

Ukraine Friends CEO says U.S. and NATO allies need to help Ukraine before 'it's too late'

Former USAID official Brock Bierman makes plea at World for Ukraine summit in Poland and to lawmakers in op-ed for Hill newspaper, saying 'we're not getting it'

RZESZÓW-JASIONKA, POLAND,
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EINPresswire.com/ -- Brock Bierman, a former USAID administrator for Eastern Europe, had strong words for world leaders as the [World For Ukraine](#) (W4UA) convened here: Save Ukraine with military and humanitarian aid before it's too late.

Bierman, president of New York-based [Ukraine Friends](#) and formerly assistant

administrator of the United States Agency for International Development's Bureau for Europe and Eurasia, had been spending time in the the war-torn city of Mukachevo, Ukraine near the Slovak border before the conference to see first-hand how an unforgiving winter of sub-zero temperatures is fast taking hold.

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*Brock D. Bierman, President,
Ukraine Friends*



Ukraine Friends President Brock Bierman spoke at the World for Ukraine summit in Poland.

"The entire country is one missile strike away from a catastrophe and total blackout," Bierman said. "People here are suffering, more so and more dramatically than just a month ago when I was in Ukraine."

Bierman says that nine months have passed and "we're still not getting it."

Bierman witnessed Ukrainians bundled up around space heaters in multiple layers of clothing, while others bought wood, mended windows and hovered around stoves to

stay warm. The elderly, he says, are bracing for what could be the worst winter in decades.

With electricity in high demand, many towns and cities in Ukraine only have enough power to be on four hours per day, as Russia's army has destroyed 40 percent of energy-producing capacity in Ukraine because of nearly constant shelling of power plants.

"With the country's infrastructure now failing at such a critical time, Ukraine is at risk more than ever from suffering a humanitarian crisis the likes we have not seen since World War II," Bierman said.

This week, over 1.5 million people in Ukraine's Odessa are without power after Russian drone attacks, with President Zelensky saying the region around the Black Sea port is "in darkness" following strikes that used Iranian drones.

"These strikes could completely close down critical infrastructure; in effect freezing people to death," Bierman said. "Kyiv presently has only 3-4 hours a day of power, if that."

Bierman contends that Ukraine's electricity network is overloaded and "might give way even without a strike."

"The power grid was not built for the current load," Bierman said. "Having been part of the process of joining Ukraine with the European network during my time at USAID, I can tell you firsthand how fragile that system is."

"Ukraine cannot be held hostage by a threat of escalation and watch thousands of people die," Bierman said. "Ultimately Putin and his army want to erase Ukrainian culture off the map; why else would they be targeting civilians?"



Ukraine Friends delivering humanitarian aid to Ukrainians



Ukraine Friends President Brock Bierman signs a Memorandum of Understanding to deliver humanitarian aid in Ukraine.

At the World For Ukraine Summit, held Dec. 7-9 at the G2A Arena in Rzeszów-Jasionka, Poland, Bierman called Ukraine a beacon for the world. "Keep doing what you're doing in Ukraine," Bierman told participants. "The future is limitless as far as I can see. Ukraine is a bright light. Democracy is winning and you can be a beacon for not just Ukraine but for the whole world."

In June, Allied leaders at the Madrid Summit agreed to a strengthened package of support for Ukraine, which included support in secure communications, fuel, medical supplies, body armor, winter clothing, equipment to counter mines and chemical and biological threats, and portable anti-drone systems.

"It is time for the United States to begin providing more defensive weapons to Ukraine," Bierman said. "We also need the U.S. and its allies to distribute sorely needed humanitarian aid to Ukrainians before it's too late."

In a plea to U.S. lawmakers in an op-ed published Dec. 11 in [The Hill newspaper](#), Bierman called for the need to close the skies to all air traffic and defend them from more missile attacks to prevent further suffering. Russia is hammering Ukraine with missile attacks, with many aimed at electricity stations. While Ukraine is shooting down as many of these missiles as they can, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his government are pleading for more defensive military systems from the U.S. and NATO to help stop the shelling.

"We need to listen to them, Bierman wrote. "The United States and its NATO allies need to step up and do the right thing. Learn from history. Before it's too late."

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