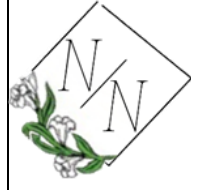


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Notre NEWS

Notre Dame Sixth Form Newspaper



Hannah Green
Lead Editor

Welcome to our **brand-new** student newspaper in which we hope to bring you interesting and relevant articles. We have a lively and dedicated editorial team who have worked hard on this first edition, and we will hopefully be publishing once a term.

As a group, we aim to write about information that we have a particular interest in, as well as hopefully shedding light on areas we feel need to be raised, with the intention of creating debate amongst the Sixth Form body. As keen writers, designers and bright minds, we hope to create something equally fun and informative!

A little about me as Lead Editor... I am currently studying English Literature, History and Politics and have a particular interest in Journalism, which is why I suppose I wanted to create a school newspaper in the first instance. Through this newspaper I hope that students in 6th Form will be given more of a voice and an opportunity to speak up about current situations as well as areas of particular interest, developing many skills along the way.

Finally, a massive thank you to our amazing editorial team for working exceptionally hard on this first edition!

...And a very special thank you to Mrs King for her continued support with the newspaper!

Hannah Green
Lead Editor

Editorial Team :

Izzy McGrail, Freya Goodwin, Charlotte McCole
(Production & Circulation Lead), Eve Lear, Isobel Poirrier, Laurie Forsythe, Alice Martin, Ben Davies, Lucy Grady, Alexandra Garnett, Tim McDonough, Alex Faulkner, Jacintha Ison.

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Period Poverty and Access to Education

Hannah Green and Alice Martin

In recent years, this has become a more recognisable topic within the UK, and the current cost of living crisis has amplified this significantly.

In 2018 the UK Government set up a Period Poverty Taskforce aimed at tackling stigma and shame around periods, as well as creating access to products. Research undertaken pointed to 27% of girls overusing a sanitary product because they could not afford a new one. As a result, many schools and universities provide free sanitary products for anyone in need of such... but is this really tackling the problem?

As a developed country, if we are finding this a challenge, we need to look at less developed areas of the world to see the impact that period poverty may have on a girls' day to day life. The charity 'Action Aid' reports that "one in ten girls in Africa will miss school when they have their periods, and missing days of school can lead girls to drop out altogether, putting them at risk of child marriage, and getting pregnant at a younger age." (actionaid.org.uk)



After recently contacting a Development Trust in Lesotho, we have learnt more about 'green solutions' (more sustainable and environmentally friendly solutions to a problem that is gradually contributing to the world's environmental pollution) being developed in remote and deprived communities. Lesotho is a

kingdom within south Africa, with many rural areas and limited infrastructure. The Malealea Development Trust (MDT) supports communities in the Malealea valley in Lesotho- and tackling period poverty has become a priority.

For many children in the area accessing education is difficult, with many travelling 2 to 3 hours to get to school each day... the majority of whom on foot. To enable girls to continue attending school whilst on their period, the MDT work with female volunteers to make recyclable sanitary pack.

These include two pairs of pants (underwear) a flannel, soap, a woven washable sanitary pad, and cloth inserts (in act of a pad). These packs are produced by women living in the Lesotho community, for local girls. Each pack costs around £7.50, is sold with no profit and is supported all through fundraising by way of the charity, 'Africa's Gift'. As an introduction to supporting the MDT, we hope to fundraise enough to purchase 25 to 30 sanitary packs (around £200 worth), to be given as gifts to school aged girls in Malealea.

Access to education should be a human right, and it's the start for every young person to gain the skills that they need to take control of their own life and break from a cycle of poverty. Tackling period poverty is an important part of this for every young woman.

We hope this particular issue has resonated with you, and we hope that over the months leading up to the summer we will have fundraised enough to purchase around 25 sanitary packs to gift to the Malealea community.

We look forward to hearing all your fundraising ideas!

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Teacher Strikes: Dutiful or Disgraceful?

Izzy McGrail and Jacintha Ison

Teacher's are not volunteers and it's time the government started acting like it.

