

Tim Cook
Chief Executive Officer
Apple, Inc.
One Apple Park Way,
MS 927-4INV, Cupertino,
CA 95014
USA

June 13, 2023

RE: Apple's business operations in Russia

Dear Mr. Cook,

We write to you as [B4Ukraine](#), a coalition of Ukrainian and international civil society organizations working to curtail the financial resources enabling the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the spirit of respect for the fundamental rights of all people, the rules-based international order, and a prosperous global economy, we expect companies to demonstrate public support for the people, democracy, and territorial integrity of Ukraine, opposition to Russia's war of aggression, and alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs).

We request an urgent dialogue regarding potential inconsistencies between Apple's obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law and the company's ongoing business operations and relationships in Russia that may contribute to, or be linked with, human rights harms.

It has been over one year since Russia invaded Ukraine and the devastating impacts continue to shock the global conscience and shake the global economy. Russia is violating international humanitarian law (IHL), including war crimes and crimes against humanity, through attacks on civilians and civilian infrastructure (e.g., mass executions, sexual violence, torture, forcible transfer of civilians). More than 24,000 Ukrainian civilians have been killed and injured and millions more have been forced to flee their homes, creating one of the largest humanitarian and refugee crises of modern times. In recognition of the severity of abuses, in March 2023 the International Criminal Court issued an arrest warrant for Vladimir Putin to answer war crimes charges.¹

Moreover, recent developments in Russia point to an expanding universe of financial, legal, and reputational risks facing those left behind.²

¹ International Criminal Court, "Situation in Ukraine: ICC judges issue arrest warrants against Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin and Maria Alekseyevna Lvova-Belova," March 17, 2023, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-ukraine-icc-judges-issue-arrest-warrants-against-vladimir-vladimirovich-putin-and> (accessed March 22, 2023).

² B4Ukraine, "Staying in Russia is risky business: Here are 5 reasons why," <https://b4ukraine.org/whats-new/russia-risky-business> (accessed June 13, 2023).

In response to this unprovoked and unjustified war³ many companies have already left Russia. According to the Kyiv School of Economics Institute's #LeaveRussia [company tracker](#), Apple has decided to suspend its Russian operations.

In March 2022, Apple issued the following statement: “We have paused all product sales in Russia. Last week, we stopped all exports into our sales channel in the country. Apple Pay and other services have been limited. RT News and Sputnik News are no longer available for download from the App Store outside Russia. And we have disabled both traffic and live incidents in Apple Maps in Ukraine as a safety and precautionary measure for Ukrainian citizens.”⁴ As a result, the media reported that Apple products will no longer be sold in Russia.⁵

While we are encouraged by the actions taken by Apple, our research shows that Apple products are still widely available in the Russian market. Wildberries, one of the largest Russian internet stores, started importing and selling iPhones after the start of the war. Russian customs data shows that over \$10 million USD worth of Apple products have been imported to Russia in March 2023 alone.⁶ This is confirmed by the availability of the newest Apple products on the Wildberries site⁷. While we understand that Apple products are imported into Russia via parallel routes, the continued availability of Apple products and brand in Russia positions the company close to the regime waging the illegal war against Ukraine and its human rights abuses and war crimes against Ukrainian people. Your ongoing brand presence helps to normalise and, implicitly condone, the war in the eyes of the Russian population. It also undermines the spirit of the unprecedented sanctions and humanitarian and military support imposed by the G7 and across Europe.

In consideration of the above points, we are asking Apple to:

- Immediately cease all operations and presence in Russia and completely exit the Russian market.
- Refrain from any future business, trade, or investment in Russia until Russia ends its war in Ukraine, territorial integrity of Ukraine is restored, and accountability imposed for war crimes and the destruction of Ukrainian infrastructure and property.
- Establish and implement comprehensive human rights due diligence measures for any responsible exit from or re-engagement with Russia.

We request an urgent dialogue with Apple’s relevant senior management and staff to discuss the company’s ongoing activities and relationships in Russia, associated risks to the people of Ukraine and the company. Please contact the B4Ukraine Coalition at contact@b4ukraine.org to schedule a call. We kindly ask for your response by 5:00pm CET, June 27th, 2023.

³ The UN General Assembly condemned Russia’s “aggression against Ukraine” and demanded that Moscow “unconditionally withdraw all of its military forces from the territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders.”

⁴ Mitchell Clark, “Apple halts product sales in Russia,” *The Verge*, March 1, 2022, <https://www.theverge.com/2022/3/1/22957000/apple-russia-ukraine-invasion-halt-product-sales-app-store> (accessed June 5, 2023).

⁵ Zita Sheftalovich and Camille Gijs, “Apple joins other global giants in Russia exit,” *Politico*, March 2, 2022, <https://www.politico.eu/article/apple-pulls-products-from-russia/#:~:text=Apple%20products%20will%20no%20longer%20be%20sold%20in%20Russia%2C%20in.all%20product%20sales%20in%20Russia.%22> (accessed June 5, 2023).

⁶ Squeezing Putin, “Metamorphosis of Wildberries,” May 13, 2023, <https://squeezingputin.com/support.html> (accessed June 5, 2023).

⁷ Wildberries, “Brands - Apple,” <https://www.wildberries.ru/brands/apple> (accessed June 7, 2023).

Sincerely,

The B4Ukraine Coalition