

Russia: For a Just World/Just Peace Manifesto

Monday 18 March 2024, by [Справедливый мир \(Just World/Just Peace\)](#) (Date first published: 15 March 2024).

The following manifesto has been drafted by the Справедливый мир campaign, which can be translated as both Just World or Just Peace given the double meaning of мир. The campaign is a new left-wing initiative seeking to disrupt the staged presidential elections that will take place between March 15-17. For more information on the initiative read this interview with Mikhail Lobanov, one of its initiators.

We need a just world! A voice against all!

- FOR the end of mobilisation: FOR the return home of fathers, husbands, and sons
- FOR the cancellation of pension reform
- FOR the release of all political prisoners
- FOR real self-government

The authorities decide for us and without us. They decide where to send our military, whether to cut down our forests and invade our ecological preserves, whether to demolish our homes in the interests of developers.

The so-called presidential election is an opportunity to say no. We don't agree and we need a just peace. Neither candidate is saying that. To make our voice heard, we need to vote against all of them.

Our vote against all

In the 17 March "election," there will be four candidates on the ballot, none of whom advocate genuine self-government, the return of the mobilised, the repeal of unjust and repressive laws. Opposition politicians who might have run for office are imprisoned, mercilessly murdered in the colonies or driven out of the country under threat of prosecution.

A vote against all is a way of conveying to the authorities that we will not indulge them by voting for their toy candidates from the CPRF, LDPR, and New People.

Unfortunately, in 2006 Vladimir Putin removed the "against all" column, so our vote becomes an invalid ballot paper.

Though considered "invalid," a ballot with crossed-out candidates is still taken into account in the total vote tally, that is, it reduces the percentage of Putin and the other candidates. However, we cannot rely only on the official final percentage: it is no secret that the authorities often tamper with ballots at the polling stations.

Therefore, we urge you to come to the polling stations on March 17, at the same time, at noon.

Then, even if the result is rigged, the broad support for a just world will be evident to all Russian citizens.

* We are collecting photos of ballots for publication on the coalition's resources. This is anonymous.

Our Telegram bot is @spravedlivost2024_bot

A Just World/Just Peace Manifesto

You and we need peace. Peace in our country, peace with our neighbours, peace in our families, peace within us.

The absence of peace means fear, vulnerable lives for us and our children, bitterness for our country, shame at our inability to stop the catastrophe. But there are also those few for whom the absence of peace is a huge profit. It is a way to manipulate those of us who live from paycheck to paycheck.

At the center of this injustice is the problem of inequality, which is literally tearing Russia apart. Economic and political inequality are inseparable. Vladimir Putin and the elites associated with him have appropriated and concentrated in their hands colossal economic resources that were created by the labor of several generations. This is how a bunch of officials and businessmen gained unlimited political power. The enormous wealth could have been used in the common interest. Instead, pension reform, the so-called Special Military Operation, and indefinite mobilisation were imposed on us.

Who are we and what do we demand?

Our initiative unites people of democratic, socialist, and communist views—politicians, bloggers, activists. We have worked out a minimum program capable of uniting tens of millions of people who currently have no voice. We want to transform our country from an armoured train hurtling under the rocks into a place for peaceful and harmonious development. And we know how to do it.

We demand a just peace! Not a temporary truce, a brief respite, after which this whole nightmare will flare up with renewed vigour. We, our children, and our grandchildren need a real, full, and just peace:

1. Peace in families

Neither the mobilised nor their families know when the special military operation will end. On the other side of the front, ordinary people very much like us are also waiting for their brothers, sons, and husbands.

The mobilised must return home. We demand the cancellation of Presidential Decree N 647 of 21 September 2022 "On the Announcement of Partial Mobilisation in the Russian Federation."

Violence destroys families

Many participants in armed conflicts return with a crippled psyche, leading to an upsurge in domestic violence. It affects first of all the most vulnerable—women, children, and the elderly. There is a need for rehabilitation programs for ex-military personnel and shelters for victims of domestic violence. Free psychological counselling is necessary for all those in need.

Support instead of bans

Borrowing the most radical dreams of American and European ultraconservatives, Russian officials are invading our private and family lives. They teach us who can be loved and who cannot. They are trying to ban abortion: they want to dictate to women how many children they should have, and when. All this is happening under the pretext of defending newly invented “traditional” values.

But modern women who combine work and motherhood do not need bans! We need other things: free nurseries, kindergartens, schools, an increase in paid subsidies to mothers, affordable housing for young parents.

Demography depends directly on the general standard of living, on our confidence in the future.

2. A world without annexations

Forced territorial acquisitions are the smoldering fuse of a new catastrophe. They will only fuel an arms race to the detriment of a peaceful economy. Hostilities must cease and all inhabitants of the affected territories must have full social, democratic, cultural, and language rights.