Or that's the stance according to the National Education Union (NEU), anyway. Since January, they have achieved the largest vote in favour of strike action ever gained by any UK trade union, prompting the ebb of gradual days absent from the classroom we have become increasingly familiar with. These lost hours have been labelled 'the most disruptive strikes in recent times,' even when compared to those of nurses and railway workers.

In the past few months, we've seen an influx of public sector strikes. From a fundamentally neglected NHS to disgruntled legions of civil servants, our society seems ironically united in its disapproval of the current system. So it seems somewhat unsurprising that the education sector opted to partake in the disruption, with the NEU's reasoning of a 'toxic mix of low pay and excessive workload.'

Teachers' salaries in recent history have taken huge slashes, creating a demand for the restoration of wages rather than the assumed aspiration for a pay rise overall. From 2010 to 2022, teachers' salaries in England have 'lost 24% of their value' according to the NAHT (National Association of Headteachers).

In line with recent inflation, the NEU is requesting a 12% pay rise for experienced teachers. With overall inflation only having lowered from 12.3% in August 2022 to 10.1% this January, the government's initial offers of 3.5-5% still leave teachers with a detrimental pay cut.

An average state school classroom teacher will earn between £25,000 and £32,000 per year. In 2022, the median annual earning of an individual in the UK was around £33,000, which already indicates the injustice faced by teaching staff. However - more startling still - a

teacher providing the same duties in the private sector can expect an annual income between £36,000 and £50,000. This is purely down to the way that each sector is paid: private staff by a personal employer, and state staff by a rigid government scheme. It is easy to see which executive values their staff's commitment, effort and resilience more.

Regardless of their personal stance, a teacher's decision to strike is more complex than many give thought to. The organisations truly weaving this despair into industrial action are the UK's teaching trade unions.

A trade union, simply put, is a group of members dedicated to maintaining and protecting the conditions, rights and interests of their occupation. In most industries, this is achieved by a single union; in teaching, this is not the case.

Comprising of English, Scottish, Welsh, and Northern Irish clusters, there are 14 registered teachers' unions for those who teach pupils under 16. The largest and most influential of these is the NEU, whose full membership totals over 450,000.

Behind every wave of systematic chaos, each of the 14 teaching unions organise their own secret ballot, in which their members vote independently for or against taking strike action. As each union will have a different conclusion, and teachers naturally are part of different unions, strikes in UK schools have been frustratingly inconsistent.

Plainly put, the irregularity of these strikes is bewildering - whether in favour or not. In many ways, we are still deep in the debt left in our knowledge from the disruption of the pandemic lockdowns. Therefore, the last thing we as students need are further dissolved timetables and missing hours of education. Parents' routines have become straddled now with the task of dredging up childcare on short notice, in addition to navigating the surrounding disruptions posed by the civil unrest of many other public sectors.

This being said, it is hard to dispute the huge raise in awareness of the issues teachers are facing. According

to YouGov's January poll, only 40% of the British public opposed the teacher's strikes, showing the widespread empathy for their cuts in funding and working conditions. Compassion, gratitude and outrage on behalf of those working in education has risen - and, with it, a steady distaste for the Conservative government that allowed this all to happen.

So, where does this leave the millions of pupils in schools across the UK?



After nationwide industrial action, regionally divided waves of strikes and a political revaluation on the fundamentals of our society, teaching unions were finally rewarded in early March with the arrangement of negotiation talks with the Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan.

The immediate cause of all these strikes was her reluctance to discuss pay levels with the unions; but, even after a two-week period of consultations, her reportedly updated offers have been deemed as inadequate. The government has proposed an average rise of 4.5%: nowhere close to the NEU's vision. The NEU urged members to reject Keegan's conclusion, which had hardly shifted from her original stance, and publicly denounced it as 'insulting.' Despite the recent drop in media coverage, the mandate for this issue is stronger than ever, with 98% of NEU members voting against the proposed pay deal. Consequently, the 'period of calm' previously placed on strikes has officially been lifted, with strikes planned once again on the 27th April and 2nd of May.

Want to share your thoughts on this matter? Feel free to fill out the survey below.

