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‘No excuse’: Brandis says Australia’s ambassador should return to Ukraine

«Немає виправдань»: Д. Брандіс каже, що посол Австралії має повернутися в Україну

Колишній генеральний прокурор і верховний комісар Великої Британії Д. Брандіс каже, що немає виправдання тому, що Австралія не повернула свого посла в Україну. Австралія ізольована серед своїх союзників через те, що не відновила свою дипломатичну присутність у Києві, яку було виведено за кілька днів до вторгнення володимира путіна рік тому.

<https://www.smh.com.au/world/europe/no-excuse-brandis-says-australia-s-ambassador-should-return-to-ukraine-20230227-p5col1.html>

Former attorney-general and high commissioner to the UK George Brandis says there is no excuse for Australia failing to return its ambassador to Ukraine.

Australia is isolated among its allies for not restoring its diplomatic presence in Kyiv, which was withdrawn in the days leading up to Vladimir Putin’s invasion a year ago.

As of February, 67 of the 81 diplomatic missions that closed at the start of the war have reopened in a show of solidarity with Ukraine.

On Friday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky during a 2½-hour news conference to mark the one-year anniversary of the war, urged Australia to return.

“Please come, come back but on a Bushmaster, we need one more,” Zelensky said, referring to the armoured vehicles Australia sent his country.

Speaking on the ABC’s Q+A program on Monday night, alongside Ukraine’s ambassador to Australia Vasyl Myroshnychenko, Brandis, now at the ANU’s Security College, said the Australian government’s decision to continue to operate out of Poland was inexplicable.

“Now in Australia’s case in particular, there’s just no excuse for not sending the ambassador and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT] personnel back in,” Brandis said.

“The Australian embassy in Kyiv was co-located in the Canadian embassy – the Canadians are back in.

“So what is being asked of us and what we should do is do the very thing that the Canadians have done and occupy the very building that they have occupied.”

Brandis served as Australia’s high commissioner to the UK until April last year. His comments were met with applause by the audience in the ABC studios.

But Minister for International Development and the Pacific Pat Conroy, also on the panel, said the safety concerns that applied 12 months ago were still prevalent today.

“Those good reasons still remain. Ultimately, we are responsible for the safety of those workers, and we have to make decisions based on that. We’re reviewing it constantly,” Conroy said.

Conroy said the estimated 50 Australians who were still in Ukraine were receiving “full support” from DFAT via the embassy in Warsaw in neighbouring Poland.

Conroy had previously defended the closure by saying his Ukrainian counterpart did not raise it with him during their meeting on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference. The meeting took place before Zelensky’s comments.

Myroshnychenko reiterated Zelensky’s call but emphasised the importance of the training that Australian troops are providing in Britain for Ukrainian civilians who have signed up to fight Russian soldiers.

“Australia, traditionally, has been always there, fighting for what is right and this is one of those things,” the ambassador said.