

Dear Mr Parker,

First of all, we would like to congratulate you on your recent election as Mayor of the West Midlands. We trust that you will serve the people of the West Midlands with dedication and integrity.

Ahead of the mayoral elections, International Partnership for Human Rights, Ukrainians in Birmingham, and the other undersigned organisations, wrote to you, as well as the five other candidates, to express our concerns about Cadbury owner Mondelez International's continued operations in Russia, particularly the corrosive impact this association is beginning to have on one of the West Midlands' most beloved and historic brands, Cadbury, and to urge you to speak out on this issue.

As we wrote to you in our previous letter, 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. Cadbury's owner has also argued that its products are too 'essential' for it to leave the Russian market, 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. 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 is today intensifying. 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.

During the campaign, one of your five pledges was to [create 150,000 new jobs and training opportunities in the West Midlands](#). Like you, we want to see the West Midlands succeed and we believe that ethical business is absolutely central to the question of creating and safeguarding good jobs for West Midlanders. As a major employer in the region, we believe that Mondelez has serious questions to answer as to its stewardship of one of Britain's most historic and beloved brands. In recent days, we have already seen [Buckingham Palace strip royal warrants from two Russian-linked companies](#). With this in mind, there can be little doubt as to the risks inherent in Mondelez' willingness to play fast and loose with Cadbury's reputation.

Since 2022, the West Midlands has opened its doors to [more than 2,000 Ukrainians](#) who now call this diverse and dynamic region home. On 30 April, in one of his final acts as Mayor of the West Midlands, your predecessor, Andy Street, [wrote to Mondelez CEO Dirk Van de Put](#) to express his deep concerns about the company's ongoing business relations with Russia.

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, its [commitment to which the Labour Party has stressed repeatedly in recent months](#).

We write to you, at this critical moment ahead of Mondelēz' annual general meeting on 22 May, to urge you, as the incoming Mayor of the West Midlands, to add your voice to the growing number of [those across the political spectrum](#), including Mondelēz [employees](#) and [shareholders](#), who are now speaking out against Mondelēz' decision to put profits ahead of Ukrainian lives and to demand that the company urgently review its decision to continue to do business in Russia.

We understand that, coming into your new role as the face of the West Midlands, you are surely grappling with a great many urgent priorities, but we trust that you, like your predecessor, will recognise the importance of this issue.

Respectfully signed,

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