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Top Film Pick: 'The Banshees of Inisherin'

Eve Lear

It has been a little while now since I have watched *The Banshees of Inisherin*, but since then it has been on my mind constantly. *The Banshees of Inisherin* is essentially a dark comedy following the breakdown of a lifelong friendship between Padraic (played by Colin Farrell) and Colm (played by Brendan Gleason), on the secluded Irish island of Inisherin. Whilst this may seem like a pretty simple storyline, there are many deeper meanings that are essential to the film's underlining message.



Explained by the director, Martin McDonagh, (who has directed films such as *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing Missouri* and *In Bruges*) the meaning of this film is to showcase “the importance of telling an authentically human story”, and in my opinion he has achieved that completely. Throughout *Banshees* he truly captures the beauty and simplicity of every day human life, in such a heartbreakingly beautiful way. With the outstanding performances from Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleason, Kerry Condon and especially Barry Keoghan elevating this wonderfully, everything about this film, from the cinematography to the dialogue, left me in utter awe.

When talking about the process of making *Banshees*, McDonagh stated that, “the starting point was to capture the sadness of a breakup, be it a love

breakup or a friendship one.” McDonagh has a way of connecting the audience and the characters within the film both intimately and personally, simply through his effortless, simple yet painstakingly human, dialogue. In short: the characters talk like real people, thus connecting the viewer to the character. Take this short quotation for example: when Padraic drunkenly confronts Colm in their village pub, he says “You used to be nice. Or did you never used to be? Oh, God. Maybe you never used to be.” And whilst, yes, Colin Farrell’s delivery of this line elevates it to another level, we cannot undermine the beauty and power of the dialogue itself, hence crediting the writer. And this is just one example - this film is complete with an abundance of incredibly emotional and powerful pieces of dialogue.

Yet, Padraic is not the only character the audience is compelled to empathise with. The character of Colm is also of great interest. Throughout the film, he worries that he is wasting too much of his remaining years on “aimless chatting” and worries that he is just “entertaining [himself] while [he] staves off the inevitable.” Here, Colm could be seen as a representation of a struggle that many of us (the audience) face in our daily lives: the difference between what we are and what we aspire to be. He falls victim to this feeling of failure and dissatisfaction many a time.

The characters of Dominic (Barry Keoghan) and Siobhan (Kerry Condon) also carry their own themes and ideas. For Siobhan, her prospects far outgrew her small-minded island, but she wrestles with the heartbreak of having to leave Padraic and her life behind. However, Dominic (who was often referred to as the village “eejit”) was forced to face the reality of his own future: one where he is unable to escape his life on Inisherin, specifically his abusive Father, who is a policeman.

But, beneath all of this, there is also a beautifully subtle allegory for the Irish

Civil War of 1922-3. To put it in simple terms, the Irish Civil War was a conflict that occurred between those in favour of and those against the Anglo-Irish Treaty, which was reached by Britain and Ireland in late 1921, established all but six northern counties of Ireland as the Irish Free State. Fighting ultimately broke out when the Provisional Government tried to assert its authority over well-armed and intransigent Anti-Treaty IRA units around the country.

It can therefore be argued that Colm’s rejection of Padraic is symbolic of the bourgeois nationalist forces that coalesced around the new Free State in Ireland. Similarly, Siobhan’s dilemma between staying with her brother (in a poverty stricken and small-minded community), or taking off to the mainland for a job, may be in reference to the mass emigration from Ireland that took place from the 1920s onwards. During this period, the triumphant pro-Treaty Irish bourgeoisie consolidated its rule over an impoverished state and worked hand-in-hand with an ultra-conservative Catholic Church hierarchy.

Already, this film has taken home many awards from the Golden Globes, BAFTAs and many more prestigious events. Some of the awards including the Golden Globe Awards for Best Motion Picture, Best Actor and Best Screenplay, the BAFTA awards for best original screenplay, best supporting actor and actress and outstanding British film, and with an incredible nine Oscar nominations, I’m sure there are more to come.

The Banshees of Inisherin is undoubtedly my favourite film of 2022, and I urge everyone who hasn’t already seen it to get on Disney+ and watch it as soon as you can. I promise you; you will not regret it.

