

Statement of the Anti War Committee of Kyrgyzstan

Wednesday 24 May 2023, by [Anti-War Committee of Kyrgyzstan](#) (Date first published: 21 May 2023).

In this comprehensive analysis, the [Anti-War Committee of Kyrgyzstan](#) unpacks the complex dynamics of wartime challenges, exploring the intertwined influences of nationalism, capitalism, and colonial histories in exacerbating regional conflicts. The authors delve into the critical importance of collective discourse, international solidarity, and the power of anti-war movements in paving a path to peace, informed by a diverse range of perspectives including leftist, anti-imperialist, and feminist viewpoints.

The Anti-War Committee of Kyrgyzstan brings together various civil sector organisations and activists with leftist, anti-colonial, anti-imperialist, and feminist positions. We are confident that collective discussions, the development of joint positions on the challenges of wartime, and the coordination of joint practical and solidarity actions can not only increase the effectiveness of our individual efforts but can also serve as a form of solidarity and mutual support in the current conditions.

Since the beginning of the war in Ukraine, many of us have felt powerless and devastated. It seems to us that our many years of activism, research, and theoretical efforts aimed at the struggle for equality and social justice have been devalued and rendered useless in the face of brute force of arms. This feeling of helplessness and disorientation is justified and understandable. But we are uniting our efforts to overcome it. War is a concentration of dehumanising violence, inequality, and oppression—that is, everything that we have been fighting all these years. Our knowledge and experience, gleaned in this struggle in peacetime, do not lose their significance in war conditions but, on the contrary, acquire special value.

War exacerbates all existing contradictions and polarises society. Emotional reactions often block opportunities for analytical work. One of our main tasks is to preserve, in these conditions, the ability to think critically and develop positions, both political and practical, through joint efforts. We unequivocally condemn Russian aggression against Ukraine and express our sympathy and solidarity to those affected by the hostilities. Taking advantage of the privilege of a peaceful sky above us, we intend to direct our efforts towards a comprehensive critical understanding of the war, including from feminist positions and in the context of global capitalism.

The war in Ukraine is not something unique; its causes lie far beyond the ill will of one or a few people. Wars in the 21st century, alas, are commonplace, especially in post-Soviet space. The collapse of the Soviet Union left behind a large number of unresolved problems and contradictions between its member countries. Military conflicts have long become the norm for resolving these contradictions. The Georgian-Abkhazian and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts, the two Karabakh wars, the wars in Chechnya, the civil war in Tajikistan—the list is quite impressive. Kyrgyzstan is no exception to this list; in the history of our country, there have been both territorial border conflicts, the most recent of which is the conflict with Tajikistan, which regularly takes on the character of active hostilities, and inter-ethnic clashes with the use of weapons.

The main form of existence of the state in capitalism is the national state, and each of the countries of the former USSR has been trying for the last 30 years to build its own national concept, often reduced to aggressive ethnic or linguistic nationalism, a space where there is no place for “strangers”, and the essence of the nation, territory, and language becomes invulnerable to criticism. Such nationalism inevitably turns into a convenient tool in the hands of political elites, which they skillfully use to increase their own popularity and legitimacy. And, of course, war becomes an extreme expression of the national idea, rallying the elites and the people around itself, obscuring any internal contradictions, and sprinkling the national myth with blood. Thus, war inevitably follows from the logic of nation-state building.

Paradoxically, capitalism, which pushes countries and peoples to build nation-states, tears them apart, turning the entire planet into a global market for labour and capital for which there are no boundaries. Migrant communities are a striking example of such a gap. So, today, many Kyrgyzstanis have connected their lives with Russia, and as a result, they are directly involved in the military conflict and are used as a tool in it, from direct participation in hostilities to the use of the migrant issue in diplomatic relations between Kyrgyzstan and Russia. Similarly, the translocal position of many residents of Donbass, who before 2014 went on migration to the border regions of Russia and later received Russian citizenship,

While the events in Ukraine are experienced by us as especially close, we should remember the wars that seem distant to us despite the fact that they are taking place in close geographical proximity to us. First of all, this is a long-term war in Afghanistan, as well as wars in Syria and Iraq. The indirect involvement of our country in these conflicts did not cause the same public outcry as the war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, the functioning of a military base in our country for almost ten years to support US military operations in Afghanistan, the influx of refugees from Afghanistan and the Middle East into Kyrgyzstan, as well as the participation of our citizens in the military conflict in Syria and Iraq, indicate that war has always been with us, long before February 24, 2022.

Of course, we must not forget that a significant part of wars and experiences associated with the threat of their outbreak is an integral part of the world capitalist system. The imperialist blocs of countries, built around the spheres of division of economic resources, constantly clash in a competitive struggle for influence, provided, among other things, by military means. The world, as before, is divided between large countries and alliances, and the more critical the economic situation becomes, the stronger the tension becomes, which finds its outlet at the points of civil and political conflicts, turning them into full-scale wars. And Kyrgyzstan will be drawn into this process in the most direct way, being in the sphere of the imperialist ambitions of Russia, the USA, and China.

The paradox of war is that none of us ordinary people want war in any of its manifestations. Most of all, the war hits the lower classes of society, the silent and destitute majority, consisting of ordinary workers, rural residents, students, pensioners, etc. Neither the elite nor the most ordinary people die from bullets and rocket attacks; they also experience a huge number of problems associated with the economic instability that any war entails. And at the same time, we, the majority, are completely powerless to stop and prevent wars. As a rule, in public discussions, the loudest voice is that of the “war party”, the supporters of aggression, whether driven by national feeling or petty political and financial gains. The anti-war protest in Russia proved fruitless. The Ukrainian majority also lost and expressed its desire for peace during the last elections. Lost in the US anti-war protests against the invasion of Iraq, like every other peace movement in recent decades,

The danger of war threatening us right now makes us look for ways out of this situation. We are convinced that the answer to war should be a principled position that makes peace between countries and peoples the highest value that prevails over national, political, and economic interests. We must reject the false slogan, “If you want peace, prepare for war.” To win a war, you need to

fight not with the war itself but with its causes. It makes no sense to wish one of the parties to the current conflict victory or defeat when it will inevitably become a prologue to new wars and new deaths. And yet history is full of examples of the victories of anti-war civil movements. Russia's exit from the First World War as a result of the October Revolution, the French movement against the war in Algeria, and American resistance to the war in Vietnam and throughout Southeast Asia are excellent examples of the victory of the idea of peace, which put an end to terrible wars. At the centre of these movements lie international solidarity and a willingness to recognise others as equals—genuine humanistic values that we need today more than ever.

** This text has been translated from Russian and then edited for grammar. Any errors are mine. (ed)*

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P.S.

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