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Dance of Freedom: Sasha Paskal brings Ukraine's story to Kenya



The "Dance of Freedom" world tour of Ukrainian gymnast Oleksandra Paskal has reached Nairobi, its fourth city after Paris, New York and Rio de Janeiro, supported by Rinat Akhmetov together with his [Foundation](#) and [Shakhtar Donetsk](#) football club. Ten-year-old Sasha, who lost a leg in a Russian missile strike in 2022 and returned to gymnastics on a prosthesis, performed at the United Nations Office at Nairobi as part of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 80th anniversary celebrations. During her two days in the Kenyan capital she also visited a

gymnastics academy and a local primary school. The tour is dedicated to the forthcoming 35th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence.

What is the "Dance of Freedom" tour?

"Dance of Freedom" is a world tour that is taking Oleksandra Paskal to five continents and five major cities. Oleksandra, known as Sasha, has prepared five special dances, each one telling the world about the strength, resilience and freedom of Ukrainians. The tour is supported by Rinat Akhmetov together with his Foundation and Shakhtar Donetsk football club, and is dedicated to the forthcoming 35th anniversary of Ukraine's Independence. It began in Paris, continued in New York and Rio de Janeiro, and has now reached Nairobi, with a final city still to come.

Where did Sasha perform in Nairobi?

Sasha's main performance took place at the United Nations Office at Nairobi, one of the United Nations' four major headquarters and its African hub. There she danced as part of the celebrations marking UNICEF's 80th anniversary, carrying Ukraine's message of freedom and strength of spirit to an international audience.

Why did Sasha's visit mark UNICEF's 80th anniversary?

The performance honoured eighty years of UNICEF's work for children's rights, inclusion and resilience. Sasha's own story — of a child who overcame terrible injury and returned to the sport she loves — reflected the message at the heart of that work: that every child has the potential to overcome hardship and pursue their dreams.

Who did Sasha meet during her time in Nairobi?

Her performance at the United Nations concluded a two-day programme in the Kenyan capital. The day before, she appeared at the Elite Gymnastics Academy of

the Kenya Gymnastics Federation and at Kinyanjui Road Primary School, where she met local children, shared her story and reminded them that, even as the war in Ukraine continues, its children keep dreaming and moving forward.

Who is Oleksandra Paskal?

Sasha is from the Odesa region of Ukraine. In 2022 she lost a leg in a Russian missile strike, and after treatment and rehabilitation she returned to rhythmic gymnastics on a prosthesis. She has since resumed competing, winning gold at Carla's Rhythmic Cup in Romania earlier this year. In 2025 she received the "Future of Ukraine" state honour from President Volodymyr Zelensky and First Lady Olena Zelenska in recognition of her courage. She sees her mission as telling the truth about the war and supporting Ukrainian children.

How is the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation supporting her?

The tour is delivered together with the Rinat Akhmetov Foundation and Shakhtar Donetsk football club. The Foundation continues to support children affected by the war, helping them to regain a sense of safety, stability and belief in the future. From Nairobi, the tour will continue to Tokyo, its final city.