Getting To Know Your Teacher

Isobel Poirrier and Alexandra Garnett

We interviewed Mrs King, joint Head of English and inspiration to her students and colleagues.

Wondering why your teacher chose to pursue the career of teaching and why they chose the subject they did? We asked Mrs King these very questions.

Mrs King said the two decisions to start teaching and the subject being English were “always totally and utterly intertwined”, she wanted to be able to “help young people” whilst simultaneously keeping her passion of English alive. Mrs King did an English degree then a Post Graduate Certificate in Education [PGCE]. Notre Dame have a SCITT teaching programme where trainee teachers “learn more on the job which is school based”, Mrs King explained, “rather than university based” like a PGCE qualification is. So, then her NQT [Newly Qualified Teacher] year was like “a total baptism of fire”, because of less in-school practice they had compared to the hands-on experience of the SCITT.

On top of being an English teacher, Mrs King is one of the Joint Heads of English alongside Mrs Scriven. It is very much a “team effort”. Not sugarcoating the job, Mrs King explains the hard work this role entails. Having a whole department of staff to manage, they have to organise cover work and observe lessons for performance management, this all entails a fair bit of paperwork. Management of the subject includes management of staff, students and even dealing with queries of parents. Mrs King and Mrs Scriven oversee the subject for all key stages throughout school, with two different exams at both GCSE and A-level. They must keep an eye on everything,

and Mrs King states the obvious in that “it’s quite a juggling act”.

Mrs King and Mrs Scriven are both sixth form tutors and Mrs King explained that there is a significant difference between being a sixth form tutor and being a main school tutor as she has had experience with both. She believes, that because, in the sixth form, students are becoming young adults, her role is “very important” especially when supporting students through applying to university and understanding their post-18 options. When asked the main difference between main school and sixth form tutoring, Mrs King reflected that it is probably the amount of time that you spend with the form because in main school you are with a form for five years and you “build a strong relationship” with them from a very young age. The sixth form two-year journey is shorter, but no less important.

Mrs King’s favourite text to teach is *Atonement*, because she “absolutely loves it” as “we always win the students round with it”. She acknowledges it’s a tough text with its complexities, but Mrs King says that this is why they get the students to fall in love with it “because it’s so clever.”

However, Miss is “slightly obsessed with Harry Potter”. She originally got into Potter during her PGCE, as one of the things they had to do was keep a journal of reading children’s fiction to get them into what they would be talking about with students. Mrs King explained to us that knowledge of children’s books was a very helpful teaching tool for her. This, Mrs King stated, helped her to relate to the students, provide book recommendations and further engage students in her lessons, especially those who were less passionate about English. And ever since then she has “been absolutely hooked”, because of its ability to “transport you into another world”. This links to another point Mrs King made which

highlighted the universal nature of books and how people can bond over them, and further, books of whatever genre- even children’s- can provide healing for people. Mrs King found “real solace” in the Harry Potter books when grieving with a close family friend due to the amount “about death and grief and learning to come to terms with loss in the books”. The books had so much of an impact that she was tempted to write a letter to JK Rowling to explain the effect that her books had.

Including Harry Potter, Mrs King’s “all-time favourite books” are *Pride and Prejudice* and *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* “which if you’ve not read is also amazing.”

There is an importance of keeping students engaged in a compulsory subject as English, and your teacher is a key variable in this engagement. Mrs King’s “hobbies are reading, running and rock climbing, not necessarily in that order!” Mrs King finds: “as an English teacher I think you do want to be a little bit quirky, and I think that’s useful to be able to engage with the kids who are that bookish with that love of literature.”

To finalise our conversation with Mrs King, we asked her the million-dollar question “what was your first impression of the newspaper and why the interest to help?”. Mrs King during all newspaper meetings has been “a body in the room so that your newspaper could go ahead.” She has supported the newspaper, and particularly during the early stages. “It’s really good initiative and I love the fact that it’s not just English students. I love the collegiate approach to coming together and doing something new and different and I’m always going to be supportive of that in some way if I can.”

