

**DANISH PRIME MINISTER METTE
FREDERIKSEN’S SPEECH AT THE EVENT “A
LIGHT IN THE DARK”.**

[THE SPOKEN WORD APPLIES]

Dear Danes,

Dear Ukrainians,

On this evening 77 years ago, the news that all Danes had been longing to hear finally arrived: The Nazi troops had surrendered. Denmark was once again free.

Imagine Copenhagen City Hall Square. Right here, right where we are now. A beautiful May evening.

People gathered here in the thousands. The year was 1945.

People danced. Climbed atop the city’s trams. Shared

embraces.

With laughter and tears. Hugs and kisses.

They waved Danish flags. Denmark was a country once more. A free country.

Exactly 77 years after the best evening in modern Danish history, we stand here again. Thousands of people gathered in Copenhagen City Hall Square.

Thank you! Thanks to all of you who came here tonight.

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Tonight you are waving Ukrainian flags.

Because this time, war has returned in Europe. Brutal. Inhuman. Unbearable.

War in Europe. Just think that our generation now facing war.

In all its horror. It reminds us that with freedom comes responsibility.

That democracy does not just happen by itself.

And that we Europeans share a common history.

In the ruins of World War Two, we built the institutions which ensured that Europe won peace. The UN. NATO. And the European Community. The EU.

Putin believed that he could divide Europe. But his brutal actions have had the opposite effect. The bonds between us are stronger than ever.

And let me make this absolutely clear:

Ukraine belongs to no one but you.

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Two weeks ago I travelled to Ukraine.

I will never forget it. So much destruction. So much pain and grief. Homes blasted to rubble. Entire neighbourhoods destroyed by Putin's war machine.

But the worst were the reports of crimes against people.

Savage rapes. Brutal murders.

Women. Men. Young people. The elderly. Small children.

I will never forget it. We will never forget it. The world must never forget.

Dear all,

Let us promise each other: Those responsible for these crimes will be held accountable.

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At the darkest hour, there is also a light. I know this to be true. Because I saw it when I visited you.

How – despite the pain – you relentlessly continue the fight against Putin’s superior firepower.

We have just heard the Ukrainian national sang. “We give our body and soul for our freedom”. You sing these words.

Because if you give up your freedom, then you have nothing. Nothing!

When freedom is under attack, it is not enough that we tell each other about its importance. We must also be prepared to defend freedom.

That is why we send weapons and military equipment. And that is why we will continue to do so.

That is why we have enacted sanctions. And that is why we will continue to do so.

That is why we help by providing humanitarian aid. And that is why we will continue to do so.

Will Denmark help to rebuild Ukraine? Zelensky asked me this question in Kyiv.

My answer – and Denmark’s answer – is of course: Yes!
The first Danish diggers are already on the way.

Ukraine can count on Denmark and the Danes.

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Back in 1945 – 77 years ago tonight – the liberation meant that all those who had fled Denmark could return home to Denmark once more.

In the days and weeks that followed, they came home – the thousands of Jews who had sailed across the Sound to Sweden for safety.

The vast majority of Danish Jews survived the war. The fate of Danish Jews is a light in the darkness of the Nazi genocide.

Hundreds of Danish families helped these Jews – their fellow human beings – with shelter and food. Provided hiding places for the persecuted. Organised the escape to Sweden.

Tonight I would like to thank everyone in Denmark who is helping the Ukrainian refugees. I am thankful for the great hospitality you have all shown. Thank you.

And a very special greeting to all those Ukrainians who have fled to Denmark.

We know that just a short time ago, you were living ordinary lives back home. Just like us. Walking with your children to school. Going to work. Going shopping. Visiting friends. Playing football.

Now you need to be here. And get back to as normal an everyday life as possible.

Please know that you all are welcome.

All of Denmark is taking care of you.

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On the evening of May 4, we place candles in our windows to celebrate the liberation of Denmark. We have done this for 76 years.

But tonight – May 4 2022 – we will also light our candles for Ukraine.

The candles are our symbol that hope and peace will prevail. A symbol of our resistance against injustice and war – a resistance that unites the West.

Dear Danes,

Dear Ukrainians,

I am honoured that President Zelensky will speak to the Danish people tonight.

Zelensky shows us what national unity and resilience look like in our time.

He carries the pain of the Ukrainians. And it gives him strength. Determination. Courage.

Dear all,

Please give a warm welcome to Ukraine's remarkable President Zelensky, who will be speaking to us in just a moment.

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