization in connection to Ukraine in his comments, as well as Jason Liu, the author of a book on Ukraine. Liu spoke about his experiences in Ukraine, including meeting a priest that persisted with efforts to hold funerals for the dead in order to ensure that they would not be forgotten. Some Taiwanese that had fought in Ukraine were present at the rally. Hong Kong groups, too, were present at the rally with Black Bauhinia flags. Taiwanese interpreters for the rally included Aurora Chang and Yang Kang.

Ukrainian speakers included Olga Kulish, the founder of Team Taiwan-Ukraine, Yurri Poita, an analyst at the Institute for National Defense and Security Research, and Mariia Tonkovyd, co-founder of Divchata Power, which fundraises to support women and children affected by the war. Poita spoke of where Taiwan has aided Ukraine, including suspending exports of semiconductors to Russia, and donations of needed supplies. Kulish brought up in her comments how the war had actually begun in 2014 with the occupation of the Donbas region of Ukraine, in the aftermath of the 2014 Revolution of Dignity and Euromaidan demonstrations. Tonkovyd stated that fundraising efforts have led to more than 200,000 NT donated to her project. Closing comments by moderator Alex Khomenko thanked all those who have sought to support Ukraine to date, while Aurora Chang spoke of her perspective as a Taiwanese person that stands in support of Ukraine.

As the event ended, speakers that were still present were invited to go up to take a photo. Likewise, all those who had supported Ukraine were also invited up for a photo. A large banner of the Ukrainian flag was unfurled and as Ukrainian music was played, a child began dancing in front of the banner.

The invasion of Ukraine has prompted a great deal of reflection in Taiwan, particularly given the geopolitical threat that Taiwan faces from China. It may not be surprising that many Taiwanese see strong parallels between Taiwan and Ukraine, particularly since Russia has justified its invasion on the basis of the claim that Ukraine does not have a distinct culture, language, or history from that of Russia. To this extent, solidarity rallies have been held in Taiwan for Ukraine since the start of the invasion—but one year on, the struggle is far from over.

Brian Hioe