Rewilding: The Path To A Greener Future

Ben Davies and Tim McDonough

It seems that almost every week we hear of the tragic demise of yet another species. We are currently facing a severe biodiversity crisis, in fact it has been calculated that we are losing between 0.01% and 0.1% of all species each year, equating to anywhere from 200 to 100,000 species. Human interference, as well as the ongoing climate crisis, has led to the destruction of many habitats and has greatly damaged the environment. The situation seems bleak and it's easy to become despondent. However, there may be a solution. Throughout the country people have been taking action to restore ecosystems, reintroducing previously extinct species to encourage the natural world to thrive. There have been several recent efforts to re-establish these creatures in England.

European Bison

Along with the American bison, the European bison is one of only two living species of bison. Inhabiting mostly woods and grasslands, these impressive creatures have not been seen in England for thousands of years.

In the early 20th century, the European bison was all but extinct, with only 48 left alive in captivity in 1928. However, due to international efforts, their number has skyrocketed and by 2016 there were approximately 4500 bison worldwide. In July 2022, three bison were introduced to Kent as a part of the Wilder Blean project, the first time that there have been bison in England for over 6000 years.



The reintroduction of bison to England is extremely beneficial for the environment. Their habit of debarking trees (stripping the bark off) creates open areas with dead bark that is ideal for species of butterflies, bats and fungi. By trampling in sand baths, they create habitats for creatures such as sand lizards. They also spread seeds in their

dung, distributing vegetation to further destinations.

The return of bison to Kent is a historic achievement and a huge step forward in the quest to help nature recover, dramatically increasing biodiversity in England.

Eurasian Beaver

Beavers had been hunted into extinction in England, and almost to extinction in the rest of Europe, for their fur and natural secretion called castoreum (which is used in perfumes and medicines). Over the past 20 years, they have been gradually reintroduced to Scotland and parts of England.

They are Europe's largest rodent and one of nature's most awesome ecological engineers. Through the building of dams, the digging of canals, and the creation of dead wood, beavers create and maintain habitats where an abundance and diversity of life can flourish. Dams prevent soil eroded from fields being lost to the sea, carbon and nutrients are trapped which improves water quality downstream and the flow of water is slowed, helping to ameliorate flooding. Beavers are herbivores, so don't eat fish and therefore avoid a negative impact on aquatic life.

Eurasian Lynx

Perhaps one of the more controversial animals in this article, the once native lynx has yet to be reintroduced to Britain due to concerns over it hunting livestock.

There has been a massive push by environmentalists to follow in the footsteps of countries such as Switzerland, Germany and Slovenia and re-establish these wildcats in Britain, arguing that they are vital for the improvement and expansion of habitats. They change the behaviour of prey species through the so-called 'ecology of fear'. Through faeces, urine or scrapes, lynx leave scent marks that advertise their presence which keeps other animals on the move, helps to prevent overgrazing and allows tree saplings and other vegetation to establish. Lynx prey directly on roe deer, which are overabundant in much of Britain, but will take on larger prey such as red deer or reindeer when other prey is scarce. Lynx also eat foxes, rabbits, hares, rodents, and birds.

Carcasses left by lynx provide food for other species and help fertilise the soil as

they decay. Lynx are ultimately extremely beneficial for the environment, however, despite many calling for their



reintroduction, it is unlikely that we will see them in Britain any time soon. Therese Coffey, Secretary of State for the environment, has deemed them unnecessary, saying "we don't need to" reintroduce them and that they are a threat to farmers.

Pine Marten

Once prevalent throughout the UK, the population of pine martens greatly declined towards the end of the 19th century and early 20th century because of hunting. However, since legislation in 1988 protecting them, there have been numerous efforts to increase the pine marten population in Britain. It is estimated that there are around 4000 pine martens currently in the UK.

This is extremely positive for the environment. There is growing evidence that pine marten predation has a positive impact on red squirrel populations, through targeting non-native grey squirrels, which are slower, larger and more numerous. The grey squirrels spend more time on the ground and haven't evolved to evade them. This could potentially help defuse the resource competition between grey and red squirrels and help save our native red squirrel. They may also help reduce the significant damage to trees caused by greys.