3. A world of decent work

We need life, not survival! A long-term program is needed, including:

- The indexation of pensions at rates significantly higher than inflation
- A consistent increase in the minimum wage
- An increase in public sector wages
- A strengthening the role of labour inspection
- An active state policy on the labour market, creating socially useful and well-paid jobs (we need more educators, teachers, doctors and social workers)
- The restoration of the retirement age: 55 years for women and 60 years for men.

4. Peace in the workplace

We are all very dependent on the workplace environment. We all want to be protected from the arbitrary behaviour of our superiors. All want respect. We all deserve to have a say in the affairs of the companies and industries to which we give a huge part of our lives.

This is only possible if we create the conditions for true trade unions to exist. One such condition is the full right to strike. International experience and studies show that where workers are protected by democratic trade unions and can influence company policy, labor productivity grows faster, staff turnover is lower and the atmosphere on the team is better.

5. Peace in society

In 2024, socialist professor Boris Kagarlitsky was sentenced to a five-year prison term for a post on Telegram. He is just one of 30,000 advocates of a just peace who have been detained, fined, arrested, or jailed in the past two years.

A regime that instigates the search for spies and traitors is splintering society to further suppress it. After the death of Alexei Navalny, it is especially clear: we must demand an end to the civil war unleashed by the authorities against political opponents. We also demand the cancellation of repressive articles of the Criminal Code, including Article 207.3 of the Criminal Code ("article on fakes"), and the release and full rehabilitation of all those convicted under these articles.

6. Peace for all, not for select few

The concentration of financial resources in the hands of a few, be it businessmen or officials, leads to dictatorship. It is necessary to limit the influence of wealth on the political process. Oil and gas and other large corporations should be brought under public control. Otherwise, their huge profits will continue to be turned into personal yachts, palaces, and instruments of mass murder.

We demand criminal liability for illegal enrichment of officials and deputies of all levels, with confiscation of income if the public servant cannot explain its legal origin. (Ratification of Article 20 of the UN Convention "On Combating Corruption.")

Taxes

The absurd tax policy whereby the poor in Russia pay (including VAT) a higher percentage of their income to the budget than the rich should be reconsidered.

After two disastrous world wars, European governments imposed high taxes on super-income and on the inheritance of huge fortunes. This keeps inequality and concentration of power in check, and prevents wars and conflicts. We should draw on this experience, as well as on modern economists dealing with the problem of the wealth tax.

Credit amnesty

Russians' total indebtedness to banks is destroying our psyche and increasing aggression. Dependence on banks forces many to seek dangerous earnings for themselves and society, including by becoming mercenaries. We need a credit amnesty!

7. Towards peace through self-government

If we want lasting peace, the country must be governed by the citizens themselves, not by a handful of the rich and their functionaries. Federalisation, empowerment of municipal councils, and real self-government are the keys to a just peace.

Equal distribution of taxes between municipal, regional, and federal budgets. Return of direct elections of mayors and governors, cancellation of barriers for opposition candidates in elections at all levels.

Local self-government bodies, with real powers to distribute city and regional budgets, control over development and land use, and the ability to develop social infrastructure.

8. Peace with the environment

Stop turning Russia into a huge toxic dump! The authorities constantly suppress protests against corporations destroying our environment and wildlife. We remember the fight over Shiesh, over Kushtau, and dozens of other conflicts. Commercial and government companies must be brought under environmental control.

We need to restore a full forest service, launch programs to renew felled forests, clear rivers, and reclaim abandoned areas. Advanced waste sorting and recycling methods are vital.

9. A just world cannot be built in a single country. Solidarity, not competition.

The imperial ambitions of a few top officials are making Russia a pariah country. We must guarantee neighbouring countries that they will never become victims of Russian aggression. Our country should not incite conflicts anywhere.

This does not mean that it needs to withdraw from the world stage and abandon an active foreign policy. We can change our country only if the whole world changes with us; if competition for resources and spheres of influence is replaced by solidarity and mutual assistance.

The new peaceful Russia will have every opportunity to actively participate in solving global economic and environmental problems.

Offshore and migration

Our country has been suffering for more than 30 years due to the withdrawal of capital and profits offshore. Therefore, Russia should develop the broadest possible international coalition against offshore tax havens. We need to move toward the creation of a unified register of large owners and the principles of a fair tax policy. The potential that digitalisation has accumulated in recent times can and should be channelled in this direction.

Such measures will be the foundation for a real fight against corruption. They will block unscrupulous corporations and the super-rich from hiding from taxes. They will help find money to maintain and develop the social sphere. But they will also be aimed at eliminating inequalities in living standards between different countries and regions. This is the only way to solve the problems of people's forced flight from poverty, war, and disenfranchisement. A safe life, education, social support and paid work must be guaranteed to everyone.

We are many, we are different, but together we can build a just country and a just world!

Справедливый мир (Just World/Just Peace)

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P.S.

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