



**European Committee
of the Regions**

The President

Declaration of the President of the European Committee of the Regions

The Russian occupying forces in Ukraine have brought war into the streets and squares of Ukraine's cities and villages, shelling civilians, their houses and public buildings.

Mayors remain on the frontline to serve citizens and ensure they receive the necessary aid.

The abduction of Ivan Fedorov, the Mayor of Melitopol, who refused to work with the occupiers and continued to govern his city and coordinate the delivery of humanitarian aid to his citizens, is a flagrant violation of the Geneva Convention and represents a desperate attempt by the forces of the Russian Federation to dismantle the democratic foundation of Ukraine by harming the building blocks the closest to citizens.

We call on the Russian occupying forces to free Mayor Ivan Fedorov immediately.

The abduction of a democratically elected Mayor is an act of terrorism not only against the citizens of Melitopol, but also all local government in Europe.

We pay tribute to the citizens of Melitopol who are defending their right to live in a free, democratic and European Ukraine.

We stand with the citizens of Melitopol, Ukraine and Mayor Fedorov.

Free Mayor Fedorov now.

Apostolos TZITZIKOSTAS

Brussels, 12 March 2022