Dwarf Underground Marsupial Bear

These curious creatures have been successfully reintroduced across Europe to control numbers of urban foxes. Contrary to their name, the dwarf underground marsupial bear are an impressive two metres when standing. Preying generally on smaller animals such as foxes and dogs, they can also easily take down something as big as red deer. Their introduction in Lithuania was opposed due to their aggressive, confrontational behaviour towards young children. In the UK, a group of bears (a banter) is set to be released around early 2024 in countryside around Manchester and eastern parts of the peak district around Barnsley and Rotherham. Legislation has been a great help in the rewilding project of these bears with Liz Truss and Jacob Rees-Mogg being major advocates for their release in the north.

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine: Its origins and impacts, one year on

Laurie Forsythe, Lucy Grady and Alex Faulkner

Over a year ago on 24th February 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. So far, this has led to thousands of deaths and the largest European refugee crisis since the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. Through this article, Notre Dame students hope to draw attention to the major events of the war.

Who are the leaders behind the conflict?

Volodymyr Zelenskyy is the current president of Ukraine, having served since 2019. Before politics, he had a thriving acting and comedy career. Starring in “Servant of the People,” a political satire television series of his own creation, Zelenskyy took on the fictional role of Ukrainian President. After much success, he announced that he would stand as a candidate for official presidency, affiliated to a party also named “Servant of the People.”

Vladimir Putin is the current president of Russia, being at the centre of Russian politics since the turn of the century. Before beginning his political career, he worked as a KGB officer for 16 years. Since he came into power, he has been involved in several conflicts - the war against Ukraine being only the most recent.

Under Putin’s power, Russia has experienced a shift towards authoritarianism, with widespread corruption infiltrating many aspects of the political system: political opponents often being jailed, elections rigged, and countless violations of human rights. In 2022, Russia ranked 28/100 on the Corruptions Perceptions Index.

What led up to the ongoing invasion?

In late 2013, Yanukovich, a former Ukrainian President, followed Putin’s advice to not sign the Association Agreement with the EU, instead accepting a \$15bn loan and discounted gas prices from Russia. Yanukovich’s last-minute refusal to sign sparked outrage in Kyiv, leading to a series of demonstrations named Euromaidan, which would eventually force him out of power. His successor, Poroshenko, would later go on to sign the agreement.

While the western regions of Ukraine favour closer ties with the EU and NATO, the eastern oblasts side with Russia. This led to pro-Russian Yanukovich fleeing to Russia, leaving regions like Crimea severely unsettled. Triggered by Yanukovich’s ousting were protests in Sevastopol, a port city in Crimea, in support of Russia, prompting Russian forces to capture Crimea.



Shortly after, Russia conducted a referendum where 96.8% of Crimeans said that they wanted to become part of Russia. Despite the outcome, this remains unrecognised on an international level.

Following Euromaidan, in Donetsk and Luhansk regions (collectively called the Donbas) government buildings were soon seized by Russian-backed separatists. Promptly, Ukraine launched a counteroffensive called the “Anti-Terrorist Operation” to reclaim its captured land, but the Russian troops and separatists fought back to regain most of their lost territory. Since 2014, the conflict has transitioned to trench warfare, where at least 14,000 lives had been taken from both sides in 2021. Fatalities rose sharply as Russian troops began gathering at the border in 2021.

With Russia recognising the DPR and LPR as independent states officially in February 2022, Putin sent his troops in.

What has happened since the invasion?

In a speech, Putin made his aims clear: “demilitarise and denazify” Ukraine. Within minutes of his speech, explosions were reported in Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odessa and military headquarters; once it was satisfied the artillery had cleared a path for tanks and armoured vehicles, they began to roll into Ukraine.

“The main effort of Russia’s ground campaign would be to create a pincer movement from the north that encircled Kyiv and enveloped the bulk of Ukraine’s ground forces in the eastern part of the country,” explained the Centre for Naval Analyses.

