

The Ultimate Sacrifice



Every day in Ukraine, people pay the ultimate price for freedom. Soldiers on the front lines, civilians in their homes, children in their schools — all live under the shadow of war. Each day, lives are lost, families shattered, and futures stolen. For Ukrainians, sacrifice is not an abstract idea. It is the reality of daily life.

Yesterday, that sacrifice became deeply personal for me. My friend, **Vlad Seniuk**, was killed by a russian drone strike while defending his homeland. Three of his

brothers-in-arms survived thanks to Vlad's body taking on the full blast of the explosion. Vlad did not.



Vlad's story is both heroic and heartbreaking. From the first days of the full-scale invasion in 2022, he volunteered to fight. He served in some of the fiercest battles, often sharing photos and videos — small glimpses of both the horror he endured and the courage that carried him forward. He came from a family of heroes: his father was killed defending Ukraine in 2017, his uncle in 2022. And now Vlad himself has joined them.

He left behind a wife, Tetiana, and two little daughters who adored him. He left behind a mother who has now buried both her husband and her son. And he left behind a grandmother who has already lost two sons — and now a grandson — to this war.

I cannot imagine what his wife and their two little daughters are going through right now. I cannot imagine the pain of his mother, who has already walked this road of grief once before. And I cannot imagine the sorrow of his grandmother — a woman who survived the atrocities of Hitler and Stalin, only to watch the russians take from her family again, generation after generation.

Yet Vlad went willingly. He once told his friends: *“I could have already been demobilized, but if not me, then who? I am going there for all of you.”* These were not empty words. They were his conviction. Vlad was a man of faith who lived by Christian values, and he embodied the words of the Gospel: *“Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.”* (John 15:13) He lived by that truth — and he died by it.



And Vlad is not alone.

Since Russia launched its full-scale invasion, the human toll has been staggering. The United Nations has confirmed more than **14,000 civilians killed** and over **600 children**. Millions of families have been driven from their homes. More than **1,600 schools** and **hundreds of hospitals** lie in ruins. On the battlefield, estimates suggest tens of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers have been killed, while Russia has lost many times more.

These are not just numbers. Each one is a son, a daughter, a father, a mother. Each one is a story interrupted, a future denied. Each one is like Vlad.

And yet, despite this devastating toll, Ukrainians continue to stand. They continue to defend not only their land but the values of freedom and human dignity that the democratic world so often takes for granted.

And still, while Ukrainians give everything, the free world hesitates. While President Donald Trump delays sanctions against Russia for yet another “two weeks”, while NATO debates whether to shoot down Russian drones even over its own territory, and while the European Union weighs whether to keep buying Russian oil, Ukrainians continue to pay the ultimate cost.

The question that lingers is not whether Ukrainians are willing to pay the price. They have shown the world, time and again, that they are. The question is whether the world will stand with them — not with words or delays, but with the resolve that matches their sacrifice.

Freedom is never free. Someone always pays the ultimate price. Today, it is Ukrainians who pay it — every single day