

Dear Ms Harper-Nunes, Mr Parker, Mr Street, Mr Virk, Mr Yakoob, and Ms Williams,

We, International Partnership for Human Rights (IPHR), alongside the other undersigned organisations, write to you today to urge you to speak out publicly against Cadbury owner Mondelez International's refusal to sever its business ties with Russia in spite of the country's ongoing full-scale aggressive and illegal war on Ukraine.

Mondelez's intransigence on this issue now risks doing irreparable damage to one of the region's most beloved and historic brands. Today, Cadbury is a globally recognised brand and a regional success story that Brummies and West Midlanders more generally can take pride in. Regrettably, we fear that, under Mondelez, sweet childhood memories of Easter treats are beginning to give way to more bitter associations with a bloody and unprovoked war in which Russia is alleged to have committed [more than 130,000 war crimes](#).

Cadbury is known not only for its chocolate, but also for the Quaker values, which the Cadbury family sought to instil in the company. Most famous of these is abstinence from alcohol, for which Bournville remains a dry town to this day, but pacifism and a fundamental opposition to war are also central to the Quaker philosophy. On the contrary, the modern-day steward of this heritage, Mondelez CEO Dirk van de Put, has stated his belief that investors '[do not morally care](#)' about the Cadbury owner's business ties with Russia, even as the country continues to rain death and destruction on Ukrainian cities on a daily basis.

As a result, in 2022 alone, Mondelez paid roughly [£48 million](#) into the Russian budget, a budget 40% of which is now dedicated to the Russian military. Moreover, the company continues to operate three factories and employ over 3,000 people in Russia. Justifying its decision to maintain operations in Russia, Mondelez has stressed its 'deep concern' for its Russia-based staff. But while Richard and George Cadbury built a town for their workers, Russia's [Partial Mobilisation Order](#) binds employers like Mondelez to aid the Russian government in the conscription of their staff. The company appears to have less concern still for the more than 1,000 of its employees who [urged](#) its senior management to do "the right thing" and exit the Russian market. Cadbury's owner argues instead that its products are too 'essential'. But its definition of 'essential' goods apparently includes chocolate, with imports of Milka, another Mondelez-owned brand, [more than doubling](#) in the year following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

While the choices made by companies such as Mondelez will have ensured an abundance of Easter eggs for the children of Russia, the children of Ukraine experienced a different holiday period this year. A few days before Easter, [Russian shelling of the Kharkiv region](#) left a 12-year-old boy dead and four other children injured, a loss of life that is now part of Ukrainians' everyday reality. Meanwhile, Russian forces in Ukraine have carried out the kidnapping of an [estimated 20,000 Ukrainian children](#). Though a handful of these kids have managed to reunite with their families, [such as Artem, Serhii, and Anastasiia](#), whose cases were documented by IPHR and Channel 4, the vast majority remain stranded in Russia, where they

are routinely subjected to military indoctrination and punished for any expression of their Ukrainian identity. Yet more are forced to live under the nightmare of Russian occupation, where [investigations by IPHR and others](#) have revealed how Russian forces subject civilians to murder, rape, abduction, and torture.

According to [analysis by the Kyiv School of Economics](#), in 2022-2023, foreign companies operating in Russia may have paid as much as £32 billion to the Russian government through tax contributions, a figure equivalent to roughly half of the annual budget of the military whose brutal campaign of terror against Ukrainians remains ongoing at time of writing. With this in mind, so long as its owner continues to put money into Vladimir Putin's coffers, there will be an indelible stain on Cadbury's once-proud name.

Today, we appeal to you, as a respected local leader and contender for Mayor of the West Midlands, to add your voice to the growing number of [those across the political spectrum](#) who are speaking out against this state of affairs and urging Mondelēz to put morals ahead of profits by severing its ties to Russia.

Since 2022, the West Midlands has opened its doors to [more than 2,000 Ukrainians](#) who now call this diverse and dynamic region home. West Midlanders can take pride in the steadfast support that the region and the whole of the UK have shown for Ukraine over the last two years of full-scale war.

We trust that the region's next mayor will likewise strive to support Ukraine's cause by championing ethical business practice in the West Midlands and beyond.

Respectfully signed,

International Partnership for Human Rights  
Ukrainians in Birmingham  
Ukraine Solidarity Project  
UK Friends of Ukraine  
Association of Ukrainians in Great Britain  
Campaign for Ukraine  
The B4Ukraine Coalition