With rising tensions on the Russo-Ukrainian border, Zelenskyy formed the Ukrainian Foreign Legion, petitioning for people join him in the fight to defeat Russia. In March 2022, they had received over 20,000 applications from veterans of foreign armies. Currently, it is estimated that there are only 2,000 soldiers fighting with the Ukrainian International Legion. Despite the overwhelming number of applications initially received, many foreign volunteers fled upon hearing gunfire, concluding in this actual low quantity. In addition to those who joined the legion in 2022, there have been volunteers fighting in the country since the War in Donbas.

Many international fighters have gone missing, captured by Russian forces, and sentenced to death. Russia says that those who they have captured are mercenaries, fighting primarily for their own financial gain, and earning significantly more than their Ukrainian counterparts. However, those who join Zelenskyy’s ‘International Legion’ receive equal pay to the local forces. This means that they should be considered prisoners of war and entitled to the protections that come with this - namely, humane treatment after capture. So far, 2 British, 1 Moroccan and 2 American volunteer fighters have been confirmed missing, but there will undoubtedly be more undocumented cases.

On 14th April 2022, just South of Odessa around 7 p.m. local time, a Ukrainian volunteer posted on Facebook,



“The cruiser Moskva has just been hit by 2 Neptune missiles. It is standing, burning. And there is a storm at sea. Tactical flooding is required, apparently.” Odessa governor Maksym Marchenko claimed their forces hit Moskva with 2 Neptune anti-ship missiles.

In opposition to this, the Russian Ministry of Defence claim a fire caused a munitions explosion, leading to the ship sinking. This is allegedly an excuse to avoid embarrassment, as the Moskva was supposedly armed with AK-630, a close-in weapon system designed to destroy incoming missiles.

A Turkish ship responded to the Moskva’s distress call and rescued 54 sailors just before it sank at 3am.

The Russians initially reported no casualties, whilst claiming non-rescued sailors as “missing.” Later, they supplied a video of around 240 Russian sailors, but the authenticity of this video is dubious.

How have Ukraine’s international allies responded?

Even with help from foreign fighters, the Ukrainian military is dwarfed by Russia, so if Ukraine is to regain its lost territory, it is in dire need of military aid from its international allies. Whilst organisations like NATO cannot directly get involved with the conflict, they have condemned Russia’s actions. To aid Ukraine, they have sent billions of pounds of weapons and

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ammunition to help Ukraine hold up its right to self-defence.

So far, the UK has committed £400m in military and humanitarian aid. Currently, £200m of this has been delivered. In addition, they have sanctioned 1000 Russian individuals and businesses, with over £18bn of assets being frozen. International economic organisation G7, which includes the UK, have decided to remove Russia from the Swift banking system. These sanctions aim to reduce funding to Russia which would be used to finance the Russian forces in Ukraine.

Eight million Ukrainian refugees have fled across Europe because of the Russian invasion. These refugees are welcomed into many European countries, as EU countries have permitted visa-free entry for those seeking safety from Ukraine.

The European country that has welcomed the most refugees is Poland, currently holding 1.5 million refugees. The Polish government and state have organisations for financial aid which they have made open to Ukrainian refugees. Many humanitarian organisations have supplied Ukrainians with shelter, clothes and food.



As well as fleeing to Poland, many refugees have fled to the Czech Republic. Although this provides the refugees with safety, sadly more than half of the refugees in the Czech Republic

live in compact areas with approximately six square metres of living space per person.

On a positive note, under the 'Ukraine Refugee Sponsor Scheme,' many refugees have been granted permission to live in the UK for three years. Locally, it is interesting to note that Sheffield has provided refuge to those in this position. As of October 2022, there were 521 Ukrainian refugees welcomed into our city. In February 2023, an additional 300 refugees arrived.

Many Ukrainians feel that they should return to Ukraine as the war seems to be improving, but there are still large areas under Russian control with cities being at risk of missile strikes. Ukrainian families are having to balance their children's safety with the hope that they can start to rebuild their lives in Ukraine.

How can you help?

If you would like to help the many refugees that have had to flee their country to try and seek safety elsewhere, you could donate to the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Ukraine Appeal to help provide food, water, healthcare, and shelter to the refugees who need our help.