Nearly two weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, many major US companies that provide goods to consumers began pulling their business out of Russia. On March 9, McDonald’s said it would close its restaurants there, saying that “our values mean that we cannot ignore the needless human suffering unfolding in Ukraine.” Several other US companies, including Starbucks and Coca-Cola, have suspended their operations in Russia as well.

Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion, claiming incorrectly that Ukraine is part of Russia. Since then, Russia has been bombing Ukrainian cities to try to take over the country. From Kyiv, Ukraine’s capital, President Volodymyr Zelensky is encouraging his military to fight back. Dozens of nations have provided military and humanitarian support to Ukraine and imposed economic sanctions (penalties) on Russia.

The US consumer companies followed the lead of major US technology firms. On March 1, Apple became the first major US tech company to announce that it would no longer sell its products in Russia. Microsoft said on March 4 that it would halt new sales in Russia. Gaming company Electronic Arts and software company Oracle pulled their apps from Russia.

For some companies, taking a stand could mean losing money. McDonald’s could lose about 9% of its revenue (income) with its 850 restaurants in Russia closed. It also donated $5 million to its Ukrainian employees’ assistance fund.

Some of the decisions by US companies could affect ordinary Russians, many of whom don’t support the war. They could face a food shortage, for example. But US companies hope the boycotts will help convince Putin to end the war. “We will continue to monitor the situation,” said a spokesperson for Warner Bros., the US entertainment company, which paused the release of its movie The Batman in Russia. “We hope for a swift and peaceful resolution to this tragedy.”